



Dawit Abraham, P.E.
Director



Welcome

Community Partners
Winter 2024



Message from the Director



Happy Holidays, Community Partners!

My staff and I are sincerely grateful for the opportunity to work with you this year on everything from permitting residential and commercial projects to resolving property maintenance issues. Our goal is to provide the best service we can to you, and we thank you for allowing us to serve you.

We wish you and yours a happy and safe holiday and look forward to collaborating with you in 2025.

Dawit Abraham

DPIE Overview



Director
Dawit Abraham

Chief of Staff
Lori Parris

Deputy Director
LaMont Hinton

Deputy Director
Mary Giles

dpiе.mypgc.us

301-636-2020

Public Information Officer
Avis Thomas-Lester
DPIEPIO@co.pg.md.us

Permitting and Licensing — Bellur Ravishankar, Associate Director 301-636-2050

Processes building and site plan permits; issues licenses

[Permitting](#)
[Licensing](#)

Building Plan Review — Bellur Ravishankar, Associate Director 301-636-2070

Reviews plans for residential and commercial projects

[Building Plan Review](#)

Site/Road Plan Review — Rey de Guzman, Associate Director 301-636-2060

Reviews/approves site and roadway plans for proposed development and road improvement projects

[Site Road Plan Review](#)

Inspections — Behdad Kashanian, Associate Director 301-636-2080

Regulates construction, development and grading through inspection and enforcement of codes

[Inspections](#)

Enforcement — Valerie Cary, Associate Director 301-883-6168

Investigates code violations; conducts inspections at residential, commercial and industrial properties

[Code Enforcement](#)

DPIE Priorities

Compliance



It's the law!

- Code requirements were established by the County Council and designate what is allowed, what is not and the actions DPIE and other agencies are empowered to take to address violations.
- DPIE conducts inspections and takes appropriate enforcement action to address violations and gain compliance.

The Code

- Protects the health and safety of the public
- Protects property and neighborhood aesthetics
- Protects residential and commercial property values
- Ensures durability and sustainability of structures
- Ensures uniformity and minimum standards

Customer Service



Established the Communications Tracking System (CTS)

- CTS manages and tracks incoming and outgoing correspondence within the organization.
- CTS features a portal which allows customers to request assistance.
- The software also manages response timelines to improve customer service.

Established the Customer Success Unit (CSU)

- The unit prioritizes rapid response to customer inquiries.
- CSU manages inquiries utilizing the new CTS.
- CSU manages phone calls into the agency.
- The unit works with divisions to make improvements in customer service response.



Enforcement

Enforcement Division

- Inspects residential, commercial and industrial properties to ensure compliance with housing, property maintenance and zoning codes
- Frequently addresses issues related to tall grass and weeds, open storage, accumulation of junk and trash, etc.



- Issues citations for all residential properties not in compliance with County Code
- Enforces the Zoning Ordinance to ensure commercial properties comply with approved land uses
- Regulates the placement of signs on private property and in public rights-of-way
- Inspects and licenses short-term rental properties and licenses all residential single-family rental properties

What Constitutes a Code Violation?

- Requirements related to property maintenance, housing and zoning are established by County Code and other applicable codes. Codes designate what is allowed, what is not and the actions DPIE and other agencies are empowered to take to address violations.
- Prince George's County Code is established by the County Council.
- One of DPIE's major responsibilities is conducting inspections and taking appropriate enforcement actions to address violations and bring properties into compliance.
- Inspections are conducted as part of an ongoing departmental "cleanup" strategy or on a first-come, first-served basis in response to complaints to PGC311, community surveys and other referrals. Inspectors are authorized to issue a Notice of Violation (NOV) and/or a Civil Citation to the property owner or other responsible person if code violations are identified.
- The NOV or citation references the violation(s) of the County Code and other details. A follow-up inspection may be conducted. If the violation is not abated, appropriate action will be taken, which may include the levying of fines and/or transferring the case to the Administrative Hearing Unit or District Court for adjudication.



10 Frequent Code Violations



1. **Operating a business out of a residence.** You may not operate a restaurant or café, prepare or serve food for pay, sell goods or store imported products. To operate a hair salon, barber shop or nail salon, a Use and Occupancy Permit is required.
2. **Performing automotive work on a driveway or street.** You may not work on cars on residential streets or in driveways. NO automotive shops may operate on residential streets, in driveways, inside garages or behind houses or apartments.
3. **Doing unpermitted residential or commercial construction.** Construction projects such as erecting a deck, finishing a basement, remodeling a kitchen, building an addition, etc. require permits and inspections.
4. **Dumping.** Allowing trash and debris to accumulate on your property or dumping tires, construction materials and other debris on streets and undeveloped areas negatively impacts the County's aesthetics.
5. **Parking commercial vehicles in driveways or on residential streets.** Many commercial vehicles, such as large trucks, are prohibited.
6. **Parking vehicles on unpaved surfaces.** You may not park vehicles on grass or unpaved areas in front or back yards. Boats must be tagged, covered and legally parked on paved surfaces.
7. **Failing to adequately maintain a property.** Homeowners and renters are required to cut grass and weeds, prune plants, pick up branches and clear debris from properties regularly. Grass and weeds over 12-inches tall are a code violation!
8. **Allowing a property to fall into disrepair.** Residents and property managers must repair peeling paint, loose siding, ragged gutters and downspouts, broken windows, etc., immediately as needed.
9. **Accumulating junk on residential or commercial properties.** You may not store untagged vehicles, vehicle parts, junk cars or motorcycles, appliances, building materials, etc. on residential or commercial lots.
10. **Leaving abandoned properties unsafe and unsecured.** Buildings must be secured, lawns cut, other plants pruned, lots cleared of litter and trash removed regularly.

Many Home-Based Businesses Are Illegal in Prince George's County



Any enterprise you operate for income at the place where you live (including apartments, condos, town houses or detached houses) is a home-based business. Operating a legal business requires a license or permit from DPIE.

Illegal Home-based Businesses

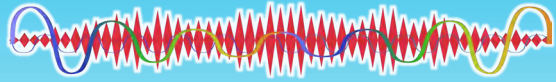
- You may not run a restaurant/eatery or sell cooked or uncooked food at home.
- A Use and Occupancy Permit is required to operate a two-chair hair salon, barber shop or nail salon.
- You may not convert your single-family home into a multifamily dwelling by renting rooms.
- You may not operate an unlicensed day care, adult care or elder care center.
- You may not operate an auto repair shop.
- You may not operate an import/export business.

Some Home-Based Activities Violate Code

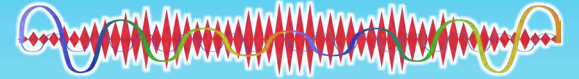


Illegal Home-based Events

- You may not have paid parties or operate a pop-up club.
- You may not rent your pool for parties or events.
- You may not sell food, drinks or alcoholic beverages.
- You may not rent your home for banquets, wedding receptions, etc.



Loud Noise Violates Code



Sound that crosses between residential and non-residential areas must not exceed the level set for residential areas. DPIE investigates businesses that generate noise levels disturbing residential areas.

DPIE may also investigate loud-party complaints and pop-up events if an owner, tenant or occupant engages in activities that are prohibited in residential zones, including unpermitted events that involve admission fees and sales of food and/or alcoholic beverages to the general public without the proper licenses.



- Playing music or making noise louder than 55 decibels after 11 p.m. and 65 decibels during the day.
- At 55 decibels, you can't hear music playing inside your home on the outside. If you can hear the sound outside, it is too loud, and you should turn the volume down immediately. There are free online apps that can help you measure decibels of sound.

Report noise violations to PGC311 or COUNTY POLICE nonemergency at 301-352-1200.

Maximum Allowable Noise Levels (dBA) for Receiving Land Use Categories			
Day/Night	Industrial	Commercial	Residential
Day	75	67	65
Night	75	62	55

How Does DPIE Address Noncompliance?



Nuisance Abatement Board (NAB)

- The (NAB) hears complaints that allege acts that disturb the public peace or endanger the health, life or safety of residents, workers or visitors in the County.
- Cases are referred by the police department, fire department, health department, DPIE, and other government agencies. Citizens may not report cases to the NAB.
- If the board finds a nuisance exists, it will order the activity to cease and may assess a \$1,000 fine.



Administrative Hearing Unit (AHU)

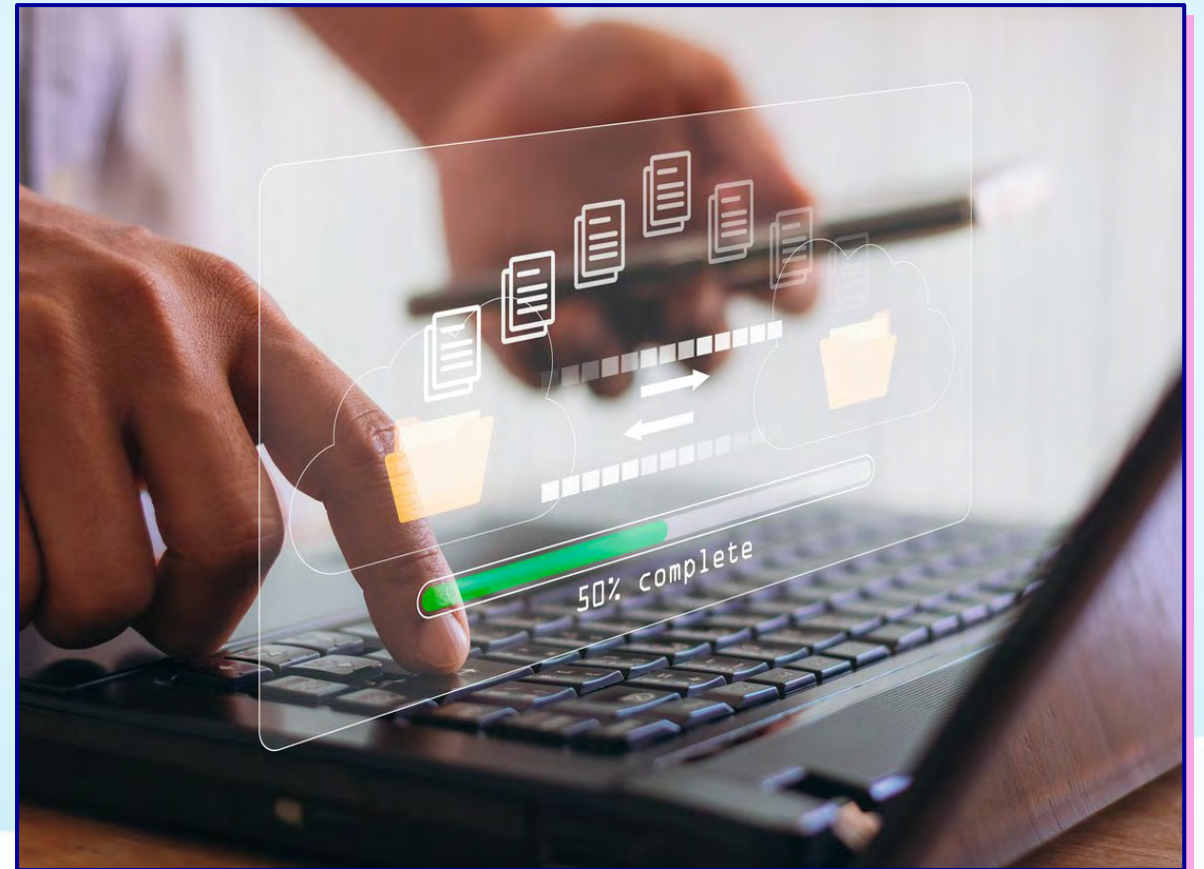
- The AHU handles complaints about unlawful vehicles, open storage, trash and debris, tall grass and weeds, unpermitted construction and short-term rental violations.
- Complaints are reported through 311 and routed to DPIE, where they are investigated, and violation notices and/or citations issued. Respondents may request a hearing within 30 days, hearings are held within 30 days of the request, and decisions are rendered within five days by hearing officers.



Permitting & Licensing

Permitting and Licensing Division

- Provides a one-stop permit approval process to ensure that permits are reviewed in a timely manner
- Reviews and processes all permit applications for construction and alterations of residential and commercial buildings
- Provides document screening for permit application submittals
- Responds to questions regarding the status and issuance of permits and engineering plan reviews
- Provides same day review for projects that meet the virtual “walk-through” requirements (currently for homeowners only) — Virtual Permit Center
- Issues permits, licenses and regulates various business activities per County Code
- Offers the Peer Review Program and the Third-Party Plan Review Program for review of commercial projects



When Is a Permit Required?

You Need a Permit Before...

Improving your kitchen

Renovating a bathroom

Finishing your basement

Building a chairlift, ramp or deck

Adding an addition

Erecting a fence taller than 4 feet

Constructing a large shed, carport, garage or driveway, and more

Visit the DPIE website at dpie.mypgc.us or call 301-883-2050 for information.



Helpful Homeowner Permit Links

- [Residential permits page](#)
- [Walk-Through Permit Process/Virtual Permit Center \(VPC\) page](#)
- [Projects eligible for VPC list](#)

Remember to Permit Your Projects!

Permitting and Licensing “No-Nos”



- Building residential and commercial construction projects without permits
 - Doing construction without following approved plans
 - Failing to get projects inspected
 - Failing to obtain a Use and Occupancy Permit (U&O)
 - Changing to another business on the same site without getting a new U&O
 - Doing business without an appropriate license
 - Falsifying information to get a permit or license
-
- Allowing your contractor to take short cuts on your project, such as using substandard materials
 - Using your name on building projects when a contractor is actually doing the work
 - Passing yourself off as certified to work on projects for which you are unqualified

Use & Occupancy Permit

A Use and Occupancy Permit (U&O), or Certificate of Occupancy, is issued by DPIE to officially state that the business meets local zoning, safety requirements and health codes. The U&O allows the business to legally operate.

- A new U&O is required for:
 - A new tenant or occupant
 - A change of use
 - A transfer of ownership
(when no construction is required)
- Certain businesses may operate in residential areas with a U&O. Reach out to DPIE for details. To apply for a U&O, go to the [Momentum portal](#).
- U&Os are also issued for residential properties to identify the use of the property, such as single-family home, multifamily structure, etc.



Plan Review



Site/Road Plan Review

- Reviews and approves plans for site and road construction including floodplain studies, utility work and small wireless facilities in public rights-of-way, traffic studies, site development concept plans, and development plans relative to various environmental requirements
- Reviews and approves plans for site and road development involving grading, stormwater management and storm drainage, and State highway roads (stormwater management only)
- Reviews and approves issuance of site/road permits



Building Plan Review

- Provides the review and approval of plans for residential and commercial construction to ensure compliance with applicable codes pertaining to building/structural, mechanical, energy, electrical, health, fire protection, accessibility
- Processes plans for internal and external agencies
- Provides plan review and inspections of new properties served by well and septic systems, public swimming pools and spas, and new food service facilities to ensure compliance with State and County Health regulations



Inspections

Inspections Division

- Conducts inspections to enforce codes for building, electrical, mechanical, energy, fire/life safety, grading, stormwater management, accessibility requirements and other regulations for construction projects
- Condemns and demolishes abandoned, unsafe and uninhabitable structures in the County and the municipalities
- Performs Use & Occupancy Permit (U&O) inspections to verify conformance with code regulations (except within the City of Laurel)



Why Are Inspections So Important?



- Construction Inspections guarantee that permitted projects are constructed according to requirements to protect the safety of the public and the environment.
- Uninspected construction may lead to hazards such as the use of substandard material, noncompliance with manufacturers' specifications and deficient building projects.
- Inspectors identify and address deficiencies during construction to negate possible adverse effects on residents and the environment.

Frequent Unpermitted Construction Projects



Visit the [Permits](#) page of the website for more information.

These projects all require permits:

- Building additions and finishing basements
- Installing kitchens in basements or additions
- Making interior renovations and subdividing rooms
- Installing decks, patios and gazebos
- Constructing secondary structures (sheds, garages, etc.)
- Rerouting water onto another property
- Erecting fences over 4-feet tall
- Changing grading (moving soil) and building retaining walls
- Cutting down trees
- Extending driveways



FYI

Rent Stabilization Act



The **Permanent Rent Stabilization and Protection Act (PRSA) of 2024** has been enacted to protect renters from excessive rent increases while ensuring landlords can maintain their properties.

- This law sets clear limits on how much rent can increase annually for many rental units, with special provisions for senior housing and exemptions for specific properties.
- DPIE enforces the PRSA and is authorized to impose fines from \$1,000 for the first violation of the law up to \$5,000 for subsequent violations.

- If you believe you are overcharged, contact your landlord to discuss the increase in your rent. If your concern is not resolved, contact PGC311 to report your complaint.
- For more information on the Act, visit the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) website at hcd@mypgc.us.

Sidewalk Snow and Ice Removal Inspection Program

- Owners, managers and tenants of residential and commercial properties abutting sidewalks near County-owned roadways are responsible for removing snow and ice within 48 hours after it has accumulated to 2 inches or more.
- Those not removing snow/ice from sidewalks within 24 hours will receive a **reminder notice**.
- Those not clearing the sidewalks within 24 hours of the reminder may be issued a citation for a fine of \$100.
- After the first notice, a fine of \$100 per day will be assessed until the snow/ice is cleared. The County may remove the snow and assess the owner if the snow is not cleared.
- Be a good neighbor! Clear your sidewalks and assist neighbors who are unable to remove snow/ice from their properties.

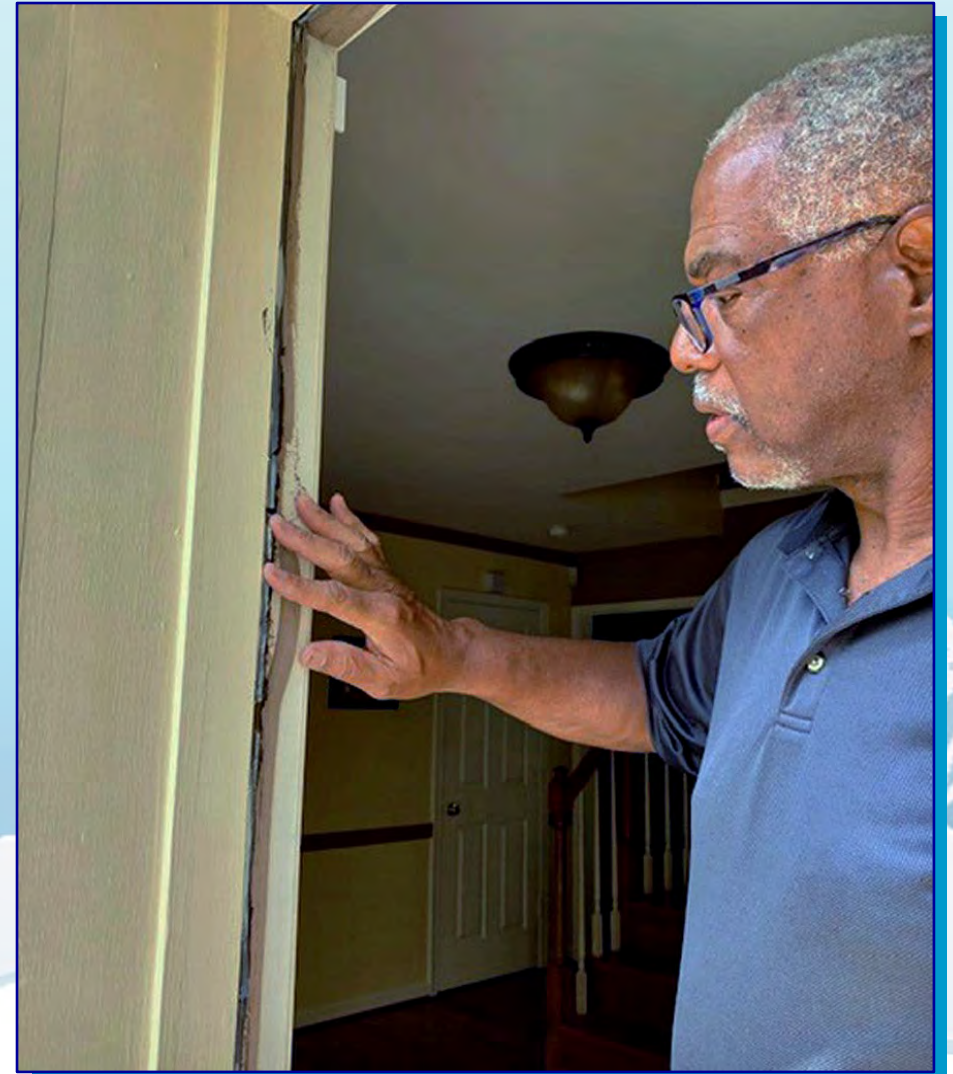
For more information, call 301-883-6168.



Winterize Your Home

Take the following steps to keep your property clean and safe during the cold weather season.

- Check the seals around windows and doors.
- Check caulking around sinks and tubs.
- Clean clothes dryer lint traps and vent ducts.
- Clear downspouts and clean out gutters.
- Focus on interior home safety issues.
- Deep clean interior spaces including under appliances.
- Replace HVAC filters.
- Clear areas around heaters.
- Check and install holiday lights and decorations.
- Clean and organize garages and lube doors.



Holiday Safety

The National Safety Council (NSC) offers these holiday safety tips:

- The [Consumer Products Safety Commission](#) (CPSC) recommends keeping poisonous plants, such as mistletoe and holly berries, away from children.
- Make sure your artificial tree is “fire resistant” and kept 3 feet away from heat sources.
- Keep breakable ornaments and those with small parts out of the reach of children.
- Use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors. Turn off lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Always [choose the right ladder](#) for hanging lights and performing other tasks.
- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down and out of reach of children. Use flameless candles when possible.
- Never leave candles or fireplaces burning unattended and use screens on fireplaces when a fire is lit. Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year.
- NSC discourages the use of turkey fryers at home, except oil-less fryers. Follow the [U.S. Fire Administration turkey fryer guidelines](#).
- The [foodsafety.gov](#) website provides some valuable [holiday food safety tips](#).
- The CPSC recommends toys that do not have small parts for children under age 3 because of the risk of choking. Avoid toys that must be plugged into an electrical outlet for children under 10. Include a helmet when gifting bikes or riding toys.





Public Information

DPIE Public Information Office

DPIEPIO@co.pg.md.us

- Serves as the information liaison between DPIE and the public.
- Publishes e-newsletter called [DPIE Developments](#) and periodic bulletins. Subscribe at [Subscribe My PGC](#).
- Access news and information at dpie.mypgc.us website's [Public Information](#) page.
- We also publish [Information in Spanish](#).



Request documents via [MPIA Processing at DPIE](#) on the DPIE website.



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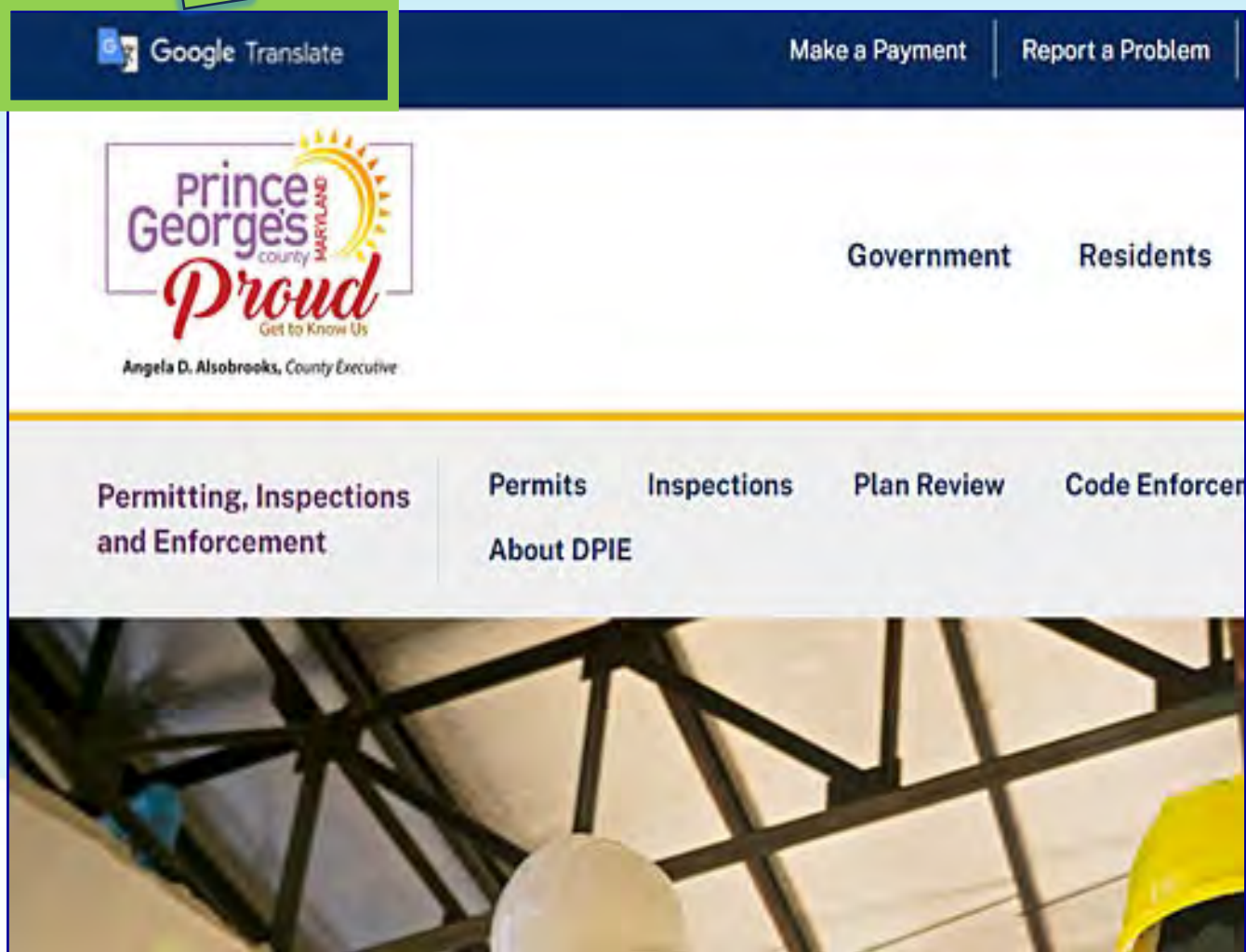
For service requests or to report violations, call 311 or 301-883-4748 (outside of the County) or access the website at PGC311.com.

Online Information

Many of DPIE's records are searchable at no cost or delay to the requester.

- **History by Address:** To search for permits by property address or permit history, visit [Permit Search](#). If you would like a copy of a permit, request one using the MPIA form (*see last item*).
- **Inspection History:** To search for inspection history by permit number, visit [Inspections History By Permit Number](#).
- **LookSee — Property Explorer:** To research permits and properties in Prince George's County, use [LookSee](#). The portal allows you to view Momentum information related to permits, licenses, inspections, and enforcement by entering the full application/permit number or property address.
- **Application Tracker — Check the Status of Plan Reviews:** To use Application Tracker, enter your Application Number into the [DPIE Application Tracker](#) portal and see your plan review progress. Each review has a status listed at the bottom of the page.
- **Data Prince George's:** [Data Prince George's](#) provides data on communities, County Government, finance, public safety, urban planning, education, health and the environment.
- **PG Atlas:** To determine if your project is within a municipality, the water and sewer envelope, a critical area, or for other mapping delineations such as zoning, visit [PGAtlas.com](#).
- **MPIA:** To request information about code violations, liens, rental licenses, site plans and other documents, visit the [MPIA Processing](#) page and use the [MPIA form](#).

Assistance in Other Languages



- Visit the DPE website at dpe.mypgc.us. Click the Google Translate button on the top left of pages to have information translated into other languages.
- Check the Resources page on the DPE website for a link to “Information Translated into Spanish.”
- We work with an interpretation service that allows us to speak to customers in Spanish and other languages. Call 301-636-2020 and ask for assistance in your preferred language. You may also request assistance in other languages when visiting DPE.
- Contact DPEPIO@co.pg.md.us or 301-636-2053 for information.

Happy Holidays!

from

DPIE

**DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING,
INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT**

Contact Public Information Officer Avis Thomas-Lester
at DPIEpio@co.pg.md.us or 301-636-2053.

Visit the DPIE website at dpie.mypgc.us.