

## **Model Program for Online Services: Permitting, Plan Review and Remote Inspections**

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## Foreword

This document provides the code official with guidance on the administration and implementation of an online permitting, plan review and remote virtual inspection program. The guidance is based on recommended best practices and the advice of building officials, industry professionals and inspection agencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown orders have been a game changer that pushed many jurisdictions into implementing online and off-site programs. Online permitting first gained widespread use with many permitting software programs available; electronic plan review followed and has gained momentum with time savings being one of its primary advantages. Remote inspections have been used by a few jurisdictions for several years and have benefited areas such as reinspection, like-kind replacement and small repairs. These programs, although not common yet, have seen recent interest and are gaining traction.

Many authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ) found that remote programs easily fit into their policies, while others ran into challenges, including acceptance by staff and the construction industry. Particularly, inspecting buildings remotely was new to many in the industry, so adjustments were necessary to gain acceptance. Additional challenges included labor agreements, connectivity in the field, ensuring job site location and identifying suitable projects.

Due to the increased demand, existing software providers and other newer vendors expanded their offerings to include features such as remote inspections. Features of remote inspection software programs typically include scheduling, geographic information system (GIS) tagging, live video streaming, recording, photo downloads and other software-related items, including automatic real-time updates of inspection records.

Recognizing the need to support its member building departments across the United States and globally, the International Code Council® (ICC®) developed resources in response to the sudden impact on permit, plan review and inspection services. Early on, following the onset of the pandemic, the ICC dedicated a webpage to the topic—the Coronavirus Response Center—published documents, including the *Recommended Practices for Remote Virtual Inspections*, and provided several webinars dedicated to the topic. This model program guide is part of the ongoing effort to assist our members to provide the best-quality service.

### About This Model Program

ICC Model Program for Online Services: Permitting, Plan Review and Remote Virtual Inspections, designated as MPO for short (Model Program for Online Services).

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