



City of Portsmouth Department of
Permits and Inspections

Public Memo

From: Douglas K. Smith, MCP; Building/Code Official
Re: COVID 19 OPERATING PROTOCOLS

The following protocols are enacted in an effort to provide the best, most effective and efficient service delivery possible while maintaining public and staff safety per CDC guidelines during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Office work

- Accept and process applications and construction documents via drop box (located outside City Hall), email, regular mail, and delivery service. Hard copies of applications and documents are subject to a 24 hour quarantine after received.
- Answer telephones and emails, respond to inquiries, provide information, and process permits with limited staff on a shift basis
- Accept payment via drop box, mail, or delivery by check or via phone by credit card
- Perform plan review with limited staff

New Construction Inspections

All new commercial and residential construction inspections are being conducted. However, staff health and safety are paramount. Generally, we are not performing any type of inspection on properties where people (owners, contractors, tenants, others) are occupying the space. A contractor or other building representative may accompany the inspector on the inspection provided they are wearing proper personal protective equipment to include masks, gloves, glasses, and maintain proper social distancing of at least 6 feet. The inspector reserves the right to refuse to perform any inspection where they feel their safety may be compromised. Due to our current workload and personnel shortages, the inspector will not wait on site while the contractor corrects any inspection deficiencies.

Our third party inspection policy is an acceptable option for new construction inspections, provided advance approval of inspection staff by the Department of Permits and Inspections. Please see our policy under the forms tab on our web site.

Commercial Reinspections

Commercial Reinspections will be performed in accordance with our Commercial Reinspection procedure. However, we are not performing any type of inspection on

properties where people (owners, contractors, tenants, others) are occupying the space. This should not be an issue since commercial reinspection are only required when a property has been vacant for 90 days or more. A building representative may accompany the inspector on the inspection provided they are wearing proper personal protective equipment to include masks, gloves, glasses, and maintain proper social distancing of at least 6 feet. The inspector reserves the right to refuse to perform any inspection where they feel their safety may be compromised.

Property Maintenance Inspections

Property Maintenance Inspections are limited to exterior inspections and rental inspections. Staff will respond to citizen inquiries regarding these issues as well. However, staff health and safety are paramount. Generally, we are not performing any type of inspection on properties where people (owners, contractors, tenants, others) are occupying the space. During a rental inspection, a building representative may accompany the inspector on the inspection provided they are wearing proper personal protective equipment to include masks, gloves, glasses, and maintain proper social distancing of at least 6 feet. The inspector reserves the right to refuse to perform any inspection where they feel their safety may be compromised. Due to our current workload and personnel shortages, the inspector will not wait while any inspection deficiencies are corrected

Why are we operating in this way?

As stated above, we are attempting to provide the best, most effective and efficient service delivery possible while maintaining public and staff safety during the COVID 19 pandemic. Performing inspections will require staff to enter environments where COVID 19 may exist. We are attempting to find a reasonable balance between complying with CDC guidelines for staff safety and service delivery during unprecedented times. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation while we work through this pandemic.

Please be patient and expect delays. These services are subject to change with little or no advance notice.