

By the Committee on Community Affairs; and Senator Perry

578-02662-21

20211382c1

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to building inspections; amending s.  
3       125.56, F.S.; requiring that certain counties allow  
4       requests for inspections to be submitted  
5       electronically; providing acceptable methods of  
6       electronic submission; amending s. 553.79, F.S.;  
7       requiring that local enforcement agencies allow  
8       requests for inspections to be submitted  
9       electronically; providing acceptable methods of  
10      electronic submission; authorizing enforcement  
11      agencies to perform virtual inspections; providing an  
12      exception; providing a definition; requiring a refund  
13      of certain fees in certain circumstances; requiring  
14      that certain surcharges be recalculated under certain  
15      conditions; amending ss. 440.103 and 553.80, F.S.;  
16      conforming cross-references; providing an effective  
17      date.

18  
19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

20  
21       Section 1. Paragraph (f) is added to subsection (4) of  
22       section 125.56, Florida Statutes, to read:

23       125.56 Enforcement and amendment of the Florida Building  
24       Code and the Florida Fire Prevention Code; inspection fees;  
25       inspectors; etc.—

26       (4)

27       (f) A county that issues building permits must allow  
28       requests for inspections to be submitted electronically to the  
29       county building department. Acceptable methods of electronic

578-02662-21

20211382c1

30 submission include, but are not limited to, e-mail or fill-in  
31 form available on the website of the building department or  
32 through a third-party submission management software or  
33 application that can be downloaded on a mobile device. Requests  
34 for inspections may be submitted in person in a nonelectronic  
35 format, at the discretion of the building official.

36 Section 2. Present subsections (6) through (22) of section  
37 553.79, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (8)  
38 through (24), respectively, paragraph (d) is added to subsection  
39 (1) of that section, new subsections (6) and (7) are added to  
40 that section, and subsection (2) of that section is amended, to  
41 read:

42 553.79 Permits; applications; issuance; inspections.—

43 (1)

44 (d) A local enforcement agency must allow requests for  
45 inspections to be submitted electronically to the local  
46 enforcement agency's appropriate building department. Acceptable  
47 methods of electronic submission include, but are not limited  
48 to, e-mail or fill-in form available on the website of the  
49 building department or through a third-party submission  
50 management software or application that can be downloaded on a  
51 mobile device. Requests for inspections may be submitted in  
52 person in a nonelectronic format, at the discretion of the  
53 building official.

54 (2) Except as provided in subsection (8) ~~subsection (6)~~, an  
55 enforcing agency may not issue any permit for construction,  
56 erection, alteration, modification, repair, or demolition of any  
57 building or structure until the local building code  
58 administrator or inspector has reviewed the plans and

578-02662-21

20211382c1

59 specifications required by the Florida Building Code, or local  
60 amendment thereto, for such proposal and found the plans to be  
61 in compliance with the Florida Building Code. If the local  
62 building code administrator or inspector finds that the plans  
63 are not in compliance with the Florida Building Code, the local  
64 building code administrator or inspector shall identify the  
65 specific plan features that do not comply with the applicable  
66 codes, identify the specific code chapters and sections upon  
67 which the finding is based, and provide this information to the  
68 local enforcing agency. The local enforcing agency shall provide  
69 this information to the permit applicant. In addition, an  
70 enforcing agency may not issue any permit for construction,  
71 erection, alteration, modification, repair, or demolition of any  
72 building until the appropriate firesafety inspector certified  
73 pursuant to s. 633.216 has reviewed the plans and specifications  
74 required by the Florida Building Code, or local amendment  
75 thereto, for such proposal and found that the plans comply with  
76 the Florida Fire Prevention Code and the Life Safety Code. Any  
77 building or structure which is not subject to a firesafety code  
78 shall not be required to have its plans reviewed by the  
79 firesafety inspector. Any building or structure that is exempt  
80 from the local building permit process may not be required to  
81 have its plans reviewed by the local building code  
82 administrator. Industrial construction on sites where design,  
83 construction, and firesafety are supervised by appropriate  
84 design and inspection professionals and which contain adequate  
85 in-house fire departments and rescue squads is exempt, subject  
86 to local government option, from review of plans and  
87 inspections, providing owners certify that applicable codes and

578-02662-21

20211382c1

88 standards have been met and supply appropriate approved drawings  
89 to local building and firesafety inspectors. The enforcing  
90 agency shall issue a permit to construct, erect, alter, modify,  
91 repair, or demolish any building or structure when the plans and  
92 specifications for such proposal comply with the Florida  
93 Building Code and the Florida Fire Prevention Code and the Life  
94 Safety Code as determined by the local authority in accordance  
95 with this chapter and chapter 633.

96 (6) A state or local enforcement agency may perform virtual  
97 inspections at the discretion of the enforcement agency.

98 However, a state or local enforcement agency may not perform  
99 virtual inspections for structural inspections on a threshold  
100 building. For purposes of this subsection, the term "virtual  
101 inspection" means a form of visual inspection which uses visual  
102 or electronic aids to allow a building code administrator or an  
103 inspector, or team of inspectors, to perform an inspection  
104 without having to be physically present at the job site during  
105 the inspection.

106 (7) (a) A local enforcement agency must refund 10 percent of  
107 the permit and inspection fees to a permit holder if:

108 1. The inspector or building code administrator determines  
109 that the work, which requires the permit, fails an inspection;  
110 and

111 2. The inspector or building code administrator fails to  
112 provide, within 3 business days after the inspection, the  
113 permit holder or his or her agent with a reason, based on  
114 compliance with the Florida Building Code, Florida Fire  
115 Prevention Code, or local ordinance, for why the work failed the  
116 inspection.

578-02662-21

20211382c1

117 (b) If any permit and inspection fees are refunded under  
118 paragraph (a), the surcharges provided in s. 553.721 must be  
119 recalculated based on the amount of the permit and inspection  
120 fees after the refund.

121 Section 3. Section 440.103, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
122 read:

123 440.103 Building permits; identification of minimum premium  
124 policy.—Every employer shall, as a condition to applying for and  
125 receiving a building permit, show proof and certify to the  
126 permit issuer that it has secured compensation for its employees  
127 under this chapter as provided in ss. 440.10 and 440.38. Such  
128 proof of compensation must be evidenced by a certificate of  
129 coverage issued by the carrier, a valid exemption certificate  
130 approved by the department, or a copy of the employer's  
131 authority to self-insure and shall be presented, electronically  
132 or physically, each time the employer applies for a building  
133 permit. As provided in s. 553.79(23) ~~s. 553.79(21)~~, for the  
134 purpose of inspection and record retention, site plans or  
135 building permits may be maintained at the worksite in the  
136 original form or in the form of an electronic copy. These plans  
137 and permits must be open to inspection by the building official  
138 or a duly authorized representative, as required by the Florida  
139 Building Code. As provided in s. 627.413(5), each certificate of  
140 coverage must show, on its face, whether or not coverage is  
141 secured under the minimum premium provisions of rules adopted by  
142 rating organizations licensed pursuant to s. 627.221. The words  
143 "minimum premium policy" or equivalent language shall be typed,  
144 printed, stamped, or legibly handwritten.

145 Section 4. Subsection (1) of section 553.80, Florida

578-02662-21

20211382c1

146 Statutes, is amended to read:

147 553.80 Enforcement.—

148 (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (a)-(g), each local  
149 government and each legally constituted enforcement district  
150 with statutory authority shall regulate building construction  
151 and, where authorized in the state agency's enabling  
152 legislation, each state agency shall enforce the Florida  
153 Building Code required by this part on all public or private  
154 buildings, structures, and facilities, unless such  
155 responsibility has been delegated to another unit of government  
156 under s. 553.79(11) ~~pursuant to s. 553.79(9)~~.

157 (a) Construction regulations relating to correctional  
158 facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of  
159 Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice are to be  
160 enforced exclusively by those departments.

161 (b) Construction regulations relating to elevator equipment  
162 under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Elevators of the  
163 Department of Business and Professional Regulation shall be  
164 enforced exclusively by that department.

165 (c) In addition to the requirements of s. 553.79 and this  
166 section, facilities subject to the provisions of chapter 395 and  
167 parts II and VIII of chapter 400 shall have facility plans  
168 reviewed and construction surveyed by the state agency  
169 authorized to do so under the requirements of chapter 395 and  
170 parts II and VIII of chapter 400 and the certification  
171 requirements of the Federal Government. Facilities subject to  
172 the provisions of part IV of chapter 400 may have facility plans  
173 reviewed and shall have construction surveyed by the state  
174 agency authorized to do so under the requirements of part IV of

578-02662-21

20211382c1

175 chapter 400 and the certification requirements of the Federal  
176 Government.

177 (d) Building plans approved under s. 553.77(3) and state-  
178 approved manufactured buildings, including buildings  
179 manufactured and assembled offsite and not intended for  
180 habitation, such as lawn storage buildings and storage sheds,  
181 are exempt from local code enforcing agency plan reviews except  
182 for provisions of the code relating to erection, assembly, or  
183 construction at the site. Erection, assembly, and construction  
184 at the site are subject to local permitting and inspections.  
185 Lawn storage buildings and storage sheds bearing the insignia of  
186 approval of the department are not subject to s. 553.842. Such  
187 buildings that do not exceed 400 square feet may be delivered  
188 and installed without need of a contractor's or specialty  
189 license.

190 (e) Construction regulations governing public schools,  
191 state universities, and Florida College System institutions  
192 shall be enforced as provided in subsection (6).

193 (f) The Florida Building Code as it pertains to toll  
194 collection facilities under the jurisdiction of the turnpike  
195 enterprise of the Department of Transportation shall be enforced  
196 exclusively by the turnpike enterprise.

197 (g) Construction regulations relating to secure mental  
198 health treatment facilities under the jurisdiction of the  
199 Department of Children and Families shall be enforced  
200 exclusively by the department in conjunction with the Agency for  
201 Health Care Administration's review authority under paragraph  
202 (c).

203

578-02662-21

20211382c1

204 The governing bodies of local governments may provide a schedule  
205 of fees, as authorized by s. 125.56(2) or s. 166.222 and this  
206 section, for the enforcement of the provisions of this part.  
207 Such fees shall be used solely for carrying out the local  
208 government's responsibilities in enforcing the Florida Building  
209 Code. The authority of state enforcing agencies to set fees for  
210 enforcement shall be derived from authority existing on July 1,  
211 1998. However, nothing contained in this subsection shall  
212 operate to limit such agencies from adjusting their fee schedule  
213 in conformance with existing authority.

214 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.