



## City of Newcastle COVID-19 Procedures

### - Building Permit Applications and Inspections -

The following provisions will ensure that construction activity in the City of Newcastle complies with Governor Inslee's *Stay Home, Stay Healthy Proclamation (20-25)*, his associated *Construction Guidance Memorandum* issued March 25, 2020, and his Phase 1 Construction Restart COVID-19 Job Site Requirements (hereafter and collectively referred to as "Governor's Order").

**"Essential Project"** includes all uses defined in the Governor's Order. Applicants shall describe how a proposed essential project meets the definition and criteria of "essential" in the Governor's Order.

**Acceptance of Building Permit Applications:** Building Permit Applications will be accepted under the following four scenarios:

1. The applicant attests that the project is an "essential" project as defined by the Governor's Order and describes how it meets the criteria;
2. The applicant attests that the project is for "emergency repair" as provided by the Governor's Order and as defined below;
3. The applicant acknowledges that the application will be processed but not issued until the Governor's Order is lifted; or
4. The application is for a public entity or governmental function or facility, including but not limited to publicly financed low-income housing.

**Work on Existing Structures:** Work on existing structures may recommence with a City-approved **comprehensive COVID-19 exposure control, mitigation, and recovery plan (Plan)** as described in Governor Inslee's *Phase I Construction Restart COVID-19 Jobsite Requirements*. Otherwise, work may only commence only in the following situations:

- a. The applicant/builder attests that the structure is an essential project as defined under the Governor's Order, in which case the applicant shall describe how the project meets the criteria for essential structure;
- b. The work is needed to prevent spoliation as defined below;
- c. The work is needed to address an unsafe condition as defined below;
- d. The work is needed as an emergency repair as defined below;
- e. The work is for a single family dwelling and is being done solely by the occupant of the home under any and all necessary permits. Any work on the home that requires an outside contractor or that entails a non-occupant of the home other than an immediate family member is not permitted unless it falls under other exceptions defined herein; or

- f. The work is for a public entity or governmental function or facility, including but not limited to publicly financed low-income housing.

**“Prevention of spoliation”** allows a builder to go no further than drying in and securing a non-essential or residential structure to prevent water damage and trespass, up to and including no more than roofing, siding, windows and doors. All other exterior work such as railings, porches, decks, applied trim (e.g., shutters) fixtures, etc., is not considered necessary for structural preservation or security and is not permitted as a spoliation prevention measure. Interior work is also not permitted except as allowed under *Emergency Repairs* below.

**Unsafe conditions include:**

- a. Open structures that may be attractive to minors or vandals.
- b. Unprotected fall hazard areas that are open to the public, such as stairs without railings, open pits or excavations. Only the minimum work necessary to make fall hazard areas safe is permitted, such as temporary guardrails, backfill of foundations and/or installation of temporary security fences.
- c. Soil erosion and off-site runoff or run-off into critical areas.
- d. Unstable slope conditions.

**Emergency Repairs cover:**

- a. Damage to occupied structures that creates an unsafe or unsecure condition (e.g., damaged structural components of building, damaged stairs and rails, or damaged protective elements of a building such as roofing, siding, windows, or doors).
- b. Damage to non-occupied structures that create an unsecure condition or that expose the structure to water damage or temperature damage (e.g., freezing pipes).
- c. Broken or leaking water or sewer pipes.
- d. Broken heating, air and/or water systems.
- e. Electrical damage or malfunctions.
- f. Malfunctioning appliances.
- g. Foundational damage that poses an imminent threat to a building’s structural integrity.
- h. Other conditions that pose an imminent threat to the health or safety of the building’s occupants or the public.

**Inspections Allowed:** Inspections shall only be scheduled for the following types of projects:

- 1. Work performed under an approved **comprehensive COVID-19 exposure control, mitigation, and recovery plan** (Plan) as described in Governor Inslee’s Phase I *Construction Restart COVID-19 Jobsite Requirements*.

2. Essential or government projects as defined above.
3. Work to prevent spoliation as defined above.
4. Work to address an unsafe condition as defined above.
5. Work pertaining to an emergency repair as defined above.
6. Work performed by the occupant of a single-family home as defined above (unless otherwise prohibited under the Governor's order – this is still under review).

**Inspection Limitations:** Inspections shall be limited to video inspections only\*, via Google Duo. If the work cannot be reasonably inspected by video or other alternate method, the Building Inspector has the discretion to:

- a. Arrange an on-site visit if the structure is not occupied and the inspection can occur at a time when there are no other individuals present.
- b. Defer the inspection to a later date if the inspector determines that there are no imminent safety risks in not inspecting the work now.; or
- c. Inform the applicant that work on the project must cease until an inspection can be scheduled for a later time when conditions allow safe access.

\* Note: Final inspections will be performed by the Building Inspector in person at the job site, subject to the above discretionary safety measures.