



What to Expect After Possible Damage from Blasting Has Occurred

If you have a complaint about blasting, please contact the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) at 804-371-0220.

The regulations for the use and storage of explosives are contained in the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) which may be enforced at the local government level and have the services of a local fire official. For those localities that do not enforce the SFPC, the SFMO is the enforcing agency.

Please be aware of the following:

1. The SFMO may conduct an investigation at the construction or blasting site for violations of the SFPC. In the absence of an egregious and eminently harmful violation of the SFPC, the SFMO does not have the authority to stop or suspend a blasting operation. You may hear blasting activity after the incident has been reported, during the investigation, and/or the blasting company has taken steps to prevent further incidents/complaints.
2. The SFPC regulates the amount of explosives that a blaster can use in relation to the closest structure, or a seismograph may be used to ensure the blasts do not exceed legal limits.
3. If a blast causes property damage or personal injury or death, in addition to other appropriate and required notifications, the blaster is required to report to the SFMO.
4. Construction companies who use explosives must have duly issued permits, carry a bond or insurance, and blasters must be certified as a "Blaster" by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The SFMO does not have the authority to order or compel the contractor to pay a homeowner for damaged property.
5. While violations of the SFPC can be treated as a criminal matter, the financial recovery for damage sustained from a blasting incident is treated as a civil matter. It is possible that your insurance company or private attorney may be able to recuperate financial loss from a contractor.