Local Authority Building Standards Scotland
Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)

Remote Verification Inspection (RVI)

LABSS Practitioner Guidance to Support the Delivery of On-Site Verification Remotely using Live Video and Photographic Evidence

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Purpose: This guidance document has been produced to support the delivery of on-site verification remotely using live video and photographic evidence.

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1.0	27.02.2023	Initial draft.
1.1	27.04.2023	Re-worked draft following LABSS DDG RVI group and BSD DTT review.
1.2	07.06.2023	Revisions incorporated, including the quick guides.
1.3	16.06.2023	Minor errors corrected.
1.4	30.03.2026	Additional guidance for when validating photographic evidence.

Contents:

Introduction:

Background.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Scottish Governments subsequent phased approach to recovery necessitated the need for local authority verifiers to consider and develop ways which would enable them to carry out the verification of work carried out on site, which was subject to building warrant approval, to enable consideration of submitted completion certificates.

Further to government guidelines, developers and building companies developed their own guidance and procedures to mitigate risk of virus transmission for those working on and visiting construction sites. The risk assessment approach taken by many local authorities meant that physical visits to sites were only undertaken in specific circumstances, where deemed necessary and subject to virus transmission mitigation measures being in place.

In response to this, the concept of inspecting and viewing work carried out on building sites remotely was accelerated and adopted by around two thirds of local authorities in Scotland to enable continued delivery of the verification service to customers.

In providing this service, these verifiers put processes in place together with hardware, software and applications to enable implementation.

Development across all the 32 Scottish local authority verifiers was varied, mainly due to reasons of policy, technical capability, budgetary constraints and perceived risk in relation to their role in ensuring they carry out reasonable inquiry prior to considering the acceptance of submitted completion certificates. The Scottish Government did provide a financial package to building standards services in local authorities to allow them to access and purchase necessary IT hardware to aid the ability to carry out RVI.

Acknowledging these various approaches to remote inspection, Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) own research, known as 'Survey 2', looked into wider digital transformation matters including how it could assist with remote inspections. This confirmed support for a nationally adopted system and methodology for carrying out inspections remotely.

In 2021, The Building Standards Division (BSD) commissioned research through the 'Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (now Built Environment – Smarter Transformation (BE-ST)) to investigate and assess the potential of remote inspection techniques, particularly the benefits of 'live video feed', to satisfy reasonable inquiry in line with the requirements of building standards legislation for domestic properties.

Edinburgh Napier University was appointed to undertake this research which included five work packages with the key aim to assess remote inspection techniques, review technologies and identify

barriers to wider adoption in Scotland. That study concluded with a formal presentation of their research findings in November 2022.

In tandem with the Napier research, BSD provided funding to LABSS Digital Transformation Group (LABSS DDG) to examine:

- Supporting digital approaches to assist in reasonable inquiry, and
- Supporting the development and dissemination of emerging national code of practice for remote verification inspection (RVI).

LABSS DDG in partnership with the BSD Digital Transformation Team, with support from the Digital Hub, incorporated within the Building Standards Hub Pilot, reviewed the research undertaken by Napier University and together with local authority cases studies have assisted in producing this code of practice, entitled 'LABSS Practitioner Guidance to Support the Delivery of On-Site Verification Remotely using Live Video and Photographic Evidence.'

The Definition of RVI.

Initially the use of the acronym 'RVI' was seen by many as meaning 'remote video inspection'. Whilst this was an accurate assumption because of the process that was being undertaken to perform the function, the use of 'video' did not fully appreciate what the process was for, nor did it acknowledge that other forms of evidence could be used for verification purposes.

To reflect that remote inspection is a tool to achieve the local authority's verification function of work carried out on site, the 'V' in RVI was quickly and widely confirmed as meaning 'verification' in acknowledgement of the wider process being undertaken.

It is important that this national definition of 'RVI' was clear, so that 'Remote Verification Inspection' developed as the common language to promote a consistent approach throughout Scotland. This national definition was agreed by the BSD, LABSS and wider industry and is referenced as such within relevant documentation.

To bring additional clarity, RVI was also defined as being: 'The visual verification of construction works, carried out remotely from the location of the works by the verifier.'

In practice, the most common form of RVI is a live video feed between the verifier and the operative on site, but other forms of verifying work exist, such as:

- Photographs.
- Recorded video.
- Digital site records held on a Common Data Environment (CDE).
- Photography derived 3D models.

- Scanned 3D models.
- VR Environments.

Noting this guidance is aimed at both simple domestic work and aspects of simple non-domestic work, most of these listed alternative forms of RVI would, however, unlikely be available or practical for the type of projects considered within scope of this document.

Purpose.

The primary purpose of this guidance paper is to provide a 'practitioner lead' national consistent approach to RVI. It also provides details on the availability of platforms that can be used to carry out a remote live video of works carried out as part of a building project.

The guidance is mainly aimed at domestic projects as these types of build are generally less complex and are more suited to the use of RVI. However, the guidance can equally be applied to non-domestic projects where the construction and detailing is simple or an RVI is chosen to re-inspect low risk aspects of the project.

Details of how RVI can play its part in verifying compliance is discussed and information is provided on how this ties into the verifier's role in discharging CCNP inspections. It also takes a brief look at how this guidance may be adopted when considering compliance plans in the future.

The benefits of adopting RVI are listed, together with considerations that need to be taken into account before deciding if an RVI is appropriate for the inspection to be carried out. How a verifier may wish to record the outcomes of an RVI inspection are covered as are its appropriate and inappropriate use.

A flowchart indicating the RVI decision process is included together with a table indicating examples of where an RVI may or may not be appropriate to use to verify work undertaken.

A background reading list of related and supporting documents is provided for assistance.

The BSD, particularly through the green and digital agenda, encourage verifiers to adopt RVI as an inspection option. It is hoped this guide will encourage verifiers to consider alternative processes for verification to make use of their resources more effectively and efficiently when inspecting and monitoring building work. However, it must be emphasised that the acceptance and scope of any RVI process to verify compliance is entirely within the remit of individual local authorities.

RVI and Compliance:

Building Standards System in Scotland.

The building standards system in Scotland is established by the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.

The system is intended to ensure that building work on both new and existing buildings results in buildings that meet reasonable standards. The standards are set out in the building regulations which are, in the terms of the Act, intended to:

- Secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of persons in or about buildings and of others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings.
- Further the conservation of fuel and power; and
- Further the achievement of sustainable development.

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. Inspections during construction and on completion are there to monitor compliance with the building regulations and to discourage avoidance of the legislation. The inspections do not provide a system to control work on site. That is a matter for the contracts and arrangements put in place between the client and builder.

Putting this in the context of verification confirms that any inspections carried out by a verifier is to satisfy themselves that it is reasonable to accept a completion certificate submission made to them on any project on the basis that what has been witnessed appears to be in line with that approved and meets the standards as far as can be reasonably ascertained.

Responsibility for compliance with the building regulations lies with the relevant person who is usually the owner or developer. As such, any checks made by a verifier do not remove any responsibility from the relevant person. It is generally the relevant person who confirms that that the completed work is in accordance with the approved building warrant and building regulations when making their completion certificate submission.

The use of RVI as opposed to a physical inspection does not alter this position. The only difference is that it would be prudent to establish that what is to be verified can be reasonably done using RVI. If not, then the default should be that a physical inspection be carried out. The process of establishing what type of inspection may be appropriate for any particular circumstance is covered in this guidance.

Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP).

Verifiers will be aware of the 'Domestic' and 'Non-Domestic' 'Verification During Construction (VDC)' Handbooks which look at the production and issue of Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP) for projects covered by a building warrant.

The CCNP sets out the construction stages in a project that a verifier has identified as requiring a site visit or other 'alternative' method to check compliance. The applicant, appointed agent or developer should notify the verifier when these specified stages are ready to be checked allowing sufficient time for the verifier to respond appropriately.

Examples of what 'alternative' evidence that may be considered is detailed within Annex F of the 'Domestic' Handbook, and Annex G in the 'Non-Domestic' Handbook.

This guidance document expands on the content of the VDC Handbooks in relation to what a verifier may consider as being suitable 'alternative' evidence, through the introduction of national RVI methodology together with the commentary on what other means of verifying work may be considered within any particular project.

Compliance Plan Approach (CPA).

In January 2026, the Scottish Government Building Standards Division introduced their 'Verification During Construction for High-Risk Buildings' which provides verifier guidance to support the implementation of phase 1 of the Compliance Plan Approach (CPA).

This referenced guidance document was introduced in anticipation of the CPA becoming a legal requirement, with legislative change not anticipated until sometime after the 2026 Scottish Parliament elections.

Under the phase 1 CPA, verifiers are still required to issue CCNPs in accordance with the nationally agreed VDC guidance with all building warrants issued. A Compliance Plan (CP) is considered as a CCNP in this requirement. As such, the guidance within this document is still relevant and can be applied to any identified inspections or check points within a CP.

Using Remote Verification Inspection:

Considerations in the use of RVI.

As with all notifiable stages within a CCNP an applicant must inform the verifier when a 'key construction stage' is ready to be inspected. This gives the verifier an opportunity to discuss, with the applicant, aspects of what is to be looked at and what the expectation is of that to be witnessed. This is particularly important if the inspection is intended to be carried out using an alternative method to a physical site visit.

When having this conversation, the verifier must decide if it is appropriate to undertake the inspection using RVI or through a physical inspection. This must be the verifiers decision alone and should not be influenced by the wish of the applicant unless the applicant is not capable of conducting an RVI.

In all forms of RVI and physical inspection, the type and form of evidence gathered must be agreed with the verifier and should not be presented by the applicant as a *'fait accompli'* as there is a possibility of that evidence not satisfying what the verifier would wish to see or witness. Additionally, applicants should provide the verifier with sufficient notice to enable the RVI or physical inspection to be arranged. This period of notice should be specified by each verifying authority for their geographical area.

The focus of this guidance relates to inspections to be carried out using RVI by live video streaming, but in some instances, it may be appropriate to accept a photograph to verify a simple installation or obtain confirmation of some, previously identified, remedial work having been carried out. This is discussed further under 'other means of verification' below.

To assist verifiers to use and promote RVIs, the following list provides examples of matters that should be taken into consideration:

Digital Capability.

It is expected that all Local Authority verifiers will have access to a computer or mobile device, with internet connection capability that would support the chosen platform to undertake RVI. As noted below, there is the availability of the **Near Me** platform that is browser based, requires no download, and is available to all Local Authorities free of charge.

Individual local authorities' corporate IT provider or team should be consulted to ensure that they are content with and can support the verifiers preferred RVI platform and hardware.

Process.

Within each local authority building standards verification teams, the procedure or process that will be followed when arranging and conducting RVI should be agreed. This should be recorded along with all other building standards service standing instructions and revised as required. Annex A provides a practical guide for verifiers to support the application of RVI.

The Customer.

The local authority should decide how they will inform their customers that inspection of building warrant related work may be carried out using RVI. All customer facing communication should be updated to reflect the introduction and availability of the service, particularly the CCNP where it can be pre-determined that a particular inspection may be undertaken through RVI.

The verifier should also consider producing a customer guide to assist them in using their chosen platform(s) for RVI. This guidance should also provide information as to what expectations there will be to enable and conduct the RVI. Annex B provides an example of a customer guide.

RVI Essential Requirements.

To facilitate the availability of RVI for verification activity, the verifier should decide in each instance if to proceed with an RVI. This should take account of the following:

- Will RVI adequately demonstrate or show what is intended to be seen or inspected?
- Is a wider awareness of the construction site required during the proposed RVI and if it is, is this achievable through RVI?
- Does the construction site / building have a reliable internet connection to enable RVI to be conducted?
- Does the site operative have the necessary skills to conduct the RVI?
- Does the site device have the necessary app or software and internet capability? (See the benefits of the **Near Me** platform below.)
- Do the overall benefits achieved through an RVI outweigh, or equate to, that of conducting a physical inspection?

RVI Practical Considerations.

Once the decision has been made that conducting an RVI is practical and suitable for the inspection proposed then the verifier should consider the following practicalities and arrangements:

- Confirm which building(s) the inspection covers and ensure they are identifiable through the RVI link. The warrant reference number should also be confirmed along with the date and time of inspection.
- Book the inspection time and date in the verifier's diary and send out the meeting request details and joining instructions to all those expected to be in attendance.

- Ensure the facilitator of the RVI is aware of the expectations for the inspection and that they will have all necessary measuring devices and equipment available. It will also assist if they are knowledgeable in building terminology.
- If there are tests to be witnessed and / or measurements to be taken, two on site operatives will likely be required to accurately witness what is being shown. I.e., one operative working the camera and the other demonstrating the test or measurement, etc.
- Confirm what areas of the building or site are to be witnessed to ensure access will be available on the day.
- Establish if artificial lighting will be necessary for the inspection.
- Before the inspection, ensure that previous inspection notes have been reviewed and any outstanding actions are noted.
- Ensure that the relevant drawings and documentation, including the CCNP, are available and to hand for the inspection.
- Be ready to log in and start the inspection on time.
- Make any necessary introductions at the start of the inspection.
- Keep instructions clear and simple when directing the operative around the site or building to ensure the necessary views of construction and detailing are obtained.
- Be ready to end the inspection if it is not demonstrating what needs to be seen. Where deviations from approval or defects are noted, it may not always be necessary to require a physical inspection.
- At the end of the inspection, confirm the outcome together with any remediation measures required and state if a follow up communication will be sent formalising these.

RVI – Other Noteworthy Points.

In addition to that listed above, it is worth noting:

- That the person participating in a remote verification inspection confirms that they are either the relevant person or are authorised by the relevant person to act on their behalf. In either case they should be aware of their responsibility to fully represent the work to be inspected and that all site health and safety requirements will be met relative to the RVI.
- That there must be trust between the verifier and facilitator(s) for the use of RVI to be successful.
- If there is a failure to properly represent the work being verified, then this would result in the RVI ending and this facility as an inspection option being withdrawn.
- That subverting an RVI may delay the acceptance of any completion certificate submitted or the issue of a temporary occupation certificate.
- That the e-Building Standards Portal should be used for the submission of any prior or post supporting information relative to the inspection.
- That regularly catching up with staff and discussing RVI processes and outcomes will help streamline and develop the service delivered.
- That additional equipment is available that may further enhance the inspection, such as:
    - Gimble stabilisers for the camera phone.
    - Surveyors staff.

- Selfie stick.
- Remote camera and / or microphones.

Benefits of RVI.

The primary importance of any compliance check carried out on a project is that the chosen method will reliably inform the verifier of what has been constructed.

When considering this, it is worth taking cognisance of the benefits RVI can provide:

Environmental Benefits.

The environmental benefits are clear to appreciate as using RVI reduces the need to travel to a site which outwith built up urban areas and cities is predominantly carried out by car with a single occupant.

The resultant saving on fuel, wear and tear and carbon emissions can significantly reduce local authorities carbon footprint and help the environment.

Staff Time Savings / Workload Management.

Staff travel time, especially within the more rural areas of Scotland can take up a considerable amount of the working week. Whilst verifiers should generally try to group inspections together, making the most of individual journeys, this is not always possible to outlying areas whereby properties are sparsely located and there are insufficient building works going on to link inspections at the same time. This issue can be compounded on island areas where ferry journeys are also required.

By using RVI, staff can plan in additional inspection as well as be more flexible when considering that they can accommodate inspections in different parts of the geographical area they cover without location being a barrier. Inspection by RVI can even be considered in between other pre-arranged physical inspections.

Another benefit of RVI is that it can make it easier for other staff members to conduct inspections out with their own geographical areas to cover annual or sick leave.

To summarise, the use of RVI, has the potential to offer considerable savings in unproductive staff time, especially those one-off inspections that require lengthy distances to be covered.

Budget Savings / Wellbeing.

The less time spent travelling brings the direct benefit of reducing staff travel costs and the associated expenses. Staff will also have some additional time to be more productive and contribute towards

wider tasks whilst ideally being less pressured with their workload. In addition, less travelling also reduces the risk of an employee being injured in a vehicular accident.

Health and safety at Work.

RVI provides a benefit where lone working creates a risk, as it clearly results in the removal of the risk.

Workplace Locality Benefits.

Utilising RVI offers the verifier greater flexibility as to where staff may be located. This may also improve the ability to appoint appropriately experienced staff through the availability of home and hybrid working arrangements. Examples of staff dedicated to RVI and living a considerable distance from their designated base are noted.

Customer Benefits.

Initially, customers may be unfamiliar with the digital technologies and processes required to undertake RVI, but as confidence grows, particularly with repeat customers working on several projects, the full benefits of RVI can be realised. Amongst these are the ability of being able to arrange an inspection sooner than may have been otherwise possible if purely relying on attendance of a verifier for a physical inspection. Should a customer be in a rural location, RVI will also enable greater flexibility when an inspection can be carried out.

Peer Review and other Applications.

The benefits delivered by RVI also potentially extend beyond the building standards verification function. The use and application of RVI has demonstrated that it can be used in other areas of work undertaken by local authority building standards teams. Listed below are some examples of other areas where RVI has demonstrated practical benefits:

- Dangerous buildings: By using RVI, officers can view potential dangers and defects remotely without needing to put themselves at risk by accessing hard to reach or high parts of structures. A facilitator can be used, accessing the danger by cherry picker or scaffold, etc. with the officer viewing the potential danger remotely. To compliment this potential for RVI the use of drones may also be considered to view hard or dangerous to access areas. This also has other benefits in that others can be called into the inspection, such as structural engineers and the fire and rescue service to name some. RVI also provides for a quicker response from the building standards officer in that RVI can often be organised quicker than a physical inspection, especially if the incident occurs out of hours.
- Peer review: RVI provides the ability to bring others into an inspection or meeting whereby their expertise or opinion is sought. For example, if an officer is carrying out a physical inspection or visiting a site and another opinion is sought, then this can be quickly called upon through RVI.

Examples of RVI Platforms.

There are many different platforms available that would support a live video RVI. Essentially any app or piece of software that allows two way visual and sound communication on a mobile device can be used for RVI. The most commonly used and commercially available apps that can be used for RVI are:

- MS Teams.
- Zoom.
- Skype.
- WhatsApp.
- Messenger.

There are also other alternatives available that may be used. Of these listed platforms Microsoft Teams is popular as it is generally readily available to local authority building standards teams and easily obtained by customers.

Near Me RVI Platform.

To provide practical support to the roll out of RVI, the Scottish Government has provided a secure solution that is free and available to all local authority verifiers.

The **Near Me** platform is a browser-based application that does not require any download or special requirements on the customers part other than an internet connection.

Although initially intended to enable a live video consultation between GPs or any other NHS medical staff and their patients, the benefits of the platform have been realised by a wide range of public services.

National activity using the Near Me platform runs to around 40,000 calls every month and it is used by:

- NHS Primary and Secondary Care.
- Mental Health.
- Social Work.
- Housing.
- Local authorities.
- Social Care.
- The Citizens' Advice Bureau.
- Social Security Scotland.

Of particular note, it has enabled social housing providers to carry out remote inspections to assess damaged properties and also check remedial work undertaken. Benefits of using the system align with those RVI benefits listed above as well as others cited by the developer that are applicable when used in other settings.

Key components of Near Me are:

- It's easy to use.
- It is free.
- There is nothing to install or download.
- Customers do not need to authenticate.
- It operates across a range of devices.
- It uses a relatively low bandwidth.
- It is secure.

The basic functions provided by the system are:

- 1:1 video appointment but you can invite up to another 3 people into the call.
- Screen Sharing.
- Chat function.
- Has a 'waiting area'.
- When used with smart phones & tablets there is the option to do close ups by flipping to the rear facing camera.

The system also delivers the additional functions of:

- Consult Now: rapid transfer from telephone to video call by passing the waiting area.
- Groups: up to 60 people on a call.
- In-queue customer leaflets.
- After call survey options.

The platform support team, in addition to the technical set up and advice, provide training, updates and process development. In addition, the 'waiting area' is customisable to your needs including skinning it with your organisation logs.

For access to the platform visit: https://www.vc.scot.nhs.uk/near-me/ or contact the Digital Hub / LABSS DDG for more direct contact details. Additional information is available on the Near Me website:
https://tec.scot/programme-areas/near-me

Recording the Outcome from RVI.

Whilst it is for an individual verifier to decide how they wish to record the outcome of an RVI, this guidance does not advocate recording a live video feed inspection and storing it within a data management system (DMS) against a case file.

There are several reasons for this recommendation.

Obtaining participant consent to be recorded is a potential issue. The question of consent is not a matter that is considered within the scope of this guidance.

Using a live video link as the media to conduct an inspection is likened to actually being on site in person and as such seen as the digital equivalent to being there physically. Once this concept is accepted and whilst noting a verifier would not, under normal circumstance, take a video of an on-site inspection, then it is reasonable to conclude that a verifier would not choose to record and store the outcome of RVI.

Linked to this, are the potential issues around digital storage. Video files take up a substantial amount of memory and storing video files could quite quickly take up server storage capacity.

Recording and storing an RVI also presents certain risks in terms of what may or may not be recorded on that file. Whilst a verifier will be diligent undertaking the inspection, there is always the chance that something incorrect or different is not witnessed or inadvertently missed due to concentration being on that element the RVI is focusing on. The recording, if capturing such an omission, would merely present what the camera captured without the reality of focus on the particular aspect of construction the verifier was witnessing.

Recording and storing RVI also adds additional steps into the processes a verifier would need to go through when undertaking the wider inspection task as the completed video file would need to be referenced and indexed into the data management system relating to the case file.

In conclusion, it is recommended that that the recording of RVI should be undertaken in the same manner that a verifier would do for a physical inspection. This would generally mean a written report of the inspection recorded in the manner dictated by the respective local authority within their case management system.

Using RVI Appropriately.

This guidance aims to assist verifiers to consider the use of RVI, when appropriate, as an alternative process of checking compliance of building work, with benefits to both the verifier and customer.

By following this guidance, the verifier should ensure that the use and application of RVI is appropriate and correct for any instance.

As detailed within table 1 below, there are specific examples of where RVI could be considered as being appropriate.

In addition to these specified examples, it should be confirmed that RVI is also particularly useful when considering the re-inspection of minor issues encountered in any building type.

In general, using RVI for compliance checks should be considered on the basis of:

- No physical test is required to be conducted by the Verifier.
- The verifier does not need to rely on evidence achieved through feel or touch.
- The type of construction is familiar to the verifier.
- The type of construction is basic, traditional and commonly used, or is a form that is easily interpreted through video media.
- The materials or components being used are familiar to the verifier.
- The type of measurements to be taken can be easily demonstrated.
- A sense of size or space does not need to be appreciated.
- There are no complex tasks, systems or operations to be demonstrated.

Inappropriate use of RVI.

RVI, as with other types of assessment should not be taken as the default position for verifying work undertaken. Each case should be assessed individually to determine what type of evidence needs to be demonstrated and how it is to be collected.

RVI should not be used primarily on environmental or economic grounds or to achieve budget savings. The primary importance is verifying the work in the correct manner.

RVI should not be used just to accommodate a requested inspection when the need for a physical inspection would otherwise delay it happening.

Verifiers should not be pressured by a customer who is advocating the use of RVI to rush through an inspection or acceptance of a completion certificate submission. Similarly, the ease of undertaking RVI should not be a reason for the applicant or relevant person seeking additional inspections over and above that required as part of reasonable inquiry. It is the verifiers decision to dictate what inspections are required and how an inspection should be carried out.

Caution should be exercised when considering RVI, either through live video or other formats when inspecting work that has either been retrospectively carried out or is advanced of the notifiable construction stage as identified in the CCNP.

As detailed within table 1, there are specific examples of where RVI may be considered as being unsuitable.

In general, these situations would be on the follow basis:

- Tests required to be conducted by the verifier.
- Tests are required to be witnessed by the verifier in person.
- The verifier anticipates a greater 'sense' of the project is needed than could expected to be achievable through RVI.
- The type of construction being looked at is unfamiliar to the verifier.
- The type of construction being looked at is innovative, non-traditional or complex, or is a form that is not easily interpreted through video media.
- The materials or components are not commonly used or seen and are unfamiliar to the verifier.
- The measurements to be taken are complex.
- A sense of size or space of the project is required to be physically experienced.

Other means of Verification (Photographic Evidence).

As noted under 'The Definition of RVI' section of this paper, there are numerous forms of alternative evidence that may be considered acceptable by a verifier when compliance of work carried out is to be demonstrated.

Noting this guidance is primarily aimed at the 'live video feed' method for collecting alternative evidence, a verifier could equally follow the same processes as detailed above when considering if photographic evidence would satisfy what needs to be achieved for any inspection.

There are however some key differences to take account of if considering accepting photographic evidence:

Verifier Control.

Prior to submitting photographic evidence, a verifier should have had a discussion with the applicant or relevant person to explain what is to be photographed in order to verify the work undertaken. Thereafter the applicant or their appointed agent will go away and take the photograph(s) of what needs to be captured. The verifier has no control over how the photograph is taken or what it will capture and, as such, it is worth noting that what is received may not demonstrate compliance or satisfy what the verifier expects. As a result, there may be further requests to re-capture the work from a different angle or position.

Scale of Inspection.

Photographic evidence may not be seen as suitable to capture the same level and scale of information than you could achieve through a live video feed, but it does have its place to record simple and

obvious pieces of construction or information, such as installation of a fan or patio door, product markings, signed safety labels, 'in place' energy performance certificates, etc.

Photographs can also be particularly useful when demonstrating completion of remedial work, such as mastic pointing to a window cill, corrected step risers, installation of a tun dish, etc.

Identifying the Relevant Project.

Trust was mentioned as one of the main considerations when contemplating using RVI. This is also relevant when considering acceptance of a photograph as the verifier must be content that the evidence received does relate to the actual project in question. A submitted photo should therefore include some form of aspect of the item being inspected in relation to its location and property to allow evidence to be established. This can be difficult to achieve when the photograph is capturing small items in confined spaces.

Verifying Images.

When deciding that it would be appropriate to consider the use of photographic evidence to verify an element of construction, it is also prudent to ensure that the image received, most likely being a digital image, is a valid depiction of the project and element of construction being verified.

The following list of considerations provides some guidance to verifiers in what to look out for when checking the validity of a digital image received:

- Are there any semi hidden watermarks on the image, this may suggest that the image has been altered by software.

- On more complex sites, where you may expect photographic evidence as confirmation a fault has been repaired, it is wise to take a photograph of the element during physical inspection first, this will allow you to;
    - Notice if there are any oddities to the images, such as odd perspective or unusual additions.
    - Things that you would not usually expect to have been changed in order to repair the fault.
    - Odd lighting or shadows.
    - Overly perfect fixes, it should be expected that the repair appears to the same quality of workmanship as the rest of the project.

- It may be prudent to run the image through an online AI checking app, however caution should be taken to ensure that the image uploaded does not contain any sensitive information.

- Check meta data for an original image, this should contain details of the camera used to take it. This can be checked in the files properties. (usually 'properties' then the 'details' tab when right clicking a file)

If after undertaking these checks of a photographic image, there is any doubt as to its authenticity, the verifier should reject the image and undertake further reasonable enquiry, or a physical inspection to validate the element of work.

Caution should also be exercised where photographs cover life safety elements of construction, and for this reason, a physical inspection should maybe be considered more appropriate following an assessment of risk and the circumstances around why photographic evidence is being presented.

Retrospective Works.

There are cases where applicants or developers start work before a building warrant is approved or proceed without notifying the verifier that work identified in the CCNP is ready to be inspected. In these circumstances the developer or applicant may take a series of record photographs as work progresses. Notwithstanding the fact that in these circumstances work is either being undertaken illegally or by not following due process, in most cases the photographs will not accurately convey what the verifier wishes to see.

Accepting photographic evidence for work that is retrospective or is advanced of the notifiable construction stage as identified in the CCNP should be done so with caution.

Storing the Evidence.

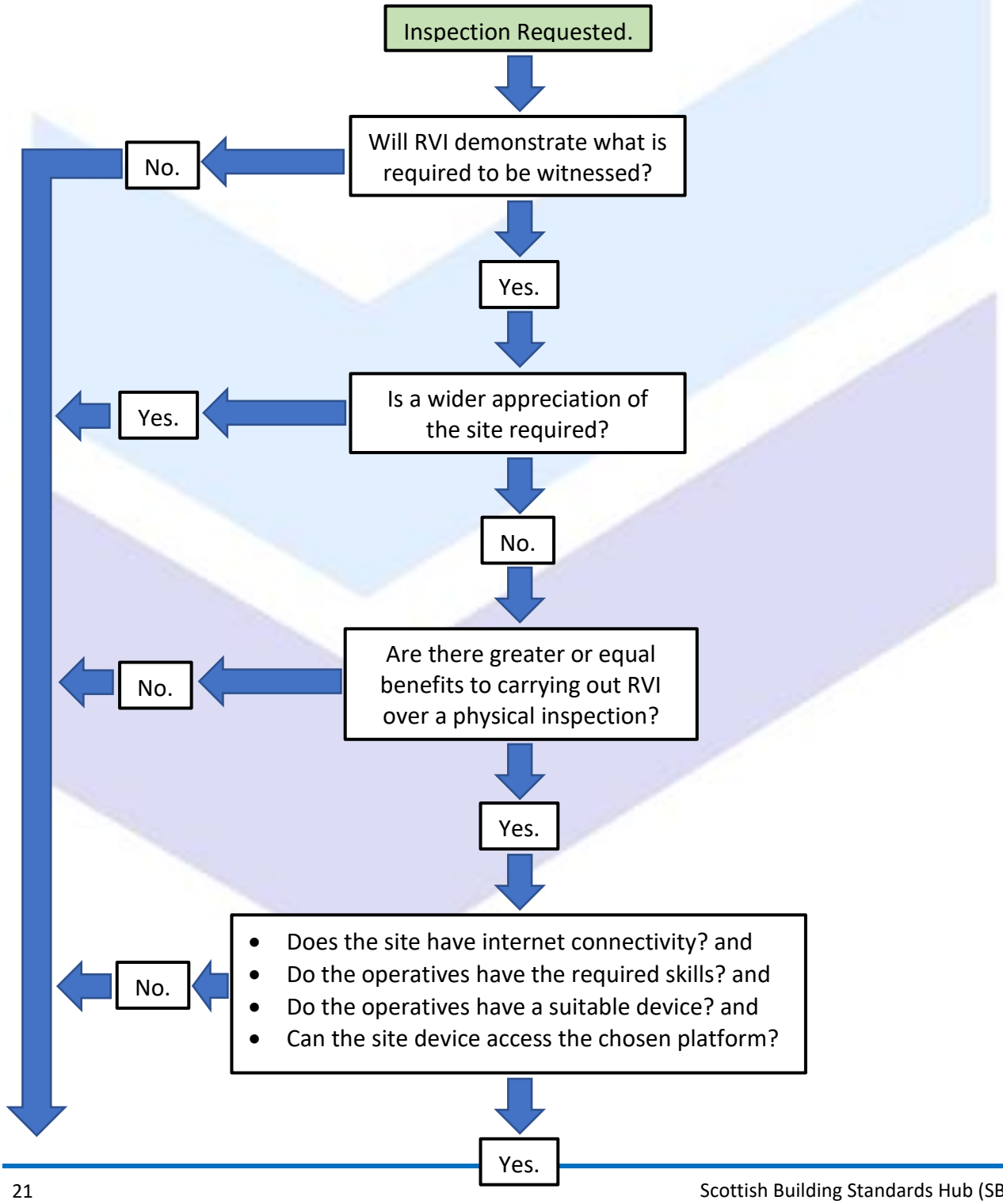
Compared to digital video files, photographs take up a relatively small amount of memory and as such could be, where considered appropriate and suitable to do so, stored within document management systems related to case files.

Capturing inadvertent areas of non-compliance in a single photograph is also much less likely than it is in a recorded video as the verifier only needs to review a still image.

Photographs also generally perform a slightly different function in relation to the verified evidence gathered for a project in that there might be no inspector's written and reported commentary aligned to a photograph like there will be in a live video feed inspection. In these circumstances, the photograph will be the verified proof as opposed to the recorded inspection notes against a live video RVI and, as such, could be kept on file.

Remote Verification Inspection Flowchart:

The following flowchart sets out to 'simply' demonstrate the decision and action process aligned to conducting a live video RVI. Using the chart should ensure that the verifier and customer achieve a comparable or enhanced outcome to the inspection, over that achievable through a physical inspection:



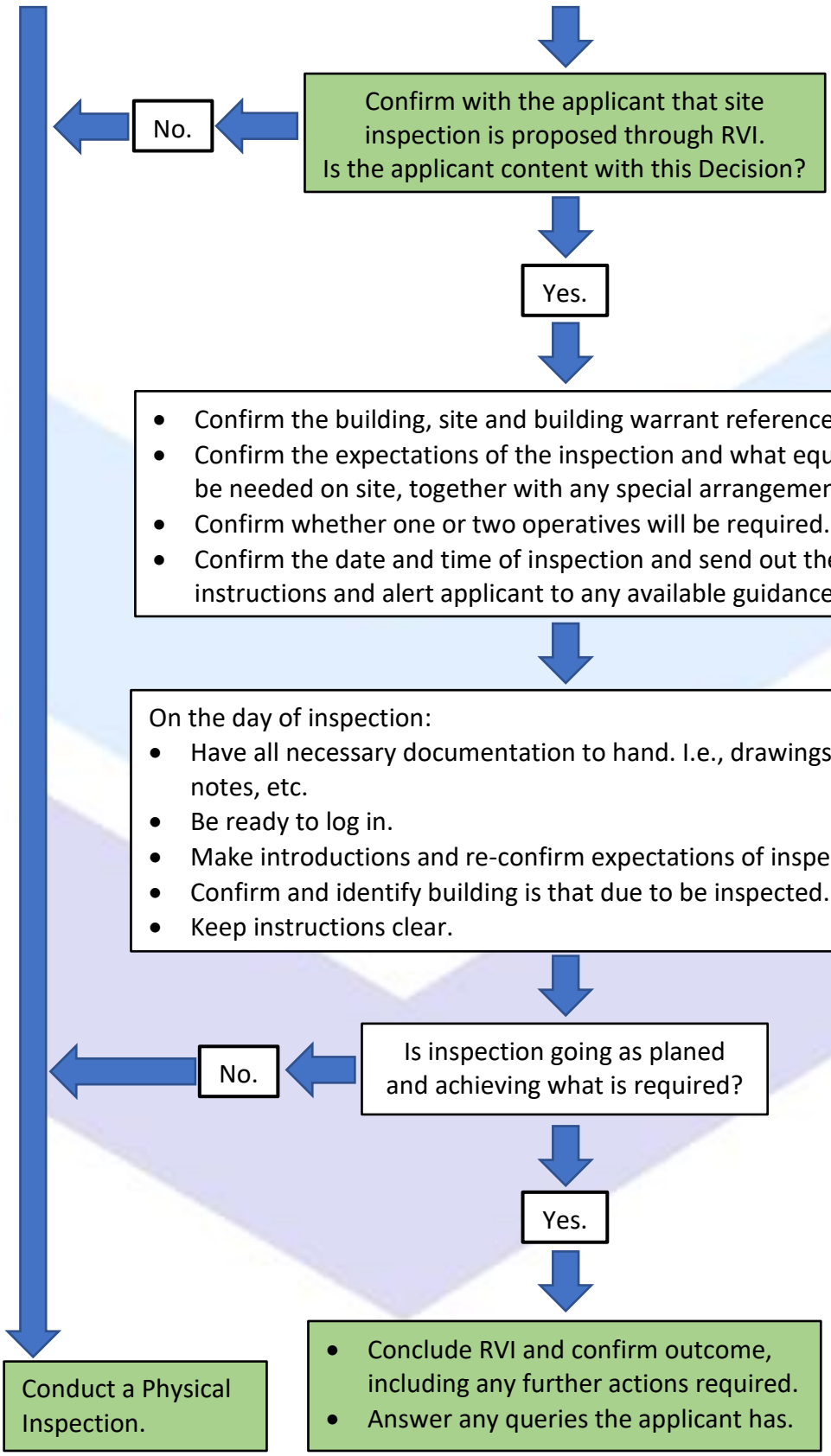

Confirm with the applicant that site inspection is proposed through RVI. Is the applicant content with this Decision?
No.
Yes.
Confirm the building, site and building warrant reference number.
Confirm the expectations of the inspection and what equipment will be needed on site, together with any special arrangements.
Confirm whether one or two operatives will be required.
Confirm the date and time of inspection and send out the joining instructions and alert applicant to any available guidance.
On the day of inspection:
Have all necessary documentation to hand. I.e., drawings, CCNP, past notes, etc.
Be ready to log in.
Make introductions and re-confirm expectations of inspection.
Confirm and identify building is that due to be inspected.
Keep instructions clear.
Is inspection going as planed and achieving what is required?
No.
Yes.
Conclude RVI and confirm outcome, including any further actions required.
Answer any queries the applicant has.
Conduct a Physical Inspection.

Table 1: Examples Where RVI may be Considered Appropriate:

The following table details areas where RVI may be considered as being appropriate for an inspection. To bring some relevance to this, the following tabled guidance is based upon what would normally be expected as a 'Level C' CCNP for a two-storey timber frame house. The examples do not cover all scenarios but give direction to how inspection suitability for RVI could be considered. Similarly, the table may reference instances that will not be relevant for all CCNPs. Reference should be made to 'Example 3' in Annex E within the 'Verification During Construction' handbook.

Key Construction Stage:	Element to be inspected under stage:	Could RVI be considered?	Comments:
Commencement.	Notification given to verifier by the applicant of the intended work commencement date.	**Not applicable.**	• At least 7 days' notice should be provided.
Foundations.	Foundation excavation prior to concrete pour.	**Possible.**	• It would be difficult to assess ground bearing capability through RVI, but the verifier may consider provision of a structural engineer's report as an alternative to inspection if this confirmation was desired. • Trench width and depth could be measured through RVI.
	Concrete foundation construction.	**No.**	• It would be difficult to assess construction through RVI. • Arguably, also difficult to verify on site unless attending at time of concrete pour. • The verifier may consider provision of a structural engineer's report as an alternative to inspection if confirmation is desired.
	Concrete foundation dimensions.	**Yes.**	• Foundation width, step heights and plan dimensions may be witnessed through RVI. • Depth of concrete may be witnessed if soil is pulled back in some locations to measure.
Drainage / Substructure.	Drainage tracks with bedding material in place.	**Yes.**	• Layout could be inspected. • Fall could be witnessed using spirit level and measuring stick. • Type and depth of bedding material could be witnessed if drawn back in some locations.
	Drainage pipes installed.	**Yes.**	• Pipe type and diameter could be witnessed.

			• Fall could be witnessed using spirit level and measuring stick. • Type and depth of fill material could be witnessed if drawn back in some locations. • Depth of pipe cover could be witnessed if drawn back in some locations.
	Drainage air pressure test.	**Possible.**	• Difficult to witness test accurately if test equipment and bunged end are not viewable in same video frame. • Requires considerable trust in operatives. • Test gauge small to read through video media.
	Drainage components. I.e., silt traps, petrol inceptors, septic tanks, etc.	**Possible.**	• Markings identifying what the component is may be visible and readily witnessed. • May be difficult to fully appreciate installation of component through RVI.
	SUDS systems, drainage fields, reed beds, etc.	**No.**	• Potential size and diversity of construction would likely mean full inspection of installation could be problematic through RVI.
	Underbuilding up to DPC level.	**Yes.**	• Materials used would generally be of a type easily recognisable. • Cavity fill could be witnessed. • Wall tie types and location could be witnessed. • Wall leaf width and cavity width could be measured. • Damp proof course material would generally be of a type easily recognisable. • Underfloor vents type and location could be witnessed. • Material and construction of internal dwarf and support walls would generally be of a type easily recognisable.
	Tanking.	**Possible.**	• Some tanking systems will be of a type that is easily recognisable and adequacy and functional quality of joints could be witnessed. • Complex tanking may be difficult to witness remotely. • The verifier may consider provision of an installation

			report / certificate as an alternative to inspection.
	Solum treatment / construction.	**Possible.**	• Some aspects of the construction could be witnessed such as finished solum and DPM provision to edge. • Build up and construction thicknesses would generally not be witnessed. The same would apply if inspecting physically.
Superstructure.	Ground supported concrete floors.	**Possible.**	• Concrete and reinforcement make up could not be witnessed, but arguably, also difficult to verify on site unless attending at time of concrete pour. Extent to what is requested to be witnessed will dictate RVI suitability. • DPM and below slab insulation type and thickness may be witnessed if concrete laid in separate bays / strips or if service penetrations left incomplete. • Battened and floating floor construction, including above slab insulation and vapour barriers may be witnessed if incomplete or service penetrations left.
	Suspended in-situ poured concrete ground floors.	**Possible.**	• Concrete and reinforcement make up could not be witnessed, but arguably, also difficult to verify on site unless attending at time of concrete pour. Extent to what is requested to be witnessed will dictate RVI suitability. • DPM and below slab insulation type and thickness may be witnessed if concrete laid in separate bays / strips or if service penetrations left incomplete. • Battened and floating floor construction, including above slab insulation and vapour barriers may be witnessed if incomplete or service penetrations left.
	Beam and block or other proprietary concrete ground floor systems.	**Possible.**	• Floor system may be of a type generally recognisable.

			• Construction may be witnessed if partially complete or service penetrations left. • Floor void may be witnessed if hatch or service penetrations left. • Battened and floating floor construction, including above slab insulation may be witnessed if incomplete or service penetrations left.
	Suspended timber ground floors.	**Yes.**	• Assuming access panel or floor hatch is left, or if flooring is not complete, joist sizes, type and centres could be witnessed. This includes provision of perimeter joists, blocking, strutting and other components. • Insulation type and thickness may be witnessed at access panels and floor hatches and / or incomplete service penetrations.
	Timber frame superstructure, including wall plates, tie down straps, lintels, beams, upper floors, roof trusses, components, sheathing, etc.	**Yes.**	• Assuming internal linings are not present, all componentry making up the timber frame superstructure should be able to be witnessed. • Any breather paper may need to be pulled back in places to witness sheathing nailing if desired. • Complex structures may be easier and quicker to assess physically, especially if there are several buildings to be checked at the same time on the same site or adjacent sites.
	Wall insulation.	**Yes.**	• Insulation will generally be of a type recognisable. • Thickness could be witnessed by pulling a section out from the frame. • Similarly, any battened insulated zones could be witnessed. • Insulated linings would have to be incomplete at inspection to see material type and thickness. Service penetrations may also show this.

	Roof insulation.	**Yes.**	• Insulation will generally be of a type recognisable. • Thickness could be witnessed by pulling a section out from between the ceiling ties or rafters. • Similarly, any battened insulated zones could be witnessed. • Flat roof insulation or insulation above rafter level would need to be witnessed prior to installation of coverings, etc. • Insulated linings would have to be incomplete at inspection to see material type and thickness. Service penetrations may also show this.
	Internal linings.	**Yes.**	• Linings and insulated linings would have to be incomplete at inspection to see material type and thickness. Service penetrations may also show this.
	External wall leaf.	**Yes.**	• Material will generally be of a type that is recognisable. • Thickness could be witnessed if incomplete or at the reveals of openings.
	Cavity and cavity barriers / fire stops. Damp proof courses, wall ties, breather membranes, etc.	**Possible.**	• The external wall leaf would need to be only partially complete or not commenced to witness the cavity and components installed. • Edge of DPCs may be witnessed around openings on completed external wall leaf prior to rendering / mastic pointing.
Completion.	Windows, doors, steps, barriers and other external components.	**Yes.**	• Window and door types, together with their operation could be witnessed. • Widths and sizes of openings, including cill heights, etc. could be witnessed. • Safety markings should be visible. • Step construction and dimensions could be witnessed. • The same would apply to handrails, barriers and balustrading, etc.

	Roof finishes and rain water goods.	**Yes.**	• These components will be visible and materials will generally be of a type recognisable. • Dimensions could be witnessed. • Slate / tile overlap, batten zones, etc. could not be witnessed, but arguably difficult to witness through a physical inspection also.
	Sockets, switch plates, lighting points, alarms and other controls.	**Yes.**	• Provision and location, including dimensional relationships could be witnessed. • Operation could be demonstrated. • Visible firestopping could be witnessed.
	Plumbing, heating and ventilation installations.	**Yes.**	• Provision and location, including dimensional relationships could be witnessed. • Operation could be demonstrated. • Visible firestopping could be witnessed.
	Internal doors, stairs, barriers and other components.	**Yes.**	• Window and door types, together with their operation could be witnessed. • Widths and sizes of openings, including cill heights, etc. could be witnessed. • Safety markings should be visible. • Stair construction and dimensions could be witnessed. • The same would apply to handrails, barriers and balustrading, etc.
	Paths and drives. Drying areas, oil or gas tanks, log stores and other external considerations.	**Yes.**	• Path and drive material will generally be of a type that is recognisable. • Plan dimensions of paths and drives could be witnessed. • Gradients of paths and drives may be assessed with spirit level and surveyors stick / measuring tape. • Constructional build-up of paths and drives will unlikely be witnessed, but arguably difficult to witness through a physical inspection also. • Drying areas can be witnessed.

			• Fuel stores, dimensions, provision and locational dimensions could be witnessed. • Tank types, capacity and safety features could be witnessed as well as any base provisions and bunding.

Background Reading:

Related Documents:

Verification During Construction: Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and Building Standards Division. Version 1.1 – 01.10.2019.

Verification During Construction – Non-Domestic: Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and Building Standards Division. Version 1.1 – 01.10.2019.

Verification During Construction High Risk Buildings - Verifiers Guidance to Support Implementation of Phase 1 of Compliance Plan Approach: The Building Standards Division. December 2025 V1.0

The Scottish Building Standards Procedural Handbook: The Building Standards Division. Third Edition version 1.9

About Near Me: About Near Me – NHSS National Video Conferencing Service (scot.nhs.uk)

Near Me website: Near Me | TEC Scotland

Background Documents / Reading:

Edinburgh Napier University: WP3: Remote Verification Inspection – Site visits findings.

Edinburgh Napier University: WP5: RVI Research Project: Final Reporting.

Annex A - Verifier RVI Quick Guide:

Local Authority Building Standards Scotland Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)

Remote Verification Inspection (RVI) Verifier Quick Guide

LABSS Practical Guidance for Verifiers Undertaking On-Site Inspection using a Live Video Feed

Version 1.1 – 16th June 2023.

Produced by the Scottish Building Standards Hub for
Local Authority Building Standards Scotland Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)

June 2023.

Document Version Control.

Title: Remote Verification Inspection (RVI) Verifier Quick Guide

Purpose: This guidance document has been produced to support the delivery of on-site verification remotely using a live video feed.

Version:	Date:	Notes:
1.0	07.06.2023	Initial draft.
1.1	16.06.2023	Minor errors corrected.

Introduction:

This practitioner quick guide has been produced to provide practical guidance for verifiers undertaking remote verification inspection (RVI) using a live video feed.

Essential Requirements to Enable a Successful RVI:

Undertaking 'reasonable enquiry' using RVI offers several practical, operational and financial benefits to the verifier and the customer.

To ensure a successful outcome is obtained from any RVI, the proposed inspection must be given due consideration and the necessary requirements be put in place.

Matters to consider are:

1. Will RVI adequately demonstrate or show what is intended to be seen or inspected?
2. Is a wider awareness of the construction site required during the proposed RVI and if it is, is this achievable through RVI?
3. Does the construction site / building have a reliable internet connection to enable RVI to be conducted?
4. Does the site operative have the necessary skills to conduct the RVI?
5. Does the site device have the necessary app or software and internet capability? (Please note the benefits of the **Near Me** platform in this regard.)
6. Do the overall benefits achieved through an RVI outweigh, or equate to, that of conducting a physical inspection?

If the answer to the above questions is 'yes', then you can confirm with the inspection facilitator (site operative) that you intend to proceed with the inspection using a live video feed.

Practical Considerations for Conducting RVI:

Once the decision has been made to conduct an inspection using a live video feed, the practical arrangements for the proposed RVI should be confirmed with the site operative:

- Confirm the date and time of the RVI.

- Confirm the building warrant reference number and, where applicable, which building(s), or plot(s) are to be inspected. Also confirm that the correct building or plot should be identifiable through the RVI link.

- Book the RVI time and date in the diary and send out the meeting request details and joining instructions to those expected to be in attendance.

- Ensure the facilitator of the RVI is aware of the expectations for the inspection and that they will have all necessary measuring devices and equipment available on site. Minimum equipment required will generally include:
    - A measuring tape.
    - A level.
    - Pressure gauge and bungs for drainage and plumbing tests.
    - A torch.

- Where there are tests to be witnessed and / or measurements to be taken, confirm if two on-site operatives are likely to be required, i.e., one operative working the camera and the other demonstrating the test or measurement.

- Confirm what areas of the building or site are to be witnessed to ensure access will be available on the day.

- Establish if artificial lighting will be necessary for the inspection.

- Before the inspection, ensure that previous inspection notes have been reviewed and any outstanding actions are noted.

- Ensure that the relevant drawings and documentation, including the CCNP, are available and to hand for the inspection.

- Be ready to log in and start the inspection on time.

- Make any necessary introductions at the start of the inspection.

- Keep instructions clear and simple when directing the operative around the site or building to ensure the necessary views of construction and detailing are obtained.

- Be ready to end the inspection if it is not demonstrating what needs to be seen. Where deviations from approval or defects are noted, it may not always be necessary to require a physical inspection.

- At the end of the inspection, confirm the outcome together with any remediation measures required and state if a follow up communication will be sent formalising these.

In addition to that listed above, it is worth noting:

- That the person participating in the RVI confirms that they are either the relevant person or are authorised by the relevant person to act on their behalf. In either case they should be aware of their responsibility to fully represent the work to be inspected and that all site health and safety requirements will be met relative to the RVI.

- There must be trust between the verifier and facilitator(s) for the use of RVI to be successful.

- If there is a failure to properly represent the work being verified, then this would result in the RVI ending and this facility as an inspection option being withdrawn.

- That subverting an RVI may delay the acceptance of any completion certificate submitted or the issue of a temporary occupation certificate.

- That the e-Building Standards Portal should be used for the submission of any prior or post supporting information relative to the inspection.

- That additional equipment may enhance the inspection, such as:
    - Gimble stabilisers for the camera phone.
    - Surveyors staff.
    - Selfie stick.
    - Remote camera and / or microphones.

Taking cognisance of these simple steps should ensure a mutually beneficial outcome is obtained from the RVI.

Annex B - Customer (Facilitator) RVI Quick Guide:

Local Authority Building Standards Scotland
Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)

Remote Verification Inspection (RVI) Customer (Facilitator) Quick Guide

LABSS Practical Guidance for Those Facilitating On-Site Inspection using a Live Video Feed

Version 1.1 – 16th June 2023.

Produced by the Scottish Building Standards Hub for
Local Authority Building Standards Scotland Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)

June 2023.

Document Version Control.

Title: Remote Verification Inspection (RVI) Customer (Facilitator) Quick Guide

Purpose: This guidance document has been produced to support the facilitation of on-site inspection remotely using live video feed.

Version:	Date:	Notes:
1.0	07.06.2023	Initial draft.
1.1	16.06.2023	Minor errors corrected.

Introduction:

When contacting building standards to notify them that work, as identified in your Construction Compliance and Notification Plan (CCNP) is ready for an inspection, the verifier will consider if facilitating the request can be done remotely using a live video feed.

This customer quick guide has been produced to provide practical guidance for operatives facilitating remote verification inspection (RVI) using a live video feed.

Essential Requirements to Enable a Successful RVI:

Undertaking 'reasonable enquiry' using RVI offers several practical, operational and financial benefits to you as the customer, and the verifier.

To ensure a successful outcome is obtained from any RVI, the verifier will wish to ensure that due consideration has been given to the proposed inspection and that the necessary requirements can be put in place to enable a remote video feed inspection.

Matters that the verifier will consider are:

1. Will RVI adequately demonstrate or show what is intended to be seen or inspected?

2. Is a wider awareness of the construction site required during the proposed RVI and if it is, is this achievable through RVI?

3. Do the overall benefits achieved through an RVI outweigh, or equate to, that of conducting a physical inspection?

To assist further with the determination if RVI is to be suitable for the inspection, the verifier will also ask you some questions, including:

1. Does the construction site / building have a reliable internet connection to enable RVI to be conducted?

2. Does the site operative have the necessary skills to facilitate the RVI?

3. Does the site device have the necessary app or software and internet capability? (Please note, the verifier may use the **Near Me** platform as the means of conducting the live video feed inspection, which has the added benefit that the site device does not require any special app of software beyond, internet capability.)

If the answer to all the above questions is 'yes', then the verifier will confirm that it is intended to proceed with the inspection using a live video feed.

Practical Considerations for Conducting RVI:

Once the decision has been made to proceed with an inspection using RVI, the verifier will confirm some practical matters with you to ensure the necessary arrangements are in place to facilitate the live video inspection:

1. The date and time for the RVI will be confirmed.

2. The building warrant reference number and, where applicable, the building(s), or plot(s) that are to be inspected will be confirmed.

3. The means of facilitating the RVI will be confirmed and the verifier will send you a meeting request for the inspection which will contain details and joining instructions. This request can be sent to all those you expect to be in attendance.

4. The verifier will confirm the expectations for the inspection and that you will have all necessary measuring devices and equipment available on site. Minimum equipment likely to be required will include:
    - A measuring tape.
    - A level.
    - Pressure gauge and bungs for drainage and plumbing tests.
    - A torch.

5. Where there are tests to be witnessed and / or measurements to be taken, the verifier will confirm if two on-site operatives are likely to be required. I.e., one operative working the camera and the other demonstrating the test or measurement.

6. What areas of the building or site are to be inspected will be confirmed to ensure access will be available.

7. The verifier will also wish to establish if artificial lighting will be necessary for the inspection.

8. If specialist equipment is considered to be of assistance during the RVI, the verifier will confirm this with you. Such additional equipment may include:
    - Gimble stabilisers for the camera phone.
    - Surveyors staff.
    - Selfie stick.
    - Remote camera and / or microphones.

Facilitating the RVI:

On the day of the RVI you should ensure that you are prepared and ready for the inspection to begin. You can do this by:

1. Ensuring all arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the RVI and all equipment and personnel are present to facilitate the inspection.

2. Ensuring all areas of work are ready for the inspection and that you can get access to them.

3. If remedial work is to be re-inspected, you are ready to explain and demonstrate what has been corrected.

4. Ensuring you have the approved plans and documents available for the building(s) to be inspected.

5. Being ready to log in and start the inspection on time.

Before the inspection starts the verifier will have reviewed the notes from any previous inspections to make themselves aware of previous progress and any outstanding actions or remediation to be reviewed. The verifier will also have the relevant drawings and documentation ready, including the CCNP, for the inspection to commence.

When the inspection starts, the verifier will make and request any necessary introductions prior to commencing. The verifier will also seek clarification that the person facilitating in the RVI is either the relevant person or are authorised by the relevant person to act on their behalf. The verifier will also make you aware of your responsibility to fully represent the work being inspected and that all site health and safety requirements will be met relative to the RVI.

During the inspection, the verifier will seek to keep instructions clear and simple when directing you around the site or building to ensure the necessary views of construction and detailing are obtained.

The verifier will also seek clarification that the correct building or plot is that being inspected and is identifiable through the RVI link.

On completion of the inspection, the verifier will confirm the outcome with you together with any remediation measures required. The verifier will further confirm if a follow up communication will be sent formalising the outcome.

Other matters worth noting to facilitate and deliver a successful outcome from an RVI is:

- There must be trust between the verifier and facilitator(s).

- As facilitator, any failure to properly represent the work being inspected, could result in the RVI ending and this facility as an inspection option being withdrawn.

- Subverting an RVI may delay the acceptance of any completion certificate submitted or the issue of a temporary occupation certificate.

- That the e-Building Standards Portal should be used for the submission of any prior or post supporting information relative to the inspection.

Following the above guide should ensure a mutually beneficial outcome is obtained from any inspection conducted using a remote video link.