

Building Standards

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Remote virtual inspections

www.midlothian.gov.uk/buildingstandards

Guidance on remote virtual inspections (RVIs)

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003, all Building Standards sections throughout Scotland must undertake reasonable inquiry to check that building works comply with the minimum standards set out in the Building Regulations.

The CCNP (Construction Compliance and Notification Plan) we issue with each Building Warrant lists all the key stages of a building project that need to be inspected by Midlothian Building Standards. You (or your agent or your builder) are responsible for notifying us when each key stage in your CCNP is ready to be inspected on site. Notifications can be via telephone, email or letter to the case surveyor. Contact details are on your CCNP.

When all the work is complete, a Completion Certificate - Submission form should be submitted, along with all the supporting documents listed on the CCNP.

2. USING ALTERNATIVE EVIDENCE

Due to the Covid-19 situation, we are currently not routinely undertaking physical site inspections, other than for immediately dangerous buildings.

Following Scottish Government guidance on using alternative evidence, we will undertake the CCNP key stage inspections as follows:

Alternative evidence options your case surveyor may select for your key inspections

Key Inspection Stage	Written submission, email or report	Certification from approved scheme	Midlothian template form	Remote virtual inspection by	
				Photographs	Video
1. Start of work	●	-	-	-	-
2. Foundation	●	○	-	○	○
3. Drainage	-	●	●	○	○
4. Superstructure	○	○	-	●	○
5. Fire safety	●	-	-	●	○
6. Completion	○	●	○	○	●

● = standard, ○ = optional

3. ARRANGING KEY STAGE INSPECTIONS

3.1 For all key stages before the final Completion stage

Please email your case surveyor when work on site is ready for inspection at the key stages detailed on your CCNP. Remember to keep evidence relating to all the key inspections stages detailed on your CCNP, for example a full photographic record of all stages of the work, and have it available for examination by the case surveyor. Your case surveyor may also ask you to provide additional reports or to complete forms detailing any testing that is required, such as for new or altered drainage.

3.2 For the final Completion stage

When all the work is completed as detailed on the approved building warrant drawings, the **relevant person** (usually the person who authorises the work in the first place, such as the homeowner, tenant or building owner, and who is accountable for the completed work) should submit a Completion Certificate - Submission form and all the supporting documents listed on the CCNP.

4. REMOTE VIRTUAL INSPECTION BY PHOTOGRAPHS

When you are asked to submit photographs to indicate compliance, the photographs should clearly show the required items. The location of each particular item should also be very clear - you may need to submit one photograph showing the full extent and location of an individual item, and additional photographs showing details. You may also be asked to show the dimensions of an item, for example, if a beam is to be photographed, a tape measure should be included within the photograph, to show the size of the beam, and detailed photographs should also be submitted showing the size of the end bearings.

For internal features, you may be asked to provide photographs showing the full extent of all four walls of a room. Such photographs would usually be taken in the middle of the room, but if it is not possible to get the full extent of a wall pictured on your device, you could step back and take the photographs from each opposite wall. It may take a little bit of trial and error to get a suitable full extent photograph.

If in doubt, it is always better to take extra photographs rather than having too few. It is also important that you backup your photographs safely (we sometimes hear of mobile phones being lost or stolen, which can effectively mean that all the photographs are also lost).

5. REMOTE VIRTUAL INSPECTION BY VIDEO

5.1 How we schedule a remote video inspection

When you submit your Completion Certificate - Submission form and we have accepted all the supporting documents, the case surveyor will contact you to agree how best to inspect your completed project. Where suitable, hosting of a live remote video inspection of the completed work will be arranged by your case surveyor. Once agreed, your case surveyor will send you an email link confirming the details of the live remote video inspection.

On the date and time agreed for the remote video inspection, you should access the live video meeting by clicking the email link on your mobile device and following the on screen instructions. Alternatively, you should type the meeting ID and password provided directly into the app. In both cases, you may need to enter a waiting room and your case surveyor will then admit you to start the live remote video inspection.

Please note that remote video inspections may not be suitable for all projects, for example particular high risk projects, or where the case surveyor feels that a physical on-site inspection is necessary.

Please also note that if you record a video of the completed work and then send it to us in lieu of a live remote video inspection, directed by your case surveyor, **it will not be accepted as meeting reasonable inquiry.**

Where suitable, your case surveyor may also offer remote video inspections for key inspection stages before completion. The same process as detailed above for a remote video inspection for completion will be followed.

5.2 Devices and software

To make a remote video inspection work best, you:

- a) Will need to have access to a mobile device such as a mobile phone or a tablet.
- b) May need to download one of the video software apps that we are using onto your mobile device, if it is not already installed. Currently we use Zoom, Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp and your case surveyor will advise which app will be used.
- c) Will need to check that your mobile device can send video via the 4G or 5G signal, or via WiFi. Please note that sometime your signal may not be strong enough to send video, for example it may work on the ground floor of a property but will not work on the first floor. If this is the case, please tell your case surveyor.
- d) Will need to be able to clearly hear what your case surveyor is saying via your mobile device.

5.3 Behaviour and privacy

During remote video inspections, we expect our staff to be treated courteously, just as if they were visiting your property in person.

Please note that we do not record any of the remote video inspections we undertake.

6. WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO DURING A REMOTE VIDEO INSPECTION

The extent of the remote video inspection will be determined by the type of work detailed on your building warrant.

During the remote video inspection, your case surveyor will direct you to areas that require to be inspected and you will need to show on your mobile device. You may be asked to stop and focus in on particular items - please listen carefully to the directions given by your case surveyor.

You may be asked to:

- a) Walk round the property (or part of the property) externally, showing elevations and external items such as access and above ground drainage.
- b) Show the property (or part of the property) internally.
- c) Have a tape measure to hand to show the dimensions of certain items.
- d) Have a torch to hand to light up any unlit areas.
- e) Show some of the following items (if applicable - the list is not exhaustive):
 - 1. Fire stopping, for example to a garage
 - 2. Suitable fire doors have been fitted and are working correctly
 - 3. Smoke detection system installed and working
 - 4. CO detector installed
 - 5. Dimensions of steps
 - 6. Headroom to stairs and landings
 - 7. Important dimensions of any escape windows
 - 8. Safety glazing provided where required
 - 9. Demonstrate extract fans are working
 - 10. Trickle ventilation is provided
 - 11. Numbers, locations and heights of sockets, switches and controls
 - 12. Drainage is working correctly

If the quality of the video connection does not allow your case surveyor to make a suitable inspection of a particular item, you may be asked to submit photographs.

Following the remote video inspection, your case surveyor will send you a list of any outstanding faults or issues that you will need to address before we can accept your completion submission.