



***AGENCY PRACTICES  
BURN BUILDING GRANT ADMINISTRATION***

***FIRE SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM***

Grant Awards to Construct or Repair Burn Buildings  
throughout the Commonwealth

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS  
Attn: Burn Building Grants Administration**

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# AGENCY PRACTICES – BURN BUILDING GRANT ADMINISTRATION

## A.) PURPOSE & PROCEDURE

In accordance with §38.2-401-D of the *Code of Virginia*, the Fire Service Grant Program was established to provide defined grants to Virginia localities seeking to construct, renovate, or repair burn buildings. The term burn building refers to an unoccupied structure specifically constructed for the purpose of providing live fire training to fire service personnel in support of Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II Training throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia per the NFPA 1001 & 1403 training standards.

The Burn Building Grant Program is a matching/cost sharing program. The percentage of match/cost share is relative to the size of the capital project the locality intends to construct; however, the purpose of the Burn Building Grant Program is to provide funding to localities for the construction, renovation, or repair of the burn building structure only.

## B.) GENERAL OVERVIEW

Grant disbursements to eligible jurisdictions for burn building construction, renovation, or repairs are administered by the *Virginia Department of Fire Programs*, VDFP, (“the Agency”) from the Commonwealth’s *Fire Programs Fund* as provided for in the *Code of Virginia* (§38.2-401:D) and consistent with policy guidance provided by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*, VFSB, (“the Board”) as set forth within this document. All grants to construct or renovate burn buildings shall be approved by the *Virginia Fire Services Board*. All grants to repair burn buildings shall be approved by the Department of Fire Programs as directed in this document.

## C.) CODE OF VIRGINIA CITATION

- 1) §38.2-401 and §9.1-203 of the *Code of Virginia* as amended – “Fire Programs Fund,” is incorporated herein by reference.
- 2) *The Virginia Administrative Code*:
  - 19VAC15-40-10. Fire Related Training
  - 19VAC15-40-90. Good cause Prohibition of Local Training Appeal
  - 19VAC15-40-100. Fire Training Center

## D.) PRECEDENTS OF LAW & DISCLAIMER

Nothing contained within this document shall or be construed to supersede the applicable laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In the event of a conflict the applicable law shall supersede the conflicting provision of this policy statement.

## E.) DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Engineering/Architect (E/A) Fees** – The Registered Design Professional in responsible charge of the E/A firm’s work must be registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Grant awards for construction (non-repair) projects may also include up to \$30,000<sup>00</sup> in additional monies for E/A fees and expenses. These fees and expenses shall include adapting the approved model

structure design to the selected site, featuring contract drawings and specifications, and providing limited construction services, including:

- ◆ Product submittal and Shop drawing review,
- ◆ Up to six (6) site visits, and
- ◆ Responses to Requests for Information from Contractors

**Note** ☞ The Agency, as it deems necessary & useful, may retain under contract one or more E/A firms to assist the Agency, and through the Agency the Board, in making determinations as to the need, amount, and other related matters concerning the award of grants. Nevertheless, the grant recipient/holder of title to the property shall be free to select any otherwise qualified E/A of their choosing.

**Burn Building** – A permanent structure whose sole use from ‘point of initial construction’ is for the purpose of training firefighters in a ‘live flame’ experience scenario.

Such scenario, generally accomplished by the supervised deliberate setting of a fire or establishment of a dense smoke environment within the structure to practice fire suppression and other allied fire attack skills. *As such, the structure is not intended to be used as an occupied dwelling.*

*Burn Building Construction Project – A project to construct a new or replacement burn building. Construction projects are approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board in accordance with this Policy.*

*Burn Building Renovation/Addition Project \_ - A project to renovate an existing burn building; add an addition to an existing burn building; conduct repairs or renovations that involve structural components of the burn building; or conduct repairs that exceed the funding authorized for a Burn Building Repair Project. Renovation Projects are approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board in accordance with this Policy.*

*Burn Building Repair Project – A project to conduct a repair to an existing burn building that does not exceed \$10,000. Projects allowed in this category include: Temperature monitoring equipment repairs; thermal lining tile repair and replacement; sacrificial block wall replacements (concrete masonry unit walls), fire brick; minor, non-structural, spalled concrete repair; door/window repairs; or similar repairs. Projects that involve repairs to structural components and/or projects that exceed \$10,000 are not eligible to be funded as a Repair Project. Cosmetic work such as painting and cleaning are not eligible to be funded as a burn building repair project. Repair Projects that meet the scope and intent of this policy are approved by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in accordance with this policy.*

**Eligible Jurisdiction** – Localities within the Commonwealth of Virginia otherwise eligible (§38.2-401 et al) to receive *Aid to Localities* as an annual allocation from the *Fire Programs Fund*; nominally the several **Counties, Independent Cities, and incorporated Towns** within those counties; herein also referred to simply as *Jurisdiction* or *Locality*.

**Lead Locality** – In the event that an award is to be made for a Burn Building serving more than one eligible jurisdiction, then that consortium of eligible jurisdictions shall identify one of their own to serve as the agent for all; such agency shall include the intake and custody of grant funds, the filing of reports, and all administrative interface with the Agency. Therefore, the lead locality shall likewise both:

- Make application on behalf of all parties involved; and
- Enter into and be solely answerable for contractual arrangements.

**Spending Plan** – That document originally promulgated by the Board effective February 9, 2001; as last revised or updated by that Body. Such plan listing the name of the jurisdiction, the amount of any grant award (burn building) so scheduled, and the effective date of that scheduled award.

**Virginia Department of Fire Programs** – An agency of the state government of the Commonwealth of Virginia – Executive Branch; herein also referred to as *VDFP* or *Agency*.

**Virginia Fire Services Board** – A policy board responsible for promoting the coordination of the efforts of fire service organizations at the state and local levels; herein referred to as *VFSB* or *Board*.

## F.) DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

1. Disbursements from the VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM for burn buildings are made as a grant to a specified jurisdiction or a lead locality – one acting on behalf of multiple eligible jurisdictions. Consistent with other provisions of this document, payments are not made until the completion by/or through that locality of an instrument contractually binding the locality to adhere to the terms and conditions of the grant. The jurisdiction's Chief Operating Officer – i.e, City Manager, County Administrator, or Town Chief Operating Officer – shall, acting as the jurisdiction's exclusive agent, execute such an agreement/contract where periodic withdrawals are made at various intervals as specified in the contract. (Disbursements are never made to individual Fire Departments.)
2. The following pertains to the receipt of monies by eligible jurisdictions:
  - a) Payments of any grant will be provided solely through an electronic transfer of funds to a banking institution.
  - b) Transfer amounts –
    - i. New Construction – Payments will be made at five (5) benchmarks: The payment for Engineering/Architect fees is at the completion of that work; the first 25% of the grant award is payable upon issue of the building permit; the remaining 3 installments of 25% each shall be issued upon completion of 50%, 75%, and 100% of the work. The payments will be issued after receipt of a certificate of completion of each stage by the registered design professional (RDP) in responsible charge of the E/A firm's work. Final disbursement at 100% will be made after a final walk-through is made by VDFP staff during which time a live burn scenario has been successfully completed and witnessed by VDFP personnel. All burn building project deficiencies will be communicated to the lead jurisdiction point of contact and must be resolved before final disbursement will be authorized.
    - ii. Renovations – Payments will be made in up to two (2) payments on a reimbursement basis as determined by the Agency for the total amount approved by the Board. Payment of more than an approved amount will not be made without consent of the Board.
    - iii. Repairs – Payments for repair projects completed in accordance with the approved application package will be authorized by the Department of Fire Programs upon completion of the repair project, and made in one reimbursement payment.
  - c) All funds **must** be deposited into an **interest-bearing account** of normal risk and with a demand restriction, if any, not exceeding 30-calendar days. (Monies may not be deposited into *Certificates of Deposit* or any other such instrument(s) which substantially hinder liquidity.)

- d) Any interest earned by funds so deposited may be utilized by the eligible jurisdiction in the construction or renovation of their Burn Building. The eligible jurisdiction shall be fully accountable for **BOTH** the *Principle* and the *Interest*.
3. **Use of Funds** – Grant funds may not be used for anything other than Burn Building construction or renovation as specified in the contract between parties. Grant funds may only be used for the construction/erection, renovation, or repair of the burn building, and direct-related costs to the construction/erection, renovation, or repair within 15 feet of the burn building including E/A costs.

Grant funds will not be approved for any civil engineering site plan implementation or any other ancillary costs assumed as overhead or ordinary cost of managing a capital project. Examples of site plan implementation, or ordinary costs of managing a capital project include but are not limited to site clearing, grubbing, excavation with the exception of the foundation, back filling with the exception of the foundation, seeding, fencing, or any other form of site restoration, site surveys, site layouts, water testing, soil testing, water run-off analysis, air quality analysis, access roads, paving/graveling, easement or land lease costs, running lines or conduit for electrical supply or water source, bonding for contractors or jurisdictions, or any other overhead expense that is not directly related to the construction/erection, renovation, or repair of the burn building.

Grant funds may not be used for routine maintenance or operations costs for new or existing burn buildings.

4. Grants shall be made upon availability of funds consistent with the then current 'spending plan'/'burn building schedule' as adopted from time-to-time by the Board.
5. Repairs shall be evaluated by the Agency in the order in which they are received, and if a request for funds meets the requirements then it shall be funded up to \$10,000 or the remainder of the funds in the account if less than \$10,000.

## **G.) GRANT APPLICATION**

**Any eligible jurisdiction may make application at any time during the calendar year for a Burn Building grant by completing and filing the prescribed form. Grant applications should be sent directly to:**

**Grants and Local Aid Manager  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs  
Attn: Burn Building Grant Administration  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500**

**The filing of an otherwise completed grant application by an eligible jurisdiction in no way binds the Agency to disburse any FIRE PROGRAMS FUND monies, including a Burn Building grant, to that locality.**

The determination of eligibility, and that of any potential amount or other conditions shall be consistent solely with guidance and practices contained within this or any successor document.

## **H.) GRANT AWARD**

1. Construction and Renovation Projects – Grants for the Construction of new Burn Buildings and for the renovation of existing burn buildings are made by the Virginia Fire Services Board in accordance with this policy based upon the needs of the Commonwealth's Fire Service and the availability of funds.
2. Repair Projects – Grants for the repair of existing burn buildings are reviewed by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Those proposed projects that meet the scope and intent of this policy may be awarded by the Department of Fire Programs based upon the guidelines in this policy and the availability of funding. Those proposed projects that the Department believes does not meet the scope or intent of this policy will be forwarded to the Virginia Fire Services Board for review and final action.
3. Grant recipients will be provided with one electronic set of construction drawings and the project manual for burn building prototypes at no charge. Current versions of the VFSA Burn Building Policy document and the VDFP Agency Practices document are available online at [www.vafire.com](http://www.vafire.com).

## **I.) GRANT AWARD NOTIFICATION**

The Agency shall notify the jurisdiction of the award of such grant consistent with the provisions of the SPENDING PLAN then in-force and upon receipt by the Agency of both the information as outlined in the standard application blank and a properly executed agreement (in duplicate). All award notifications shall clearly enumerate the...

- 'Name' of the payee – locality receiving grant moneys
- Total amount of the award
- Effective date of that award
- Closing/end-date of that award

If any jurisdiction shall not have submitted the required documentation within forty-five (45) calendar days of reaching their scheduled eligibility, then the Agency shall notify the Board Chairman of this circumstance.

The Agency shall take such administrative actions as to assure up-to-date information regarding any jurisdiction's principal point of contact /and/ necessary notifications including informal telephony and Internet e-mail advice, to assure the proper administration of all such grants and corresponding awards

## **J.) TERM OF GRANT**

For new construction, the grant term shall not exceed twenty-four (24) months from the date of award notification without approval from the Agency and/or the Virginia Fire Services Board. The grant recipient shall have up to twelve (12) months from the date of award notification to provide to the Agency a valid building permit. The grant recipient shall have up to (an additional) twelve (12) months to complete the construction project.

For renovations or repairs, the grant term shall not exceed twelve (12) months from the date of award notification without approval from the Agency and/or the Virginia Fire Services Board.

During the grant term, all repair and construction work is to be completed and all documentation pertaining to such activities shall be submitted to the Agency in a timely manner. Additionally, within 30-calendar days after the conclusion of the grant term, all unexpended funds – including any interest accrual remaining – shall be returned to the Agency.

1. Return of Unexpended Funds by Check: **Funds being returned to the Agency via a check:**
  - **Must be made payable to the *Treasurer of Virginia*, and**
  - **Forwarded to the attention of the Agency at the address specified in [G] above. (Funds are NOT to be sent directly to the Treasurer's Office or any other State agency.)**
2. **Direct Deposit:** Funds may also be returned to the Agency via electronic transfer as may be provided for within the contractual agreement among parties.

## **K.) EXTENSIONS**

An extension of up to 90-days may be granted by THE AGENCY. All requests for extension must be received by the Agency not less than 30-calendar days **prior** to the scheduled termination of the original grant period. Such requests must list the compelling reason(s) for extension and/or circumstance(s) that prevent project completion by the end of the initial grant period. Extension requests for any period of time greater than 90-days will need to be addressed by the Virginia Fire Services Board for approval; such should always be directed to the Agency's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, at the same address as listed in [G] above; the Agency shall be responsible for the timely transmittal to Board members.

## **L.) MAXIMUM AMOUNT**

1. There shall be a cap on the maximum amount of funds to be awarded in any single grant for either totally new or the replacement of an existing Burn Building; the current cap is \$400,000.00. An additional amount up to \$30,000.00 shall be available to offset E/A costs pertaining to site adaptation.
2. The maximum amount of funds to be awarded for any renovation project will be set by the Virginia Fire Services Board, but in no case will it exceed the cap that can be awarded for a new or replacement building.
3. The maximum amount of a repair project award shall not exceed \$10,000 per project and no burn building will be funded over \$10,000 per fiscal period (July 1 – June 30).
4. For renovation and repair project awards, if the burn building exceeds the base Prototype model, applications must include conceptual plans/design plans with the total square footage of the burn building and the number of burn rooms per floor. The award will be based on square footage of the burn building and number of burn rooms compared to the base Prototype model. (i.e. If the total existing burn building square footage is 3,000 and the base prototype model square footage is 1,200, the award will be capped at 40% of the total estimated cost; or if the existing burn building has more than 2 burn rooms, the award will be based on the minimum requirements of 2 burn rooms.)

## **M.) AWARD DISBURSEMENTS**

For all **construction** grants, disbursements of awards shall be made as follows:

- Payments will be made at five (5) benchmarks: The payment for Architect/Engineering fees is at the completion of that work; the first 25% of the grant award is payable upon issue of the building permit; the remaining 3 installments of 25% each shall be issued upon completion of 50%, 75%, and 100% of the work. The payments will be issued after receipt of a certificate of completion of each stage by a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For all **renovation** grants disbursements of awards shall be made as follows:

- Once subject monies are otherwise available for disbursement and notification of an award has been made – see sub-section [ J ] of this practice, then:
  - Payments will be made in up to two (2) payments as determined by the Agency for the total amount approved by the Board. Payment of more than an approved amount will not be made without the consent of the Board.

For all **repair** grants disbursements of awards shall be made as follows:

- Once subject monies are otherwise available for disbursement and notification of an award has been made – see sub-section [ J ] of this practice, then:
  - Payments for repair projects completed in accordance with the approved application package will be authorized by the Department of Fire Programs upon completion of the repair project.

In the event of *documented extenuating circumstance*, the Agency may, at its discretion, transfer all or part of the award (repair) to the jurisdiction in advance of fifty (50%) of work being completed & paid for. In applying this provision the Agency shall endeavor to treat all jurisdictions equally whenever the Agency may determine the same or substantially similar circumstance exists.

All awards – construction, renovation & repair alike, are made on the basis of a total amount both ‘*up to*’ and ‘*not to exceed*’; in this the grant recipient shall only collect those moneys equaling the total amount actually paid but not exceeding the total amount of the award.

**Retroactivity** – If a locality slated for a future grant proceeds with repairs or construction in advance of any such award, the grant shall then be later awarded – in full up to the amount actually so expended by the jurisdiction, provided that the construction or repair work meets all other requirements of this program.

## **N.) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Localities shall provide progress reports to VDFP every ninety (90) days until their project is completed. The foregoing measured from the date of the transfer of funds to the eligible jurisdiction. Reports shall be made to the Grants and Local Aid Manager. (Information contained within such reports shall be made available by the Agency to the members of the Virginia Fire Services Board.)

## **O.) INSURANCE**

No person or entity shall commence construction or repair work, unless and until such person or entity has obtained all insurance required by the “Virginia Fire Services Grant Fund Agreement” from insurers licensed to provide such insurance in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These types of insurance must be maintained at all times when any construction or repair work is being performed. Before any such work commences, the locality shall submit to VDFP a Certificate of Coverage or Certificate of Insurance evidencing that the required insurance coverage is in effect for the appropriate entities, including coverage for subcontractors. The locality must be named as an additional insured party for certain types of insurance as specified in the “Virginia Fire Services Grant Fund Agreement”.

## P.) AUTHORIZATION FOR RENOVATIONS

The Agency shall authorize repair work as identified by the jurisdiction within their application. The foregoing authorization upon verification by a licensed Engineer duly authorized to conduct business in Virginia as to scope of need. The cost of such survey may be part of any total grant. Localities making application for a grant for repairs to their Burn Building and choosing to obtain an Engineer's review in advance of submission, may therefore include the eventual reimbursement for this cost as part of their total grant request.

## Q.) FULL CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for any grant award to construct a new or replacement burn building the recipient shall agree to expend such funds to construct one of the Agency's prototypes from the specifications provided by the Agency for either:

- Prototype I for Class A fuels
- Prototype I for Class B fuels
- Prototype II for Class A fuels
- Prototype II for Class B fuels

...where Prototype I is defined as a concrete structure and Prototype II is defined as a premanufactured steel structure.

-or-

- A stand-alone burn building or other structure whose burn building part shall meet the basic requirements of the outline/performance specifications provided in Prototype I for Class A fuels, Prototype I for Class B fuels, Prototype II for Class A fuels, or Prototype II for Class B fuels. If building plans deviate from or have been modified/enhanced from the basic requirements of the above referenced Prototypes, the applicant must define the building concept and include proposed plans with their application. All modifications to proposed and approved building plans must be submitted to the Agency for review and approval in writing prior to commencement of construction.
- From the time such new construction or said repair is authorized to begin, the lead locality shall have one (1) year to begin and one additional year to complete the actual construction. Should they fail to meet this deadline (Section I) or request an extension (Section J), the award will expire and the application shall be resubmitted.

## R.) OWNERSHIP OF SITE

1. **NEW CONSTRUCTION:** It is required that the eligible jurisdiction or other governmental entity own the site (land) and not be subject to any restriction or limitation that would prohibit or impair the use of the property as a burn building. On a case-by-case basis, the VFSB may consider a long-term lease. The length of the lease shall be consistent with the expected life of the building.
2. **RENOVATIONS:** It is strongly recommended that the eligible jurisdiction or other governmental entity own the site (land) and not be subject to any restriction or limitation that would prohibit or impair the use of the property as a burn building. On a case-by-case basis, the VFSB may consider a long-term lease. The length of the lease shall be consistent with the expected life of the building.

## **S.) BURDON OF PROOF & LIABILITY TO AUDIT**

It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to maintain all necessary fiscal records. Such records are subject to audit by this Agency or its assignees, for a period of not less than five (5) years following the date of the last transfer of award moneys to the grant recipient.

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