



MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

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Why would the City use a VOC?

VOCs provide an opportunity to Safety Codes Officers to still verify that corrections were made but without the costs of exposing covered work. This improves efficiency for the city and provides better customer service to the applicant

Who can sign off?

Any third-party person with firsthand knowledge whether the deficiency was corrected

Who initiates?

A Safety Codes Officer

Why isn't it used all the time?

A VOC is a tool to deal with project oversights or to allow a project to continue with minimal delays over minor issues. Depending on the level of safety risk of the deficiency, a VOC may not be appropriate and a site inspection to ensure the corrections were done properly is the preferred option

What are the criteria?

A deficiency has been previously identified (not to be used in lieu of an inspection or if the minimum number of site inspections hasn't been done) and the SCO believes there are minimal safety risks with the identified deficiencies.

What are some examples of typical VOC deficiencies?

Hangers on a gasline, vent terminations not as per manual, pipe grade and bedding, additional vent required, relief valve not piped to within 12" of the floor, etc.

What happens if it isn't returned?

The SCO will follow up with the permit holder or owner within 30 days. If this doesn't provide results, a SCO Order may be issued.

Why would one SCO accept a VOC and another would not for the identical deficiency?

If the minimum required site visits haven't been met on one of the jobs. It would also depend on the past performance of the contractor or the perceived knowledge and skill level of the homeowner. The SCO's comfort level with the contractor and the SCO's level of risk tolerance would also be considerations.

What won't be included on a VOC?

Life safety or imminent danger deficiencies. Complex issues that may not be reasonably understood as being corrected by an independent third party

Where does it go?

Attached electronically to the permit

Can the SCO reject the signed VOC returned to him?

Yes, there may be new information or issues that have come up since the VOC was originally issued that escalate the job risk to a point where on-site re-inspections are required. Also, if he has good cause to believe the deficiencies weren't corrected.

Why are some people allowed to sign a VOC and not others?

Confidence based on past performance. It also depends on the type of job and deficiency with the relative risk of failure and frequency/consequence being significant.

Are there consequences to falsely signing a VOC?

Yes, contractors have already been charged and fined with 'Knowingly providing false Verification Statements'. The amount of fine imposed depends on mitigating factors which include frequency of offence, scope of work and level of potential safety risk. Depending on whether an accident occurred because of the deficiency and its severity, a contractor could be charged criminally as well.



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