



ROCHESTER

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BUILDING SAFETY DEPARTMENT
4001 West River Pkwy NW,
Suite 100 Rochester, MN 55901-
6971
(507) 328-2600
FAX (507) 328-2601

CITY OF ROCHESTER BUILDING SAFETY DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC SERVICE DESK CLOSURE AND PROCESS CHANGE INFORMATION IN TIME OF THE COVID19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Purpose:

This information sheet serves to update the status and changes to our processes resulting from the health emergency precautions related to the COVID19 pandemic. Our goal is to protect the health and safety of both our staff and our community partners during this time with minimal impact and disruption to services. Process changes currently enacted are listed below.

Current Operational Status:

City Leadership has closed all public service desk locations throughout the City of Rochester. City employees are still working, answering phone calls and emails, processing permits and making inspections. We are also applying social distancing when performing inspections and using special protocols where possible.

To be clear, the office is not closed, just closed to the public from direct in-person interactions.

Communications:

1. Face-to-face: There shall be no face-to-face meetings or direct in-person contact at City buildings. No exceptions to this will be allowed (excluding field work described below)
2. Telephone: Telephone communications shall occur using the department phone number 507-328-2600 as normal or by calling directly to the person you need to reach
3. Email: Email communication shall continue as normal working directly with staff or using the general department mailboxes:
 - a. For general department items contact buildingsafety@rochestermn.gov
 - b. For rental housing items contact bsrental@rochestermn.gov

Permit Request & Issuance:

1. Electronic: Online access for many services is still available on the Citizen Access website at <https://aca.rochestermn.gov/CitizenAccess/Default.aspx> where the following can be done:
 - a. Permits, building and trades, can be paid for by credit card when ready to issue
 - b. Licensed professionals can submit applications for trade permits
 - c. Inspections can be scheduled for building and trade permits
 - d. Rental housing fees can be paid
2. Via Email: Communication related to permit applications and plans can be handled via email with the staff appropriate to addressing your questions. During this time, anyone unable to submit permit applications can send them in by email to the appropriate email address as noted above. As permits are approved for issue and paid,

by online payment, checks mailed in or dropped off, or using a Trust Account, staff will communicate once the permit package is ready for pickup at the department in the cordoned off section of the lobby as marked by signs.

3. Drop Off: Permit applications, not submitted online or via email, may be left in the appropriately marked drop off box just inside the Building Safety entrance. Applications dropped off can be paid with a credit card online once they are ready to issue on the [Citizen Access](#) website, by dropping off or mailing in a check clearly marked with the permit details, or using an existing Trust Account.
4. Pick Up: Approved permits may be picked up in the designated section of the Building Safety lobby. When a permit packet is ready to be picked up, you will be contacted by the department. Please confirm an estimated time and date the permit and approved drawings will be picked up so they can be ready to be pick up in the designated area of the lobby.

Inspections and other Guidance:

1. Rental housing
 - a. Inspections are cancelled until further notice with nothing being scheduled until after May 1st, which is subject to change as the situation progresses
2. Occupied dwelling construction inspections (building & trades)
 - a. Inspectors will not enter occupied dwellings and Building Safety does not consider the residents not being home at the time of inspection as unoccupied
 - b. Inspectors will work with permit holders to conduct inspections (building and trades) of occupied dwellings by alternative means if possible
 - i. This means conducting the inspection by recording a video, taking photos, or a video call (using Face Time for example)
 - ii. Please provide contact information when scheduling the inspection
 - c. We will conduct emergency inspections such as electrical service or fuel gas
3. Non-occupied dwellings and buildings
 - a. New construction inspection will continue with no change at this time
 - b. Commercial inspections will continue with no change other than any protocols to observe put in place by the customers
4. Investigations and inspections of citizen concerns/service requests will continue