

City of Valdez - City Clerk  
PO Box 307 Valdez Alaska 99686  
RE: Permit #20-000197

Dear Sheri Pierce - City Clerk

I am writing in regards to my building permit and seeking to appeal a decision made by the Building Official regarding the construction of our personal home at 5975 Deep Lake Drive.

During the construction process and more specifically the foundation phase of construction, I failed to complete an inspection for the sonotube deck footings that wrap around the perimeter of our building. It is important to note that these footings are not attached to the foundation wall of the house; but they will support two roof structures attached to the house.

Our building site required us to hire a concrete pump from Anchorage. In the course of pouring the foundation and footings, I made the decision to pour these sonotubes prior to inspection. After completing the foundation wall pour, we had excess concrete and with the sonotubes ready and waiting - I decided to pour them rather than send the concrete back to the plant as waste. I took photos of the sonotubes prior to filling them with concrete to prove that there was adequate reinforcement inside the forms.

Since these footings were poured prior to inspection, the Building Official has deemed them non-compliant and is requiring me to remove and replace them.

I admit that I made a mistake deciding to pour these footings prior to inspection. However, given the circumstances of the tubes being ready to pour, the pump truck on site for a limited amount of time and extra concrete in the truck, I made a decision in good conscience, not foreseeing the extreme ramifications. I have personally seen photos accepted by the Building Official as valid proof during a project and in the moment believed that they would be accepted on this occasion given the circumstances.

Total cost for concrete from Harris Sand and Gravel for the entire pour was \$10,308 and the cost to hire the concrete pump from Anchorage was \$3800. I estimate the total cost per sonotube to be approximately \$1100 with materials, pump and labor. There are 8 tubes that the department has deemed to be replaced, which will require heavy equipment to remove and then all the materials and labor for forming and re-pouring with concrete and pump service. To replace these footings would cost more than the original \$1100 per sonotube.

This is my private residence, there is no reason for me to cut corners. The tubes are done to code, this is a fact. I am asking the committee to overturn the non-compliant ruling from the Building Official and to accept my photos as proof of compliance along with a stamped letter from the project engineer.

Sincerely,  
Rhett Foster  
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[rhett.foster@gmail.com](mailto:rhett.foster@gmail.com)



Photos taken prior to pour showing proper reinforcement. Note: Rebar is sitting on the ground in these photos. When the concrete is poured into the tube, the rebar is then lifted up to proper 3 inch height from the top of the tube.