

2021 Virginia Construction Code

CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 119 APPEALS

119.1 Establishment of appeals board.

In accordance with § 36-105 of the Code of Virginia, there shall be established within each *local building department* a *local board of building code appeals (LBBCA)*. Whenever a county or a municipality does not have such a *LBBCA*, the *local governing body* shall enter into an agreement with the *local governing body* of another county or municipality or with some other agency, or a state agency approved by *DHCD* for such appeals resulting therefrom. Fees may be levied by the *local governing body* in order to defray the cost of such appeals. In addition, as an authorization in this code, separate *LBBCAs* may be established to hear appeals of different enforcement areas such as electrical, plumbing or mechanical requirements. Each such *LBBCA* shall comply with the requirements of this section. The *locality* is responsible for maintaining a duly constituted *LBBCA* prepared to hear appeals within the time limits established in this section. The *LBBCA* shall meet as necessary to assure a duly constituted board, appoint officers as necessary, and receive such training on the code as may be appropriate or necessary from staff of the *locality*.

119.2 Membership of board.

The *LBBCA* shall consist of at least five members appointed by the *locality* for a specific term of office established by written policy. Alternate members may be appointed to serve in the absence of any regular members and as such, shall have the full power and authority of the regular members. Regular and alternate members may be reappointed. Written records of current membership, including a record of the current chairman and secretary shall be maintained in the office of the *locality*. In order to provide continuity, the terms of the members may be of different length so that less than half will expire in any 1-year period.

119.3 Officers and qualifications of members.

The *LBBCA* shall annually select one of its regular members to serve as chairman. When the chairman is not present at an appeal hearing, the members present shall select an acting chairman. The *locality* or the chief executive officer of the *locality* shall appoint a secretary to the *LBBCA* to maintain a detailed record of all proceedings. Members of the *LBBCA* shall be selected by the *locality* on the basis of their ability to render fair and competent decisions regarding application of the USBC and shall to the extent possible, represent different occupational or professional fields relating to the construction industry. At least one member should be an experienced builder; at least one member should be an *RDP*; and at least one member should be an experienced property manager. Employees or officials of the *locality* shall not serve as members of the *LBBCA*.

119.4 Conduct of members.

No member shall hear an appeal in which that member has a conflict of interest in accordance with the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (§ 2.2-3100 et seq. of the Code of Virginia). Members shall not discuss the substance of an appeal with any other party or their representatives prior to any hearings.

119.5 Right of appeal; filing of appeal application.

Any person aggrieved by the *local building department's* application of the USBC or the refusal to grant a modification to the provisions of the USBC may appeal to the *LBBCA*. The applicant shall submit a written request for appeal to the *LBBCA* within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the decision being appealed. The application shall contain the name and address of the *owner* of the *building* or *structure* and, in addition, the name and address of the person appealing, when the applicant is not the *owner*. A copy of the building official's decision shall be submitted along with the application for appeal and maintained as part of the record. The application shall be marked by the *LBBCA* to indicate the date received. Failure to submit an application for appeal within the time limit established by this section shall constitute acceptance of a building official's decision.

Note: To the extent that a decision of a building official pertains to amusement devices there may be a right of appeal under the *VADR*.

119.6 Meetings and postponements.

The *LBBCA* shall meet within 30 calendar days after the date of receipt of the application for appeal, except that a period of up to 45 calendar days shall be permitted where the *LBBCA* has regularly scheduled monthly meetings. A longer time period shall be permitted if agreed to by all the parties involved in the appeal. Notice indicating the time and place of the hearing shall be sent to the parties in writing to the addresses listed on the application if requested or by electronic means at least 14 calendar days prior to the date of the hearing unless a lesser time period is agreed to by all the parties involved in the appeal. When a quorum of the *LBBCA* is not present at a hearing to hear an appeal, any party involved in the appeal shall have the right to request a postponement of the hearing. The *LBBCA* shall reschedule the appeal within 30 calendar days of the postponement, except that a longer time period shall be permitted if agreed to by all the parties

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involved in the appeal.

119.7 Hearings and decision.

All hearings before the *LBBCA* shall be open meetings and the appellant, the appellant's representative, the *locality's* representative and any person whose interests are affected by the building official's decision in question shall be given an opportunity to be heard. The chairman shall have the power and duty to direct the hearing, rule upon the acceptance of evidence and oversee the record of all proceedings. The *LBBCA* shall have the power to uphold, reverse or modify the decision of the official by a concurring vote of a majority of those present. Decisions of the *LBBCA* shall be final if no further appeal is made. The decision of the *LBBCA* shall be explained in writing, signed by the chairman and retained as part of the record of the appeal. Copies of the written decision shall be sent to all parties by certified mail. In addition, the written decision shall contain the following wording:

"Any person who was a party to the appeal may appeal to the *State Review Board* by submitting an application to such Board within 21 calendar days upon receipt by certified mail of this decision. Application forms are available from the Office of the *State Review Board*, 600 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, (804) 371-7150."

119.8 Appeals to the State Review Board.

After final determination by the *LBBCA* in an appeal, any person who was a party to the appeal may further appeal to the *State Review Board*. In accordance with § 36-114 of the Code of Virginia, the *State Review Board* shall have the power and duty to hear all appeals from decisions arising under the application of the USBC and to render its decision on any such appeal, which decision shall be final if no appeal is made therefrom. In accordance with § 36-98.2 of the Code of Virginia for state-owned *buildings* and *structures*, appeals by an involved state agency from the decision of the building official for state-owned *buildings* or *structures* shall be made directly to the *State Review Board*. The application for appeal shall be made to the *State Review Board* within 21 calendar days of the receipt of the decision to be appealed. Failure to submit an application within that time limit shall constitute an acceptance of the building official's decision. For appeals from a *LBBCA*, a copy of the building official's decision and the written decision of the *LBBCA* shall be submitted with the application for appeal to the *State Review Board*. Upon request by the office of the *State Review Board*, the *LBBCA* shall submit a copy of all pertinent information from the record of the appeal. In the case of appeals involving state-owned *buildings* or *structures*, the involved state agency shall submit a copy of the building official's decision and other relevant information with the application for appeal to the *State Review Board*. Procedures of the *State Review Board* are in accordance with Article 2 (§ 36-108 et seq.) of Chapter 6 of Title 36 of the Code of Virginia.

119.9 Hearings and decision.

All hearings before the *State Review Board* shall be open meetings and the chair shall have the power and duty to direct the hearing, rule upon the acceptance of evidence and oversee the record of all proceedings. The *State Review Board* shall have the power to uphold, reverse, or modify the decision of the *LBBCA* by a concurring vote of a majority of those present. Proceedings of the Review Board shall be governed by the provisions of the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia), except that an informal conference pursuant to § 2.2-4019 of the Code of Virginia shall not be required. Decisions of the *State Review Board* shall be final if no further appeal is made. The decision of the *State Review Board* shall be explained in writing, signed by the chair and retained as part of the record of the appeal. Copies of the written decision shall be sent to all parties by certified mail. In addition, the written decision shall contain the following wording:

"As provided by Rule 2A:2 of the Supreme Court of Virginia, you have thirty (30) days from the date of service (the date you actually received this decision or the date it was mailed to you, whichever occurred first) within which to appeal this decision by filing a Notice of Appeal with the Secretary of the Review Board. In the event that this decision is served on you by mail, three (3) days are added to that period."