Best Practices for Conducting Remote Video Inspections

First of all, this is not a requirement but merely a guideline for Remote Video Inspections. Each jurisdiction must decide when and if to use these inspections to help their department and their customer. It is not meant to cut down on personnel but only enhance the building department.

The building department must first decide if it will allow RVI’s and which inspections will be allowed. A policy outlining what the jurisdiction will allow would be excellent. I would suggest each project reviewed on a case by case basis at the plan review stage as to which inspections would be allowed for Remote Video Inspections. Each jurisdictions would have to determine also the format for viewing the inspection whether it be Gotomeeting, FaceTime, GoPro or another method. We may even see drone usage in the future.

The method of requesting inspections and the fees will need to be determined by the jurisdiction.

The process of conducting inspections will be up to the inspector whether they are on site or at the office, so communication is going to be important. At any point the Inspector may cancel the inspection due to poor lighting, insufficient communication or technical problems and the inability to do a thorough job. The inspection should be streamed live. First the applicant needs to show the address or space being inspected and the area to be reviewed. Without this verification the inspection will not be able to proceed. Plans are needed for the inspections to proceed and an approved set must be shown or a comparable set for the inspector at their office or in the field is needed to track the progress. After inspection is approved or disallowed an email should be sent to owner, person requesting inspection and into inspectors report.

Some inspections do not lend themselves to RVI’s such as footings, finals, life safety and elevators and thus I would not allow. While others could save time and effort such as replacements roof top units, hot water heaters, furnaces. Others that could be done are rated walls systems, roofs and re-inspection of minor items.

These inspections are designed to help contractors and home owners as well as trim time off of inspectors. The inspections should be discretionary and not discriminatory, but a contractor that continually is not ready or poorly done will be less likely to be allowed to use this process.