



BALDWIN

— COUNTY, ALABAMA —

Construction Certificate Management Procedures Baldwin County Building Department

Updated March 2022

The Baldwin County Building Department is responsible for the administration of all development issues within the Baldwin County building permit jurisdiction including permitting, inspection, and review of all construction, along with the creation of and maintenance of all building permit files and administrative documents (ordinances, building guides, applications, forms, outreach materials, etc.) related to building and development. All inspections and permit/plan reviews are conducted by the Baldwin County Building Department as well as all permit approvals.

The purpose of this document is to explain our management procedures for review of Elevation Certificates and all other required floodplain-related construction certificates including, but not limited to, Floodproofing Certificates, Coastal A-Zone or V-Zone Design Certificates, and engineered flood opening certificates. These procedures outline the types of certificates required, the collection and review of all certificates, how corrections should be made, where the certificates are stored/archived, and how we make these certificates available to the public.

TYPES OF CERTIFICATES REQUIRED

When any new construction, substantial improvement or repair for a substantially damaged building is conducted in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), the Baldwin County Building Department shall require an Elevation Certificate and any other floodplain-related certificate that is appropriate for the development including, but not limited to, Floodproofing Certificates for Non-Residential Structures, Residential Basement Floodproofing Certificate, Coastal A-Zone or V-Zone Design Certificate, No-Rise Certificates, and certification of engineered flood openings.

WHEN CERTIFICATES ARE REQUIRED

The applicant shall submit an Elevation Certificate marked “construction drawings” with the building permit application. The Elevation Certificate shall be used to determine if the proposed design is in compliance with the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance of Unincorporated Baldwin County, Alabama. In some cases, a Temporary Benchmark may be allowed in lieu of an Elevation Certificate. As deemed necessary by the Building Department, an Elevation Certificate marked “under construction” may be required when the finished floor elevation is established. Once construction of the building is finished and all adjacent grading is finalized, a complete and correct “finished-construction” Elevation Certificate must be submitted by the applicant to show the “as-built” characteristics of the building. A “finished-construction” Elevation Certificate must be received, reviewed, and corrected (if necessary) before a final inspection is performed. At this point, all other required certificates must also be submitted and reviewed.

If a Floodproofing Certificate for Non-Residential Structures is required for a floodproofed non-residential building, an Elevation Certificate is not required for purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), but we will require one to help verify compliance with our Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. A complete and correct Floodproofing Certificate is required to be submitted to the Baldwin County Building Department once construction is finished on the building but before issuing a certificate of occupancy.

A Coastal A-Zone or V-Zone design certificate is required for all new construction and substantial improvement/substantial damage that includes structural modification or repair within an identified Coastal A-Zone or V-Zone on our Flood Insurance Rate Map. The Coastal A-Zone or V-Zone certificate is required before granting the initial building permit because it certifies the structural design and the proposed methods of construction for the building. A complete and correct Elevation Certificate is also required once construction is finished on the building. At a minimum, all permit files should contain both the pre-construction Coastal A-Zone or V-Zone design certificate and the finished-construction Elevation Certificate for all new construction and substantial improvement/substantial damage that includes structural modification or repair in our Coastal A-Zone(s) or V-Zone(s).

When engineered flood openings are installed in the foundation of a building, and the Elevation Certificate indicates that they were installed (Sections A8d and A9d on the Elevation Certificate), an engineered opening certification is required to be submitted with the Elevation Certificate to help verify compliance and the insurance rate. Be sure the developer submits either the International Code Council® Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) form for the engineered opening or an individual certification. Individual certifications must cover the following, at a minimum:

- 1) An identification of the building (address) that has the engineered openings installed;
- 2) The design professional's name, title, address, type of license, the state issuing the license, signature, and seal; a statement certifying the design of the openings will automatically equalize hydrostatic flood loads on exterior walls by allowing for the automatic entry and exit of floodwaters; and
- 3) A description of the range of flood characteristics tested or computed for which the certification is valid, such as rates of rise and fall of floodwaters.

WHAT DEPARTMENT/OFFICE COLLECTS/REVIEWS CONSTRUCTION CERTIFICATES

All under-construction and finished-construction Elevation Certificates shall be submitted to the Baldwin County Building Department for tracking and review. If a hard copy of the Elevation Certificate is submitted in person at the office, the Permit Technician (Danielle Anderson, Danielle Brazwell, Mindy Smith, Skye Bell, or Tammy Thomley) will upload the Elevation Certificate to the file in the Citizenserve portal. If the permit holder uploads the Elevation Certificate to the file through the online Citizenserve portal, it will be automatically assigned to the responsible user listed on the file (either a Permit Technician or an Inspector). The person who receives the Elevation Certificate will create an Elevation Certificate Review activity in Citizenserve and assign it to a Certified Floodplain Manager (Building Official Eddie Harper, Deputy Building Official Murray Authement, Deputy Building Official Freddy Holman, or Hazard Mitigation Coordinator Janie Joiner) for review. The assigned Certified Floodplain Manager will review the Elevation Certificate along with all supporting documentation and other required certificates, to ensure all applicable building and development ordinances and standards are met.

When the Elevation Certificate is approved, the Floodplain Manager will stamp it, save the stamped copy to the file, and update the document source code appropriately. The permit holder may then schedule the next required inspection. The final inspection will not be approved, and the Certificate of

Occupancy will not be issued until all problems with a finished construction Elevation Certificate and supporting documentation are resolved.

HOW CERTIFICATES ARE CORRECTED

The Floodplain Manager should consult the CRS's Elevation Certificate Checklist when reviewing an Elevation Certificate to ensure all required fields are completed correctly. When an error is noticed on an Elevation Certificate, there are three ways to correct it.

- (1) For any inaccurate or incomplete information in Section C2, the Floodplain Manager should request a new certificate from the applicant or his/her representative (surveyor/engineer/architect) who certified the form.
- (2) If incomplete or inaccurate information is found in the other sections, the Floodplain Manager can do the following. As a general rule, and as law in some states, the local official SHOULD NOT mark up a signed and sealed form.
 - a) The forms may be returned to the applicant (or representative) with instructions on what needs to be changed or corrected;
 - b) The Floodplain Manager can prepare a separate memo with the correct information and attach a "memo of correction." When the certificate is provided to an inquirer, the memo must be included with it;
 - c) The Floodplain Manager can note the changes or corrections in Section G.

All finished-construction Elevation Certificates that have errors on them should be returned to the applicant within 5 business days for immediate correction. In no case shall we accept a finished-construction Elevation Certificate until all corrections deemed appropriate by the Floodplain Manager are addressed. In no cases shall a final inspection be approved or a Certificate of Occupancy be issued until the Floodplain Manger has approved the Elevation Certificate.

If corrections are completed after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, the Floodplain Manager must ensure the file copy is updated and the homeowner receives a copy of the corrected Elevation Certificate in case the correction(s) would affect the building's insurance rating.

HOW AND WHERE CERTIFICATES ARE MAINTAINED

All Elevation Certificates and all required construction certificates, as well as all other permit application documentation, shall be stored in the building permit file. They also shall be scanned at the usual time building files are scanned for storage/archival. Copies of the finished-construction Elevation Certificates, along with the other required construction certificates (if applicable), shall also be placed in a separate folder containing all Elevation Certificate information for CRS purposes, labeled "Activity 310," organized by CRS recertification date. The Baldwin County Building Department retains all permit files for properties located in a Special Flood Hazard Area indefinitely. All other state and local records retention policies shall be observed.

HOW CERTIFICATES ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO INQUIRERS

Members of the public may obtain Elevation Certificates on the Building Department website (<https://baldwincountyal.gov/departments/building-inspection/flood-zone-information>). If the member is unable to locate a certificate for the address in question, they may send an email to Danielle.Anderson@BaldwinCountyAL.gov. Danielle Anderson shall act on the request immediately, if time allows, but at worst, shall have 5 business days to make a copy of the requested information and make the documentation available to the inquirer. There is no financial charge for this service.