



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

## SERVICE UPDATE

April 20, 2020

**Update for Week of April 20, 2020 - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

The Bureau of Development Services is committed to protecting public health and is changing our service delivery 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.**

● **New!** [At a Glance: Permitting & Forecasted Service Levels](#) ●

## 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 described below in 1. New Permit Intakes and 2. Plan Review for Current Permits. These limitations are temporary while we continue to provide 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 online. 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 20), 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. [Corrections to Electronic Plans \(Interim Review Process\)](#)

5. [Inspections](#)
6. [Land Use Services](#)
7. [FPP and FIR Programs](#)
8. [Questions about Property, Projects and Records](#)
9. [Trade Permits](#)
10. [Payments](#)
11. [Property Compliance - Enforcement and Liens](#)
12. [Permitting and Inspections Services from Other Bureaus](#)

[Click here](#) for more information about our current and anticipated permitting service levels through April.

### **Please Check Back!**

This is an unprecedented and rapidly evolving situation. This information will be updated as conditions change. **Please check back until normal operations resume.**

## **BACKGROUND**

Currently, the major challenge BDS is working to address is related to permitting and the technology needed to provide that service remotely. 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 number of City employees working remotely. This 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 bandwidth needed for 911 dispatchers and Police and Fire personnel. This issue is being addressed, but in the meantime, we are working on other short-term solutions to restore the full breadth of permitting services to the community.

It is important to understand the "why" behind the temporarily tiered approach the City has taken to prioritize the intake of permits and plan review while we address the technology issue described above. 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 to be able to complete construction in a timely way, and receive a Certificate 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 obtain building materials, fixtures, and other items due to disruption of global supply chains.
2. **Permits already in the pipeline** – Simultaneously, we are working to get as many of the previously submitted permit applications reviewed and issued to avoid delays. This way, once the permit is issued, the contractor 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 process the permit applications already received (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 accept more types of new permits.

3. **Acceptance of new permit applications - As of April 20, the City is accepting new permit applications for projects in Tiers 1-6 (electronic submittals only).** When applications for Tier 7 are accepted they will be electronic submittals also. The City's ePlans system is already being used for large commercial projects that have a BDS Process Manager assigned. Instead of a planned phased rollout, we now need to find a way to accept all new permits digitally, without the opportunity to train customers in using 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 have tested approximately 30 Tier 1 and Tier 2 permits to make sure it works. We are also testing PDF submittals for a new single-family residential (NSFR) permit and a single-family residential demolition permit. Based on initial feedback from these tests, BDS began accepting a limited number of both of these permit types on April 13. Additionally, BDS accepts Tier 3 (Portland Housing Bureau affordable housing projects that are not working with BDS Process Management/Major Projects Group), and Tier 4 (Regulated affordable housing projects with associated grant funding that are not working with BDS Process Management/Major Projects Group). More information will be provided here on a weekly basis, so please check back regularly.