



**Bureau of
Development
Services** FROM CONCEPT
TO CONSTRUCTION

SERVICE UPDATE

April 6, 2020

Update for Week of April 6, 2020 - **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

The Bureau of Development Services is committed to protecting public health and is rapidly changing the ways we deliver services in order help slow the spread of COVID-19 while also supporting the economy and people's livelihoods. **We will keep this section of our website updated – please check back. Updates will be provided weekly.**

OVERVIEW

Walk-in services to the Development Services Center have been temporarily suspended in compliance with [Governor Brown's Executive Order](#). Permit intake and plan review are proceeding, but with some limitations that are outlined further in this service update (See 1. New Permit Intakes and 2. Plan Review for Current Permits). These limitations are only temporary while we continue to provide our staff with the tools and systems required to work remotely. Inspections services are continuing. For a detailed explanation describing our current limitations and service priorities, please read the Background section below.

We thank you for your patience during this extraordinary time.

SERVICES ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

Many of our services are available to you from your home. Using [Development Hub PDX](#), you can apply online for **electrical, mechanical, or plumbing permits that [do not require plan review](#)**. You can also [schedule inspections for trade permits obtained online](#), [update contact information](#), [pay a variety of fees](#) and download billing statements all from a computer or mobile device. BDS also offers a [Remote Video Re-inspection](#) service for simple on-site inspections involving minor corrections.

For the latest information on our service availability (for the week of April 6), please click on the links below according to your interest.

1. [New Permit Intakes](#)
2. [Plan Review for Current Permits](#)
3. [Corrections to Plans](#)
4. [Inspections](#)
5. [Land Use Services](#)
6. [FIR and FPP Programs](#)
7. [Questions about Property, Projects and Records](#)
8. [Trade Permits](#)

9. [Payments](#)
10. [Property Compliance - Enforcement and Liens](#)
11. [Permitting and Inspections Services from Other Bureaus](#)

Please Check Back!

This is an unprecedented and rapidly evolving situation. This information will be updated as conditions change. Please check back frequently for the latest information about our services and operations. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the major challenge BDS is working to address is related to permitting and the technology needed to provide that service. Permit plan reviewers from BDS and other bureaus are all working from home, but the City's computer network was not designed to support large numbers of City employees working remotely. The large number of remote users has impacted network speed, so if many more BDS staff are allowed remote access to the City's network, it will impact the speed and functioning of the overall system, including impacting 911 dispatchers and Police and Fire personnel who need that bandwidth daily. This issue will take several weeks to resolve, but in the meantime, we are working quickly on other short-term solutions to be able to restore the full breadth of permitting services to the community.

It is important to understand the "why" behind the temporary tiered approach the City has taken with intake of permits and review priorities while we work to address the technology issue described above. The City's focus is starting at the tail end of the pipeline when looking at the continuum from permit application, to review and issuance, to inspections. The following describes the sequence of where we are focusing our resources and why:

1. **Projects already under construction** – We are working to ensure that **projects already under construction** can continue, get the inspections they need, as well as the permits for revisions and deferred submittals that they need to be able to complete construction in a timely way, and get their Certificates of Occupancy. This is important for several reasons, including saving jobs in this sector of the economy, and avoiding delays that could impact the ability to get building materials, fixtures, etc. due to disruption of global supply chains.
2. **Permits already in the pipeline** – Simultaneously, we are working to get as many of the **permits already in the pipeline** reviewed and issued as possible before the projected late-April early-May peak in coronavirus cases in the Portland Metro area to avoid delays. This way, if the contractor has enough personnel, once the permit is issued, they can proceed with construction. Most of these permit plans are on paper, which is especially challenging when reviewers are all working from home.
NOTE: While we are working to clear out the permits already in the pipeline (and the paper associated with them), we are simultaneously creating the new tools and processes to shift to digital permit submittal for ALL new permits that will come into the pipeline when we open the gate to accept more types of new permits.
3. **Acceptance of new permit applications** - Currently, the City is only accepting new permit applications for Tier 1 and 2 projects. When the City starts accepting new permit applications for Tiers 3-5, these will be digital submittals, not paper. The City's ePlans system is already being used for large commercial projects that have a BDS Process Manager assigned. But instead of rolling that new tool out in phases as was planned,

due to the pandemic, we now need to find a way to take in ALL new permits digitally, without the opportunity to train customers on how to use the new ePlans software, ProjectDox. So instead, we are going to use PDFs for the immediate situation, for projects that don't have a BDS Process Manager assigned. We are testing approximately 18 permits currently to make sure it works, and we are targeting April 13th as when we hope to be ready to take in permits for Tiers 1-4 digitally. We are also testing digital submittal using PDFs for a new single-family residential permit the week of April 6. Depending on how that goes, possibly some new single-family residential permits may be accepted, in a metered way, the week of April 13 or 20, but we must first make sure the system works. More information will be provided here as it is available, so please check back at the BDS website.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access.

For accommodations, modifications, translation, interpretation or other services, please call 503-823-7300, the TTY at 503-823-6868 or the Oregon Relay Service: 711.

Traducción e interpretación | Chuyển Ngữ hoặc Phiên Dịch | 翻译或传译

Письменный или устный перевод | 翻訳または通訳 | Traducere sau Interpretare

번역 및 통역 | Письмовий або усний переклад | Turjumida ama Fasiraadda

الترجمة التحريرية أو الشفوية | ການແປພາສາ ຫຼື ການອະທິບາຍ