

MEMORANDUM

Community Development



City of Bothell™

DATE: March 20, 2020

TO: Building Division/Permit Services

FROM: David Swasey, Building Official

SUBJECT: Virtual inspection and social distancing guidelines due to COVID-19

The purpose of this memorandum is to explain the use of and need of virtual inspection methods/tools on site due to COVID-19 conditions that may affect inspector health and safety.

Reasons to activate these guidelines are not intended to replace personnel, as the most effective way to conduct inspections is to be physically on site, but rather to assist in completing inspections in times when performing inspections may be hazardous to inspector's health and/or safety.

All inspectors (and back-up inspectors) need to have access to Facetime and Skype on I-Pads. Those inspectors without designated I-Pads will not perform these inspections until such tools are made available to them. These protocols will be activated/authorized by the BO or CD Director and the inspection types to be covered under these protocols are as designated by the Building Official below for each situation. For purposes of these protocols, the term "requestor" will mean inspection requestor, person on site assisting with the virtual inspection and/or the applicant.

Inspectors will contact the applicant/requestor (in am for am requests and in late am for pm requests) and let them know what items will be needed, based on inspection type (measuring tape, flashlight, permit information, etc). Any items needed in advance (manufacturer specifications) will be asked for by the inspector at this time. They will explain to the requestor (or email the pdf) the items below under "the following shall take place at each inspection" so the requestor is prepared.

The inspector will send a virtual call request to the requestor. The inspector will greet the requestor, identify themselves and show their identification via their virtual device. The inspector will confirm the inspection type being requested and will then ask the requestor to proceed to the location of the inspection request.

Social distancing for inspections done in-person:

At all inspections:

- Inspectors will ask if anyone within the building/near the inspection area(s) is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath - per CDC), if someone has been in contact with someone experiencing symptoms or if they have had or been near anyone who has/had COVID-19. If yes, to any of these questions then the requestor will need to reschedule for a week later: **non-negotiable** (CDC guidelines – 7 days after symptoms first appear). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- Inspectors will use gloves at all inspections and use hand sanitizer as needed in the vehicle
- Inspectors will explain, prior to the inspection, that there is a social distancing requirement of 6-ft required from the inspector and anyone within the building at all times

New Construction: items needed for inspections (plans/permit/documents) will be left in a clearly visible location and nobody will be in the inspection area (within the structure for residential)

Occupied structures: 6 ft distance is to be maintained at all times. Inspector will ask for the needed inspection documents to be left near the place of the inspection and for the requestor to show them where the inspection location is within the building.

Inspectors will notify their supervisor immediately if they believe they have been exposed to someone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and who has had COVID-19.

The following shall take place at the time of each inspection:

- The requestor will make visible the physical address of the site
- The requestor will make available and visible the permit and approved plans (and manufacturer installation guidelines), as needed by the inspector
- The inspector will direct the requestor in where to position the requestor's electronic device being used to conduct the inspection. The requestor will follow directions of the inspector so all areas are inspected to the satisfaction of the inspector.
- The inspector will email any correction items to the requestor, as per normal inspection protocols via IG Inspect, and sign off the inspection as failed or partially passed.
- If approved, the inspector will sign off the inspection in IG Inspect or Energov as approved and will add a note indicating "approved via VI".

Virtual Inspection's allowed for inspections due to COVID-19:

- As per recommendation of King County Health Dept's recommendations to utilize social distancing measures during the COVID-19 outbreak and based on concerns from field personnel conducting inspections within occupied structures where affected persons may be, virtual inspections will be offered within occupied residences but are limited to those inspections the inspector feels comfortable conducting remotely. Any other inspections and inspections solely at the exterior (including the garage) of occupied structures will be inspected

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via on-site inspection, provided, access to inspection locations do not require travel through the occupied structure.

Additional requirements during activation of these protocols:

- For inspections at any site the inspector will assess the situation and environment. If they do not feel comfortable with the site conditions, in relation to their health and safety, they will cease the inspection at that point and ask the requestor to follow virtual inspection protocols the same day (if time allows) or the following day through a separate inspection request. The inspector will indicate the reasons for ceasing the inspection in IG Inspect/Energov under notes