



Community Development Department

Temporary permitting and inspections procedures/ policies during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We ask for your patience as we do our best to continue to serve you without increasing risk to citizens/customers or our staff.

Permitting

1. The front counter for permitting, inspections, planning and zoning will be staffed for directing phone calls and processing of permits and inspections requests.
2. Applications must be submitted by U S mail.
3. Forms can be found on the City website or if requested a copy can be sent to you through U S mail or email.
4. Appropriate fees may be obtained by calling or emailing our office prior to application. We will need to know the square footage for the project.
5. We will do our best to answer any questions posed through email and our main office telephone line.
6. Staff will contact you (by phone or email) once the applications are reviewed and approved. Permits, plan review comments, and approved plans will then be mailed back to the customer. The customer will then need to sign the office copy of the permit and the plan review comments and mail them back to our office.

Inspections

1. Our goal is to limit personal contact as much as possible as to limit our staff's exposure and to not contribute to the spread of the virus.
2. To accomplish this goal, we will be doing virtual inspections using video calls where possible at the discretion of the Inspector or the Building Official. This may also include photos and video for some minor inspections.
3. If it is determined that a virtual inspection is not possible, a Third-Party Inspector must be used in accordance with our Third-Party Inspection Policy.
4. Virtual inspections requests will be scheduled the same as it has been with a phone call to the main office line 540-332-3862. The only difference is you will be given an exact time for the inspection and must provide us with an email address.
5. Zoom will be utilized for the video call to perform the inspection.

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6. Virtual inspection requirements and preparations.
 - a. Customers must have a smartphone or tablet connected to Wi-Fi or 4G wireless service and an email address.
 - b. Customers will need to download the free Zoom video conferencing application to their phone or tablet.
 - c. Ensure you have the necessary tools (based on the inspection type) readily available. For example, a tape measure, level, GFCI tester, step ladder, and/or flashlight.
 - d. Make sure your mobile device is fully charged.
 - e. Turn off phone or tablet notifications. Notifications can freeze the video feed during the call and could cause delays or require the inspection to be rescheduled.
7. At the scheduled time of inspection:
 - a. The inspector will send an email with a link to the Zoom video call.
 - b. The customer will follow the link in the email to join the video call.
 - c. Walk through the inspection with the inspector, noting the following (if applicable):
 - i. Follow directions from your inspector.
 - ii. Begin at street view looking at structure with the address showing.
 - iii. Walk the inspection in a clockwise direction.
 - iv. Walk the inspection from bottom to top, if multiple floors. If residential, top to bottom to follow load path.
 - v. Make note of any items that require correction.
8. Your inspector will tell you in the video call if the inspection has passed or failed.
9. Results will be processed in the permitting system and an email will be sent confirming that the inspection passed or in the case of a fail a list of the deficiencies.

Property Maintenance

1. Our goal is to limit personal contact as much as possible.
2. We will only be responding to imminent life safety complaints (gas leaks, electrical hazards, improper venting of fuel fired appliances, potential structural collapse etc.). All other complaints will be taken and we will process them once the crisis has passed.
3. We ask that whenever possible the structure be vacated during our inspection. If this is not possible, we will need to assess the situation.
4. Our staff will assess the situation on a case by case basis to determine the best course of action.
5. Our staff will be provided with personal protective equipment and will evaluate the situation on site.

As of 4/9/2020