DATE: August 8, 2014  

TO: Associates and Coworkers  

FROM: Elaine B. Gall, P.E.  
University Building Official  

SUBJECT: Fire Safety Shop Drawing Procedures  
2012 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC)  

This is to clarify and further enhance submittal procedures for fire alarm and automatic fire sprinkler shop drawings. Several projects have come to our attention recently for which fire and life safety systems are not only commenced, but in some cases fully installed with inspections requested without the benefit of plan submittal for review and approval. This is not an acceptable practice.

1. To avoid unnecessary delays in construction projects, it is important that sprinkler and fire alarm system subcontractors be reminded as early as possible of the requirement to have shop drawings reviewed and approved prior to commencement of system installation. (VUSBC Section 109.1)

2. Please keep in mind that fire alarm and automatic sprinkler systems are critical life safety systems. Often many code tradeoffs have been taken based on the assumption that we have compliant and fully operational systems. Like other MEP trades, plans must be submitted, reviewed and approved prior to installation.

3. Building Permits for projects having such systems now include language to reinforce that installation of life safety systems shall not begin until shop drawings are approved by OUBO. Installation of such systems without approved drawings will result in a stop work order for these life safety system sub-contractors in the same manner as would be issued for other sub-contractors performing work without approvals in place.

4. Note that there are some small projects for which shop drawing review is not necessary if the A/E performs the design for these limited scope projects. A/Es often have default notes on their drawings that require the sub-contractor to submit shop drawings but it is sometimes not needed for small projects. Watch for opportunities to have the A/E eliminate this unnecessary step if you have a project of limited scope.