

Third-Party Inspection Application Guide

Introduction and Purpose

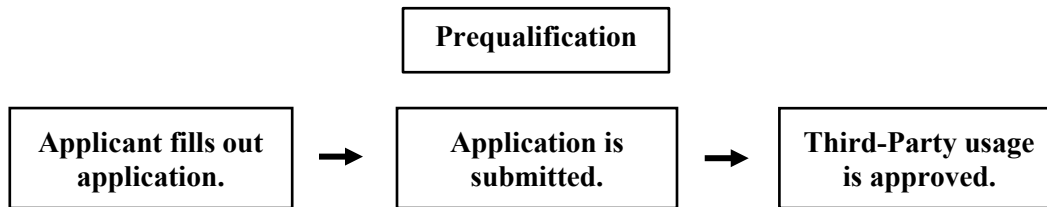
The Department of Planning and Sustainability oversees state-mandated code inspections in compliance with the Georgia State Minimum Construction Codes, as updated by the Department of Community Affairs. This applies to all building construction and alterations in unincorporated areas of DeKalb County. Under the Private Professional Provider Law, O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g) <https://dca.georgia.gov/community-assistance/government-authority-reporting/construction-codes/code-enforcement-and/code>, Private Professional Providers are authorized to perform inspections to ensure that state codes are met. DeKalb County has established this *Third-Party Inspection Application Guide* to outline pre-qualification requirements, administrative guidelines, and application procedures for Private Professional Providers. This guide also details the process for reporting, verification, and inspections under O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g).

Definitions

1. **Complete Application:** Refers to a submitted plan, application, or an inspection request that includes all necessary information and supporting documentation required by the county or municipality. This completeness allows for a determination of compliance with regulatory requirements.
2. **Private Professional Provider:** Defined as a professional engineer or architect who holds a valid certificate of registration under the relevant chapters of Title 43. The individual acting as a Private Professional Provider must not be an employee, affiliate, or have any financial interest in the entity engaged in the construction project subject to review or inspection.
3. **Regulatory Fee:** Encompasses payments required by local governments, which may be referred to as permit fees, application fees, or other similar terms. These fees are imposed as part of the local government's exercise of policy power and regulation of business activities related to the construction under the relevant chapter.
4. **Regulatory Requirements:** Refers to the criteria established by a county or municipality that must be met for the approval of plans, permits, or applications. This includes compliance with the Georgia State Minimum Standard Codes, locally adopted ordinances and amendments, applicable zoning ordinances, design standards, and other relevant state and local laws and regulations.

Prequalification

Prequalification is required for the approved use of a Private Professional Provider. Applicants will need to complete and submit the Third-Party Inspections Application as part of a Private Professional Provider's inspection report at the beginning of the permitting process to become prequalified.



Application For Private Professional Providers

1. Submit the application according to O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g)(14) and complete the insurance requirements according to O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g)(11) (*See below*).
 - a. All Private Professional Providers providing inspection services under this subsection must maintain professional liability (errors and omissions) insurance. The insurance coverage must be at least \$1 million per claim and \$1 million in total coverage for projects with a construction cost of \$5 million or less, and \$2 million per claim and \$2 million in total coverage for projects with a construction cost of more than \$5 million. This insurance policy may be either a general practice policy or a project-specific policy. If a general practice policy is used, it must include coverage for prior work. If a project-specific policy is used, it must remain in effect for two years after the issuance of the certificate of final.
3. Provide a Certificate of Insurance with the application.
4. List DeKalb County as the Certificate Holder under the Certificate of Insurance.
5. Provide Proof of Certifications for all professional engineers, professional architects, and inspectors.
6. Provide a Notary Seal within the application (*Page 3 on the Third-Party Inspections Application*).
7. Once the initial application is submitted, applicants **must** wait to get approval from the Inspections Manager before using a Private Professional Provider. (*See section on the next page for the Submission/Approval process*).

Submission/Approval of Inspection Services

1. Third-Party Inspections Application

- a. Third-Party Inspection Applications must be submitted to Planning and Sustainability by emailing documents to the buildinginspections@dekalbcountyga.gov inbox. An automated message will be sent back once an email is received to confirm submission.
- b. Staff will have two business days after receiving an applicant's email to review the application and will send a confirmation email in return once usage of a Private Professional Provider has been approved by the Inspections Manager.
- c. Applicants will then send any applicable inspection reports back to the inbox, notifying staff of the desired third-party inspection reports needing to be processed into *Infor Public Sector*.
- d. Staff will then have two business days after the initial day of receiving of the third-party inspection reports to process them.
- e. Any application or inspection report received after 3:00 PM will be processed on the next business day.
- f. Inspection reports should be on the forms provided by Planning and Sustainability, signed, sealed, and dated by the Private Professional Provider with credentials attached.
- g. The Private Professional Provider must submit their credentials on every inspection. *(See the minimum requirement table on Page 4.)*
- h. The report must include the signature and printed name of the Private Professional Provider and the inspection date.
- i. Upon staff approval of an inspection, the Private Professional Provider must sign and date the permit card clearly marking "pass" or "fail", with their name printed beside the signature.
- j. Permit applicants using a Private Professional Provider must not cover or conceal work for two (2) business days, or until a member of the Planning and Sustainability staff grants approval in *Infor Public Sector*.
 1. If work is covered prior to the two (2) business days, the builder is subject to remove any construction material for approval by the Inspections Manager, and the permit applicant will be fined a double permit fee. (Double permit fee will vary based on the original cost of the permit.)

Chief Executive Officer
Lorraine Cochran-Johnson

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Director
Juliana A. Njoku

DeKalb County Private Professional Provider Minimum Requirements According to O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g)(15)		
Inspection Discipline	Private Professional Provider	Third Party Inspector
Commercials Building	State licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C Commercial Building Inspector certification	Commercial Building Certification from ICC
Residential Buildings (3 stories or less)	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C. Residential Building Inspector Certification	I.C.C. Residential Building Inspector Certification
Commercial Mechanical	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C Commercial Mechanical Inspector Certification or State Commercial Mechanical License	I.C.C Commercial Mechanical Inspector Certification
Residential Mechanical	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C. Commercial Mechanical Inspector Certification or State Residential Mechanical License	I.C.C. Commercial Mechanical Inspector Certification
Commercial Electrical	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C. Commercial Electrical Inspector Certification or State Master Electrical License	I.C.C. Commercial Electrical Inspector Certification
Residential Electrical	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C. Commercial Electrical Inspector certification or State Electrical License	I.C.C. Commercial Electrical Inspector Certification
Commercial Plumbing	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C. Commercial Plumbing Inspector Certification or State Master Plumbing License	I.C.C. Commercial Plumbing Inspector Certification
Residential Plumbing	State Licensure as an Architect or Engineer and I.C.C. Residential Plumbing Inspector Certification or State Plumbing License	I.C.C. Residential Plumbing Inspector Certification

Additional Requirements

Site Requirements

Verify that all approved plans, permits, on-site inspection record cards, shop drawings, and documents issued by Planning and Sustainability are properly posted at the site.

Utility

- **Electrical Service Inspections (including switchgear, power connections, and service changes) must be conducted by DeKalb County Inspectors.**
- **Environmental, Watershed, Land Development, Backflow, FOG, Historical, and Fire Marshal inspections will also be conducted by DeKalb County Inspectors.**
- **Gas line installations requiring meter installations must also be inspected and approved by DeKalb County Inspectors.**

Field Revisions

2. Report any deviations from approved plans to the Inspections Manager immediately before concealing inspected work.
3. Submit field revisions to the Inspections Manager as necessary, as determined by Planning and Sustainability.

Verification Audits

Verification Audits are site visits performed by the Inspections Division to confirm adherence to this guide. The Inspections Division may conduct these site visits at any time if deemed necessary by the current Chief Building Official.

After-the-Fact Reports

1. Approval must be obtained from the Inspections Manager by submitting a written statement explaining the reason for the after-the-fact inspection request. The statement must be notarized by the owner of record. The owner must also request an in-person meeting and bring the approved construction documents indicating which concealed areas were inspected by the engineer.

2. The engineer's report must be on a company's letterhead and include the following:

- Date of inspection
- Planning and Sustainability building permit number
- Name of the Engineer
- Project or subdivision's name
- Street address of the construction site
- Type and scope of inspection
- Inspection result (passed/approved or failed/denied)
- Applicable construction code for compliance
- Seal and signature of the Design Professional

Note: Third-Party Inspectors cannot perform after-the-fact inspections.

Conflicts of Interest

Third-party inspection companies must avoid conflicts of interest. Disqualifying factors include ownership or control by entities associated with the project, financial interests by project architects or contractors, and any other activities that could compromise the impartiality of inspections.

Payments

1. The owner or authorized representative is responsible for all fees associated with third-party inspections.
2. Planning and Sustainability is not involved in the contract between the owner and the inspection company.
3. The owner or developer bears all costs and claims related to third-party inspections.

Special Inspections

1. **Qualifications:** Planning and Sustainability will determine the qualifications required for special inspectors based on the Georgia State Minimum Construction Codes and Chapter 17 of the International Building Code.
2. **Eligibility:** Special inspector companies must complete a Private Professional Provider Inspections Application to complete inspections services.

Disciplinary Violations

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g)(18) & O.C.G.A. § 8-2-26(g)(21), disciplinary actions determined and enforced by the Chief Building Official may be taken for violations including ethical breaches, falsifying documents, or failure to document code violations. Private Professional Providers that face disciplinary actions are subject to a set of penalties based on the occurrences of said actions. *(Listed below)*

Penalties

- **1st Occurrence:** Written warning and meeting with relevant parties.
- **2nd Occurrence:** Suspension of inspection services (length depends on the violation).
- **3rd Occurrence:** Possible ban from performing inspections in DeKalb County for 12-24 months.

In addition to the disciplinary actions above, applicants who are issued a “Stop Work” order on the property being worked on **cannot** utilize a Private Professional Provider and must go through the county for their inspections.

Disclaimer: *The local government, its building officials, code enforcement personnel, and their agents are not liable for any actions or omissions by building owners or by Private Professional Providers, including their representatives, regarding inspection services conducted by Private Professional Providers as outlined in this Guide.*