

Frequently asked questions to become licensed as a Residential Home Inspector

In accordance with S.C. Code of Laws Section 8-29-10 and a SC Attorney General Opinion dated March 3, 2014, DACA status recipients are not eligible to receive a professional license in South Carolina.

Q. How can I obtain an application to become licensed as a Residential Home Inspector in the State of South Carolina?

A. Go to the Residential Builders website at <https://lir.sc.gov/res/> and click on **Apply For A License**, then click on the **Home Inspector Application and List** link and print the application form please go to <https://lir.sc.gov/res/PDF/RBI%20Course%20Provider%20List.pdf> for a list of the approved course providers, or contact the Residential Builders Commission at 803-896-4696 and request that an application form be mailed to you. You may also apply electronically by going to the Online Electronic Applications section. Under this section you will need to download the applications under step 1 then click on the link under step 2 to complete the application. South Carolina uses the ASHI Standards of Practice <https://www.homeinspector.org/Resources/Standard-of-Practice> .

Pursuant to S.C. Reg. 106–4(A), to be licensed as a home inspector **without examination**, the applicant must show to the satisfaction of the Commission that he or she is currently certified or licensed as a building or home inspector after written examination by an organization or other entity approved by the commission:

and

1. Has a minimum of one year of experience as a home inspector under the direction and direct supervision of a licensed home inspector, residential builder, general contractor, engineer, or architect;
- or
2. Has performed a minimum of fifty residential inspections, as evidenced by the name, address, telephone number, and summary page of each inspection being submitted for review.

Pursuant to S.C. Reg. 106–4(B), to be licensed as a home inspector **by examination**, the applicant must show to the satisfaction of the Commission that he or she:

1. Has a minimum of one year of experience as a home inspector under the direction and direct supervision of a licensed home inspector, residential builder, general contractor, engineer, or architect;
- or
2. Has successfully completed formal course of training or study in home inspection approved by the Commission. Course completion certificates are valid for three (3) years.

The commission has approved courses with a minimum of 120 hours (one 120 hour course, not multiple courses that add up to 120 hours). The course providers list may be found here <https://lir.sc.gov/res/PDF/RBI%20Course%20Provider%20List.pdf> , they may offer multiple course, we only accept the 120 or more hour course.

To qualify for 106-4(A) above you must be currently licensed, for a minimum of 1 year as a home inspector in good standing, by examination in another state by their state examination. You will still be required to take and pass our Business Management and Law Exam. We do not accept home inspection course examinations or state home inspector registrations.

Q. Once I have a SC Residential Home Inspector Application, what is my next step?

A. Submit the completed application form to the Commission and a \$80.00 application processing fee (certified check or money order) made payable to LLR- Residential Builders Commission along with copies of W-2s, 1099s, transcripts, certifications, photos, to support your proof of home inspection experience or successful completion of a formal training course (see list of approved course providers within our application) in home inspection.

Once the application has been received, the affidavit of one year of work experience will be sent to the individual(s) you listed on your application as your previous supervisor(s), if you are seeking licensure based upon minimum one year of supervised experience. Your supervisor is required to fill in the affidavit and mail the completed form to the Commission. Whomever you designate as supervisor must be a licensed home inspector, residential builder, general contractor, engineer or architect. The experience must have been gained within the preceding five (5) years of application.

Q. Can I share with license with my partner?

A. No, each person doing the work is required to apply for and be issued their own license.

Q. Does the one (1) year of experience and home inspection reports need to have occurred within SC?

A. No, it can be from any state or country.

Q. What if I do not have W2s or 1099s as I apprenticed under a licensed home inspector and did not receive pay?

A. If you do not have W2s or 1099s a Commission appearance will be required for experience review.

Q. What if I don't have a copy of my Social Security Card or State issued ID?

A. Your application will not be processed until you submit a photocopy of your Social Security Card and a photocopy of your State issued ID. To order a replacement social security card, please go to <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/replacement-card.html> .

The reason why we ask for the social security card is because state law requires we do so for child support enforcement purposes. Once we receive a copy of your social security card, we match it with the number on the application, and then we shred it. Similarly, we use the name on the driver's license to match the application to ensure that the person who applies for the registration can verify they are who they say they are.

I've cut and paste the statute below for your review:

SECTION 63-17-1080. Social Security numbers to be provided.

An applicant for a license or for renewal of a license shall submit the applicant's social security number, or the alien identification number assigned to a resident alien who does not have a social security number, to the licensing entity which must be recorded on the application.

Since this information is required by law, we are unable to process your application without it. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Q. If I plan to operate under a company name, do I need to notify LLR?

A. Yes, you need to submit a request to add your company name to your license along with your Certificate of Existence/Authority from the SC SOS office, Articles of Organization from the SC SOS office, or Proof of Ownership for the company. The link to the SC Secretary of State can be found at <https://sos.sc.gov/online-filings/business-entities/file-and-search-online>. You may also find useful information at the South Carolina Business One Stop link <https://scbos.sc.gov/>.

Q. Am I required to list a company name on my license?

A. No. We license the individual, not the company. We allow the licensee to list a company name if they intend to operate under a company name. If you intend to operate under a company name, then that company name must be affiliated with your license in our database.

Q. How do I list my company name on my home inspector's license?

A. You must own a minimum 51% of the company in order to list it on your license. You will be required to provide the Commission with a photocopy of your Certificate of Existence/Authorization from the SC Secretary of State as well as Articles of Incorporation and documentation establishing percentage of ownership. The link to the SC Secretary of State can be found at <https://sos.sc.gov/online-filings/business-entities/file-and-search-online>. You may also find useful information at the South Carolina Business One Stop link <https://scbos.sc.gov/>.

Q. If I need the Certificate of Authorization where do I find the application, and what are the requirements?

A. The application can be found on the Commission website at <https://llr.sc.gov/res/PDF/Certificate%20of%20Authorization.pdf>. The certificate of authorization is a company license and requires that a resident licensee be in responsible charge of any residential home inspecting services that the company offers.

Q. How long will it take to process Residential Home Inspectors application?

A. All applications will be reviewed by the Commission staff for accuracy and completeness within fifteen (15) business days. After this period of time, you can check the status of your application online at <https://eservice.llr.sc.gov/SSO/Login/LoginPage?ReturnUrl=%2fOnlineStatusCheck%2f> by entering the requested information. Any application that is incomplete, that does not provide the social security number, or that provides an incorrect social security number **will** be returned to the applicant. If additional information is requested, please allow fifteen (15) business days to process the new information once it has been received by the Commission. There are currently four (4) application processors for the entire state of SC and all paperwork is processed in the order in which it is received. Applications are valid for one year from the date of receipt. If your license is not issued within one year of receipt of the application, you will be required to reapply and repay the fees.

Q. Once my Residential Home Inspectors application is approved, what do I do next?

A. If you are applying for licensure *without examination*, only the technical portion of the exam is waived and you will still be required to take and pass the SC Business Management and Law portion of the exam. Once your application is approved by the Commission, staff will email/mail you an Examination Eligibility Letter.

If you are applying for licensure *by examination*, you must pass both the Residential Home Inspector and the Business Management and Law Exam portions of the exam. Once your application has been approved by the Commission, staff will email/mail you an Examination Eligibility Letter.

Your Examination Eligibility is valid for one year and you are allowed only three (3) attempts to pass within a twelve (12) month period. If you do not pass the exam within the twelve (12) month period, you will be required to reapply. If you fail the exam three (3) times, you will be required to wait twelve (12) months from the last date you failed the exam before you will be authorized to take the exam again.

Q. Do I schedule my Residential Home Inspectors Exam and Business Management and Law Exam with LLR?

A. No. The Residential Home Inspectors and the Business Management and Law Exam are administered by PSI Examination Services (PSI) and every approved applicant will schedule his/her own exam and make payment (by certified check or money order) to PSI Examination Services. You may visit the PSI web site at www.psiexams.com for more information on their fees, books, and exam services.

Q. Can I obtain a SC Residential Home Inspectors License if I am licensed in another state without having to take the SC exam?

A. The Commission does not have an exam waiver agreement with any other state for a home inspectors license. Therefore, if you seek licensure without examination, you must have a certification or license issued by written examination from another state, organization, or entity that must then be approved by the Commission. This will likely require a Commission appearance. We do accept the National Home Inspector exam as well as the SC Home Inspector exam, you are still required to take our SC Business Management and Law exam.

Q. After I have passed my exam(s) with PSI, what is my next step?

A. After you have passed the exam(s), you must submit a copy of your test results from PSI Testing Services to the Commission staff.

Q. Once I receive a SC Residential Home Inspectors License, how often do I renew my license?

A. The Residential Home Inspectors License is renewable every two (2) years, before June 30, of each even year (2020, 2022, 2024, etc). Per S.C. Code Ann. § 40-59-230(C), you are required to have a current mailing address on file with the Commission. The Commission mails a courtesy renewal notice in mid to late April. The Commission will also send a courtesy renewal reminder eblast during renewal season. It is the licensee's responsibility to renew his or her license on time. There will be a late fee for all renewals received after June 30. Your license will lapse on June 30 if you do not renew it. Your license may remain inactive for up to three years before being required to reapply and retest per S.C. Code Ann. §40-59-230(A).

Q. If I have a current SC Residential Home Inspectors License, can I renew my license online?

A. Yes. To renew a current Residential Home Inspectors license, you need a checking account, Master Card, Visa, or American Express, your userid and password, and your current email address on file with the Commission. If you have misplaced your userid and password, the Commission now has a website that will provide this information to you. Go to <https://eservice.llr.sc.gov/SSO/Login/LoginPage?ReturnUrl=%2fOnlineRenewals%2f> where there is an option to click and retrieve your userid and password. Enter the required information and your userid and password will be emailed to you.

There will be a late fee for all renewals received after June 30. Your license will lapse on June 30 if you do not renew it. Your license may remain inactive for up to three years before being required to reapply and retest per S.C. Code Ann. 40-59-230(A).

Q. What if I answer yes to a question on the Residential Home Inspectors application?

A. You will be required to provide further documentation along with a written explanation and may be required to appear before the Commission for application review.

If you answer yes to prior arrests/convictions, you will be required to submit a sealed criminal background report from the state(s) or federal agency in which the arrest(s) and/or convictions(s) occurred, along with a written explanation of what is listed in the report. If your arrest/conviction is federal, then you will be required to submit an FBI background report. Your request to the state/federal agency must include your full legal name, date of birth, and social security number or the report will not be accepted. If you have had a felony arrest/conviction in the preceding 10-year period, are currently on probation, have pending charges, are listed on the sex offender registry, or have a lengthy history, you will be required to appear before the Commission for application review. You may be required to provide arrest warrants, court dispositions and probation status (if you are currently on probation or have been released from probation) to the Commission for review.

The Commission staff checks the SC Public Index and both the national and state sex offender registries. SC Public Index lists arrests and convictions. Just because you have an item on the Index does not necessarily mean you will be denied, but you may be required to provide additional information and may have to appear before the Commission for application review.

Q. What is a commission appearance, and what should I expect?

A. When you arrive for the Commission meeting, please use the front entrance of the Kingstree Building where you will be required to go through a metal detector and may be subject to search by the security guard. Failure to submit to a search will result in a denial of entry. Please be aware that concealable weapons, including, but not limited to guns, knives, mace, pepper spray, etc. are prohibited in the building and therefore should be left in your car. After you proceed through security, please sign in at the receptionist's desk where you will receive a visitor's badge. Once you have a visitor's badge, you may go to the meeting room where you will be required to sign an attendance sheet documenting your presence at the meeting.

The Commission Chairman will open the meeting and will address some preliminary agenda items.

Individuals will be called to the podium one at a time when it is his or her turn. When it is your turn, you may present any documents and witnesses as you deem relevant to support your request. If you wish to submit documentary evidence, please bring at least nine (9) copies of each document so that the Commission members may have a copy. The staff will supply the Commission members with a copy of your application along with any other information that you may have already submitted. You and your witnesses will then be sworn in by a court reporter. You may present your witnesses by asking them direct questions or they may testify by giving summary testimony on their own. You and your witnesses are also subject to questioning by the Commission members and staff. The Commission members will consider all of your information and ask questions pertaining to the issue under review.

You have the right, at your own expense, to be represented by legal counsel who may be helpful in guiding you through this process. If you plan to be represented by an attorney, please provide us with their name as soon as possible.

The Commission will make a determination at the meeting as to your application for licensure. You are free to leave once they have made a motion that has been approved.

If you are approved for license/registration, you will not receive your license/registration at the meeting. Your

application will be processed within 3 business days. If your license/registration is denied or is issued with conditions, an order will be drafted within 60 days from the date of the meeting. Once the Order is signed by the Commission Chairman, you will be sent a copy for your records.

Please click on <https://lr.sc.gov/res/laws.aspx> and read/review for a further understanding of the South Carolina Residential Builders Commission Statutes and Regulations.

Q. Can I do a home inspection under my builder's, general contractors, architects, or engineer's license?

A. Yes, you may inspect homes under your builders, general contractors, architects, or engineers license but may not advertise or hold yourself out to the public as a licensed home inspector without first being issued a home inspectors license pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §40-59-520(A).

Q. Can I do repairs to a home on which I have done an inspection within twelve months of the inspection?

A. No, if the inspection was performed within the previous twelve months, a home inspector may not perform any work or improvements on the home pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §40-59-580(A)(7). Violation of this statute could result in a disciplinary action against you with sanctions that might include suspension or revocation of your license and/or a civil penalty.