



**AAC Certification of Independent Inspection Agencies**

**Proposal:**

Section 1 authorizes DAS to establish an application program to certify independent inspection firms. The program will establish and maintain minimum qualifications, administrative guidelines and procedures to ensure that all inspections or reviews conducted by independent inspection firms are at the highest professional level, and to ensure a process for verification and auditing of the independent inspection firms.

Section 2 of this bill will revise CGS 29-195 to allow inspections of elevators to be performed by the independent firms certified under this program.

**Need:**

- Most local building departments are both under-staffed and overloaded with projects. Limited staffing causes delays in scheduling inspections, creating delays in productivity for contractors. DAS continues to hear more and more of lengthy delays in scheduling inspections, especially in the mechanical and electrical trades.
- Limited staffing does not allow building departments the necessary time to perform thorough inspections.
- Smaller municipal departments do not have the volume of work necessary to justify hiring trade-specific inspectors for all trades.
- An unregulated market already exists to provide plan review and inspection consulting services. This program would provide minimum standards, oversight and audit functions to this market, to improve its performance and insure the reliability of the independent firm's product.
- The majority of building inspectors nationwide have reached retirement age, threatening to further exacerbate the shortage of licensed inspectors in the next three to five years.

**Benefits:**

- Allows contractors and building owners to prosecute work more efficiently with increased schedule certainty creating cost savings and aiding the development and construction market.
- Allows a local department to leverage limited resources with outside resources to provide more, and more timely, reviews and inspections improving overall public safety.
- Will free local department resources to improve customer relations with homeowners and focus on problem projects/contractors improving the taxpayer's service experience.

- Provides consistency and baseline quality standard for inspection firms vs. the current unregulated inspection market place.

### **Implementation Process:**

DAS intends to use the District of Columbia program as a model, modifying it as needed to meet Connecticut's unique marketplace. Similar to the current code development process, DAS intends to engage stakeholders in the development process early on to insure the program will function well for all parties.

### **Proposed Language:**

Sec. 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

(a) The State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee acting jointly, with the approval of the Commissioner of Administrative Services, shall establish a program to certify independent inspection firms to perform code inspections for submission to the local building official. The program shall establish classifications of inspection firms, the duties and responsibilities of each inspection firm at each such classification level, including the insurance requirements and the minimum qualifications of inspection firms at each such classification level. It shall establish an oversight and audit program administered by the State Building Inspector to insure the consistency and quality of a certified inspection firm's work product. The State Building Inspector may charge any person a reasonable fee for applying for certification. The commissioner may waive any such fee for any person who applies, in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, for a waiver of such fee and demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay such fee.

(b) The State Building Inspector, with the approval of the Commissioner of Administrative Services, shall establish a program to certify independent inspectors to perform elevator or escalator inspections for submission to the Department of Administrative Services. The program shall establish classifications of inspectors, the duties and responsibilities of each inspectors at each such classification level, including the insurance requirements and the minimum qualifications of inspectors at each classification level. It shall establish an oversight and audit program to insure the consistency and quality of a certified inspection firm's work product. The commissioner may charge any person a reasonable fee for applying for certification. The commissioner may waive any such fee for any person who applies, in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, for a waiver of such fee and demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay such fee.

Sec. 2. Section 29-195 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

Each elevator or escalator shall be thoroughly inspected by a department elevator inspector **or an inspector certified by the department pursuant to subsection (b) of section 1 of this act** at least once each eighteen months, except elevators located in private residences shall be inspected upon the request of the owner. More frequent inspections of any elevator or escalator shall be made if the condition thereof indicates that additional inspections are necessary or desirable.