



Master File Plan Program

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Building Official

Effective: September 1, 2003

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This establishes the policy for the Residential Master File Plan Program for dwellings permitted under the Virginia Residential Code. The Program also includes review of detached garages, decks, and covered or screened porches shown on the Master File plan under the 2018 code cycle and future code cycles. These items will be reviewed under the Master File however they will require a separate permit.

All other accessory structures are excluded from this program, to include:

- Storage sheds
- Retaining walls
- Swimming pools
- Gazebos
- Pergolas and similar structures

If any accessory structure listed above is shown on the Master File, it is **not** considered during review and would require a separate submission with a separate permit.

The goals of the program are to:

1. Improve the efficiency of the plan submittal process by eliminating the requirement for a specific property address.
2. Improve the coordination between the site plans and building plans.
3. Improve the maintenance of the official records and code enforcement by clarifying the use of model names and the plan revision process.
4. Improve customer service and efficiency by eliminating the need for a separate plan submittal for qualifying accessory structures.

Model Name – A model name shall only be used once per builder per code cycle. It is acceptable to have different versions of the same model. However, the different versions must be clearly designated (e.g., Washington, WashingtonV2, WashingtonV2.2, etc.). If a builder elects to submit a new plan with the identical model name, the current Master File Plan shall be closed out.

Approved Site Plan/Subdivision Plan – The purpose of the review is to ensure that the building plans have been coordinated with the site plans (i.e., distance to lot line versus fire rated assemblies and topography versus Story Above Grade Plane). Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a copy of the approved site plan/subdivision or lot grading plan must be submitted to the Building Development Division for review.



MST Plan Submission: required information – Please include the following forms and information with your master file plan submission:

1. Completed Master File Plan Application
2. Complete set of the plans.
3. [Single Family Dwelling, Townhouse and Additions Cover Sheet](#).
4. If the plans are waived (does not apply to townhouses), submit the designer waiver form and owner waiver form for each set of plans.
5. Complete UL (or other) approved construction details for any fire resistance rated construction required per section R302 of the VRC. Please include a direct reference to the selected assembly numbers as well as the complete corresponding details integrated into the plan set.
6. For detailed submission guidelines applicable to all residential plans click [here](#).

MST House Permitting: Required Information – Please include the following forms and information with your applications for permits under the Master File Plan:

1. Application of Residential Single Family Dwelling building permit referencing the MST number of the associated approved plan via the [ePortal](#).
2. Completed “lot specific” [Master File Inspection Summary Sheet](#) identifying the details and options being used for the structure.
3. For detailed guidelines applicable to all residential permit applications click [here](#).

Permitting Decks and Porches on MST plans: Required Information

1. Please include the following forms and information with your applications for permits under the Master File Plan:
 - a. Application of “Building permit - Residential Addition” referencing the MST number of the associated approved plan via the [ePortal](#).
 - b. Copy of zoning approval issued by Land Development.
 - c. Application of electrical permit (or other trade) where required via the [ePortal](#), referencing the deck building permit.
2. For detailed guidelines applicable to all residential permit applications click [here](#).
3. Decks linked to a Master File must be from the same model and code year that the dwelling was constructed under.
4. Where a porch or similar structure is integral to the design of the dwelling and one could not be built without the other (e.g., shared continuous foundation, shared cantilevered roof, or shared cantilevered floor framing) that structure may be considered part of the dwelling which would **not** require a separate permit.

Stoops and steps at the front door are part of the required egress and do not fall into the category of an accessory structure and would also be considered part of the dwelling.



Revisions to Master File Plans

1. *Engineered Floor/Roof Systems* – Revised plans for an engineered floor/roof system shall have the Master File Plan Control Number designated on every plan sheet (e.g., MST2020-00001) and shall be sealed per the requirements of [Prince William County Policy: Registered Design Professional Sealing of Plans](#) in accordance with the requirements set forth by [APELSCIDLA](#).
2. *Revisions to Main Plans*
 - The designer of record must submit a letter stating the proposed changes to the plans and the purpose of each change. The Master File Plan Control Number must be designated in the letter (e.g., MST2020-00001).
 - The submitted revision would apply to all permits associated with the Master File Plan. If a “lot specific” revision is required for a single structure covered under this policy, a separate BPR number will be issued.
 - Each revised plan sheet shall have the Master File Plan Control Number designated (e.g., MST2022-00001).
 - A revision “bubble”, the revision number, and the revision date must be clearly designated with each change.
 - The Building Official reserves the right to determine that a proposed revision is too extensive, and a new Master File Plan must be submitted. For general guidance, an increase of the building footprint by more than 100 square feet will require a new Master File Plan Submission.
 - Since it is important to maintain an accurate plan file, the existing plan sheets that are being revised will be maintained in the Master File Plan. Building Development staff will be responsible for stamping each of the existing plan sheets indicating a revision sheet is attached to the Master File Plan.

Close Out of Master File Plans – When a Residential Master File Plan has not had a building permit issued within the preceding 12 months, Building Development staff will contact the permit applicant to determine if the Master File Plans should be closed out or if an extension should be approved.

Expiration of Master File Plans – Residential Master File Plans reviewed under a previous code cycle may not be used for permit issuance once a new code cycle has been adopted and is in effect. A new Residential Master File Plan designed in accordance with the [current code year adoption](#) must be submitted and reviewed prior to issuance of new permits under the Master File Plan.



Attachments/Hyperlinks

- [Single Family Dwelling, Townhouse and Additions Cover Sheet](#)
- [Residential Plan Review Requirements](#)
- [ePortal](#)
- [Master File Inspection Summary Sheet](#)
- [Policy: Registered Design Professional Sealing of Plans](#)
- [APELSCIDLA](#)
- [Current Code Year Adoption](#)