



SOP for Auditing Private Providers

Rev: 3 | Revision Date: 08/03/2026 | I.D. Number: E-BLD-36

PURPOSE

The use of a Private Provider is authorized pursuant to Florida Statute 553.791, "Alternative Plans Review and Inspection." This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes the policies and procedures for auditing Private Providers performing alternative plan reviews and inspections within the jurisdiction of the City of Fort Lauderdale.

The purpose of these audits is to verify compliance with the applicable provisions of the Florida Building Code and Florida Statutes; safeguard public health, safety, and welfare; and ensure the accurate documentation, retention, and accessibility of construction records and related materials maintained by Private Providers and the City. These procedures are designed to promote accountability, transparency, and code compliance without duplicating inspections or creating unnecessary delays or impediments to the timely progression of construction projects.

SCOPE

This SOP applies to all audits conducted by the City of Fort Lauderdale Development Services Department ("DSD" or Department) regarding services performed by Private Providers, including but not limited to plan reviews, inspections, certificate of compliance, and affidavits. Audits assess both the inspection process and progress of the job to ensure compliance with approved documents, permits, and applicable Florida building codes. The audit is intended only to verify compliance with statutory requirements and may not duplicate the private provider's work. These SOPs are written to operate within the framework of Florida Statute 553.791 and do not assert enforcement authority beyond what the statute expressly preserves for the Building Official on private provider projects.

1. DEFINITIONS

- **Audit:** As per Florida Statute 553.791, "Audit" means the process to confirm that the building code inspection services have been performed by the private provider, including ensuring that the required affidavit for the plan review has been properly completed and submitted with the permit documents and that the minimum mandatory inspections required under the building code have been performed and properly recorded. The local building official may not replicate the plan review or inspection being performed by the private provider, unless expressly authorized by this section.
- **Private Provider:** "Private provider" means a person licensed as a building



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code administrator under part XII of chapter 468, as an engineer under chapter 471, or as an architect under chapter 481. For purposes of performing inspections under this section for additions and alterations that are limited to 1,000 square feet or less to residential buildings, the term "private provider" also includes a person who holds a standard certificate under part XII of chapter 468.

- **Private provider firm:** "Private provider firm" means a business organization, including a corporation, partnership, business trust, or other legal entity, which offers services under this chapter to the public through licensees who are acting as agents, employees, officers, or partners of the firm. A person who is licensed as a building code administrator under part XII of chapter 468, an engineer under chapter 471, or an architect under chapter 481 may act as a private provider for an agent, employee, or officer of the private provider firm.

2. AUDIT OVERVIEW

An Audit, as it relates to Private Providers under Florida Statute 553.791, is a formal review process conducted by a local building enforcement agency. The audit focuses on evaluating the quality and accuracy of the services provided by a Private Provider, including:

- Reviewing the Private Provider's completed plan reviews and inspections.
- Ensuring that the required affidavits and documentation have been submitted properly.
- Verifying compliance with the Florida Building Code through a review of records and documentation.
- Observe the actual conditions of the construction work.
- Verify that construction activities align with approved plans, permits, and building codes.
- Identify any immediate safety issues or potential code violations in real-time.

3. AUDIT INITIATION

- **General Audits:** Each private provider or private provider firm may be audited up to four times per calendar year on either a scheduled or random basis, unless the local building official determines that a condition of the building constitutes an immediate threat to public safety and welfare.
- **Audits Initiated by Complaints:** Complaints regarding a Private Provider's



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performance can also trigger audits, which may focus on specific issues raised by the complainant.

- **Documentation Triggered Audits:** Audits may be initiated when permit records, inspection reports, affidavits, or related documents contain deficiencies, inconsistencies, omissions, or irregularities indicating potential noncompliance with the Florida Building Code.
- **Audits Initiated by Lack of Inspections:** Audits will be initiated when credible information indicates that mandatory code inspections are not being performed. Audits will not be used to duplicate inspections already properly performed by the private provider.
- **Public Safety:** A private provider or private provider firm may be audited more than four times per calendar if the Building Official determines there is an immediate threat to public health, safety, or welfare.

4. PRE-AUDIT PREPARATION

- **Audit Notification:** Written notification (via phone, email, or letter) shall be provided to the Private Provider before conducting an audit unless immediate safety concerns are present. The Department shall provide the private provider with a written notice no less than five (5) business days prior to conducting an audit.
- **Previous Audits Check:** The Department's Audit Tracking Log shall be reviewed to verify that the subject private provider or firm has not undergone more than four (4) audits during the current calendar year. If the annual audit cap has been reached, no additional audit shall proceed unless the Building Official issues a written finding determining that an immediate threat exists.

5. AUDIT PROCEDURE

- **Inspection Audit:**
 - A. Confirm proper preparation and submission of the Notice to the Building Official (NTBO).
 - B. Verify all Duly Authorized Representatives (DARs) maintain current licensure and are employed by Private Provider Firm.
 - C. Confirm the Private Provider and DARs perform only services within the scope of their licenses.
 - D. Ensure that all construction documents are current and bear the City DSD approval stamp.
 - E. Verify all required inspections were completed by the Private Provider and matched to actual construction progress.
 - F. Ensure required inspection reports include pass/fail results and are



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- submitted to the Building Official within four (4) business days.
- G. Verify inspection logs are current, accurate, and reflect ongoing construction progress.
- H. Confirm the Private Provider audits special inspector work and threshold inspection logs.
- I. Verify deficiency notices are posted at the jobsite and corrected items are reinspected before concealment.
- J. Confirm submission of the Certificate of Compliance to Building Official upon completion of all required inspections.
- **Plan Review Audit:**
 - A. Confirm submission of the NTBO for private provider plan review services.
 - B. Verify all DARs maintain current licensure and are employed by Private Provider Firm.
 - C. Confirm submission of signed and sealed compliance affidavits for plan review services.
 - D. Ensure required plan review affidavits were submitted for all applicable disciplines.
 - E. Confirm plan review services were performed within the authorized scope of licensure.
 - F. Verify construction documents reviewed by the private provider are stamped approved for code compliance.
 - G. Verify all applicable construction documents are signed and sealed by the design professional of record.
 - H. Verify a valid Private Providers certificate of insurance is on file.

6. AUDIT RESULTS AND REPORTING

- **Audit Report:** Within 10 business days of completing the audit, an audit report summarizing scope, findings of noncompliance, corrective action areas, and process improvement recommendations should be prepared. All references and observations will be clearly documented in the audit report.
- **Communication of Results:** Share the audit report with the Private Provider, providing them 10 business days to respond to all findings. If deficiencies are found, the Private Provider must submit a corrective action plan detailing resolution. Audit reports will be recorded under the PXA permit application, shared, and posted in the City of Fort Lauderdale's Accela Citizen Access Portal (ACA).
- **Corrective Actions:** Upon receipt of a corrective action plan, a follow-up audit or site visit may be scheduled to ensure compliance. Corrective



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action must be completed within a specified timeframe, and repeated or significant violations may be referred to DBPR for further review.

7. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD-KEEPING

- **Audit Log:** Maintain a comprehensive log of all audits, including results and corrective actions taken by Private Providers. Audit logs will be stored with the PXA permit application for future access through Laudershare.
- **Public Access:** Summaries of audit results from the previous two quarters should be available on the local building authority's website for transparency (compliance with FOIA/Public Records Requests).
- **Retention:** Audit records must be kept for a minimum of seven years, per Florida record retention laws.

8. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If a Private Provider disputes the findings of an audit, they may request a review by the local designated building official. The designated building official shall be available to meet with the private provider to resolve any dispute. The designated building official shall be available to meet with the private provider within 2 business days to resolve any dispute after issuing a stop-work order or providing notice to the applicant denying a permit or request for a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion. Further disputes can be escalated to administrative or legal channels (e.g., DBPR, FBPE).

9. COMPLIANCE WITH FLORIDA STATUTE

All audits must adhere to the requirements of Florida Statute 553.791.

10. REVIEW AND UPDATES

This SOP should be reviewed annually and updated to remain consistent with any changes in Florida regulations or local policies regarding Private Provider audits.