



# Alternative Plans Review and Inspections: Consumer Information<sup>1</sup>

## Background

Traditionally, construction plans review and approval and construction work inspections are done by government personnel—usually city or county building department personnel. Certain types of construction (such as restaurants, hospitals, and more) are subject to state and/or federal requirements and inspection.

As of 2002, Florida allows the use of “private providers” for some plans review and inspection services, subject to a number of requirements or restrictions:

1. The decision to use a private provider must be made by the property owner, and the property owner must comply with the requirements found in section 553.73, Florida Statutes. Private providers include Florida licensed engineers, architects, and building code administrators or inspectors. The type of inspection or review that may be performed by any of these licensees depends on their respective qualifications.
2. Private provider services are limited to building code compliance (structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and accessibility components of the building) and do not include review for other codes

such as land use, environmental, or fire.

Reviews or approvals outside of what may be performed by a private provider (such as site development plans) must be successfully completed before the beginning of building plans review.

3. A property owner using a private provider is required to notify the applicable building department of this when applying for a building permit. The building department may concurrently inspect subject to specified time limitations.
4. A property owner considering the use of a private provider for plans review *or* inspections should consult with the appropriate building department as the building official may require use of a private provider for both or not at all. The building department should be consulted to determine which services may be available in its jurisdiction.

## Cautions:

- While a property owner may save time and achieve other benefits with the use of a private provider, extreme care must be taken to ensure a complete understanding of

<sup>1</sup>*DISCLAIMER – This piece is intended to give the reader only general factual information current at the time of publication. This piece is **not** a substitute for professional advice and should not be used for guidance or decisions related to a specific design or construction project. This piece is not intended to reflect the opinion of any of the entities, agencies or organizations identified in the materials and, if any opinions appear, are those of the individual author and should not be relied upon in any event. [Applicable to 2004 Florida Building Code.]*

the requirements and limitations of this process.

- Necessary resources and references include:
  - Section 553.791, Florida Statutes
  - Section 553.73, Florida Statutes
  - Alternative Plans Review forms found at [www.dca.state.fl.us/fbc/forms/1\\_forms.htm](http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fbc/forms/1_forms.htm)
  - Applicable local city or county ordinances
  - Verification of proper qualification of the private provider (chapters 471 or 481 or part XII of chapter 468, Florida Statutes)

#### **Government Agencies/Offices:**

Florida Building Commission: 850-487-1824 / [www.floridabuilding.org](http://www.floridabuilding.org)

Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation: 850-487-1395 / [www.myflorida.com/dbpr/](http://www.myflorida.com/dbpr/)

Florida Board of Professional Engineers: 850-521-0500 / [www.fbpe.org](http://www.fbpe.org)

Florida Statutes: 850-488-4371 / [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us) (select “Florida Statutes”)

Your county or municipal building department (please see the government section of your telephone book—look under “building,” “plans,” “inspections,” or “zoning.”)

#### **Other Resources:**

American Society of Civil Engineers, Florida Section: [www.fla-asce.org](http://www.fla-asce.org)

Associated Builders and Contractors: [www.abcfloida.com](http://www.abcfloida.com)

Associated General Contractors: [www.agcgf.org](http://www.agcgf.org), [www.sfagc.org](http://www.sfagc.org), or [www.agcfla.com](http://www.agcfla.com)

Building Officials Association of Florida: [www.boaf.net](http://www.boaf.net)

Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects: [www.aiafla.org](http://www.aiafla.org)

Florida Engineering Society: [www.fleng.org](http://www.fleng.org)

This piece was developed with the input and assistance of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Florida Section; Associated Builders and Contractors; Associated General Contractors; Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects; and Florida Engineering Society.

#### **Don't know where to go for an answer to a specific question?**

Contact: Building A Safer Florida, Inc. 1-850-222-2772 or [www.buildingasaferflorida.org](http://www.buildingasaferflorida.org)

This document was developed jointly by Building a Safer Florida and the University of Florida's Program for Resource Efficient Communities ([www.energy.ufl.edu](http://www.energy.ufl.edu)), with input and assistance from:

- American Society of Civil Engineers, Florida Section
- Associated Builders and Contractors
- Associated General Contractors
- Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects
- Florida Engineering Society

April 2005 R