



# Construction Inspections Updates

Department of Planning and Economic Development

May 2020

COVID-19 has prompted Van Buren Charter Township to revisit and reconsider its construction inspections policies. Construction inspections must be allowed to proceed to the extent necessary to verify compliance with applicable codes without compromising the health of contractors, inspectors, or site occupants. Likewise, public health does not have to be a trade-off for thorough review of construction activities and safe occupancy of sites. This document serves as a Township construction inspection guide for contractors to demonstrate how we will safely proceed and balance public health and complete construction review.

## HOW TO SCHEDULE AN INSPECTION

Many aspects of the construction inspection process will remain unchanged. The Township is currently continuing to allow call-in inspections.

- **By phone.** Inspection requests may be made by dialing **734-699-8910** and leaving a voicemail.
- **By email.** Inspection requests may be directed to [building@vanburen-mi.org](mailto:building@vanburen-mi.org).

All inspection requests should include, in writing or by voicemail, the following information:

- **Name** of requester.
- **Company** of requester if applicable.
- **Contact phone number.**
- **Address of site** for the inspection request.
- **Permit number** for the inspection request.
- **Type of inspection.**
- **Preferred inspection date.** Note: Inspection requests will be processed in the order in which they were received. Slight delays may be necessary in the period immediately following the Township's closure due to COVID-19 in Spring 2020 due to a likely high volume of inspection requests.

## INSPECTION SEQUENCE

Certain types of inspections will rely on previous inspections being complete first. The Planning and Economic Development Department will coordinate with contractors and applicants to establish the appropriate permitting sequence.



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## REMOTE INSPECTIONS

Many building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical construction activities can best be inspected in person, on-site. However, certain inspections can be adequately performed in the interest of public health if certain benchmarks are demonstrated:

- **Thorough imagery** through photographs or a virtual tour using Zoom
- **Clear site information** including photographs or a virtual Zoom tour which demonstrates the site address in relation to the work being done
- **Exterior view** of all aspects of the item being inspected is available, and it is not necessary to view connections between two new components, view internal or underground components of scope items, or for the building official to take detailed field measurements.
- A **clear description of work** can be provided by the contractor or applicant.
- **Snapshot** verification is possible, meaning that the inspection does not require verification of a process, such as water running through a pipe without leaking.

A list of a few common acceptable virtual inspection items, subject to the above benchmarks being met, is provided here:

If the type of inspection you are requesting is not on this list and you would like to determine if it can become eligible, please contact (734) 699-8910 and leave a voicemail with your question or send a question via email at [building@vanburen-mi.org](mailto:building@vanburen-mi.org).

Open board inspection for roofing (building)

Insulation (building)

Hot water heater replacement (plumbing and mechanical)

Humidifier (mechanical)

Furnace / AC / Dryer (electrical)

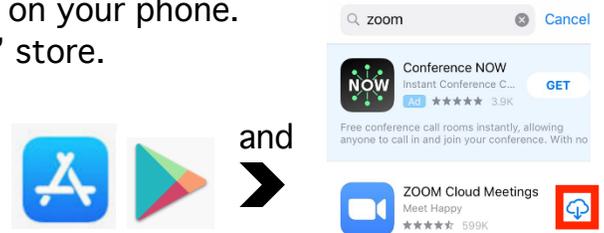
Re-inspections

### How to Proceed: What do I need prior to inspections?

You will need a high-quality camera OR a mobile device with internet access to get started.

## To get started with Zoom-based inspections:

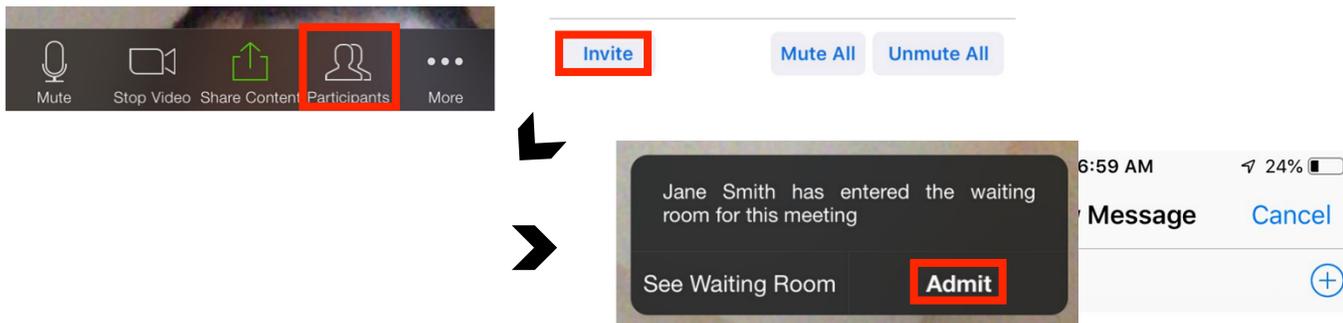
1. For iPhone devices, visit the “App Store” on your phone.  
For Android users, visit the “Google Play” store.
2. Search for and download “Zoom”:
3. Follow the instructions to open Zoom  
initiate activation.



## At the inspection:

**Make Zoom calls** to the building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical inspector via the following steps:

1. Open the Zoom app.
2. Click “participants” and click “invite”.
3. Type the inspector’s phone number in the “To” line.
4. Click “admit” when the inspector’s name or number appears as being in the “waiting room”:
5. You should now be able to interact with the inspector.



**To receive Zoom calls from** the building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical inspector via the following steps:

1. Open your text messages and respond to a text invitation from the inspector:
2. Enter your first and last name and click “continue”.
3. Allow your mobile device’s Zoom app to use your camera and microphone.
4. “Join with Video”.

5. You should now be able to interact with the inspector.



For any remote inspection, in the event that the remote exchange of information does not adequately convey the condition being reviewed, the Planning and Economic Development Department reserves the right to require a follow-up on-site inspection when conditions allow for such inspection.

When a virtual inspection passes, Department staff will update the Township's database and send an email expressing the same to the contractor / applicant to serve as documentation that an inspection has been approved by the Township. Once Township operations return to normal, the client may obtain final approved permit.

## ON SITE INSPECTIONS:

On site inspections will be required to meet applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), State of Michigan, and Township policies regarding safe construction site practices. These include the following requirements of State of Michigan Executive Order 2020-77, Section 11, as subsequently revised, if revised:

11. Businesses, operations, and government agencies that remain open for in-person work must, at a minimum:
  - a. Develop a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan, consistent with recommendations in Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19, developed by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and available [here](#). Such plan must be available at company headquarters or the worksite.
  - b. Restrict the number of workers present on premises to no more than is strictly necessary to perform the in-person work permitted under this order.
  - c. Promote remote work to the fullest extent possible.
  - d. Keep workers and patrons who are on premises at least six feet from one another to the maximum extent possible.

- e. Require masks to be worn when workers cannot consistently maintain six feet of separation from other individuals in the workplace, and consider face shields when workers cannot consistently maintain three feet of separation from other individuals in the workplace.
- f. Increase standards of facility cleaning and disinfection to limit worker and patron exposure to COVID-19, as well as adopting protocols to clean and disinfect in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in the workplace.
- g. Adopt policies to prevent workers from entering the premises if they display respiratory symptoms or have had contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.
- h. Adopt any other social distancing practices and mitigation measures recommended by the CDC.
- i. Businesses or operations whose in-person work is permitted under sections 10(c) through 10(f) of this order must also:
  - 1. Prohibit gatherings of any size in which people cannot maintain six feet of distance from one another.
  - 2. Limit in-person interaction with clients and patrons to the maximum extent possible, and barring any such interaction in which people cannot maintain six feet of distance from one another.
  - 3. Provide personal protective equipment such as gloves, goggles, face shields, and face masks as appropriate for the activity being performed.
  - 4. Adopt protocols to limit the sharing of tools and equipment to the maximum extent possible and to ensure frequent and thorough cleaning of tools, equipment, and frequently touched surfaces.
- j. Businesses or operations in the construction industry must also:**
  - 1. Adhere to all of the provisions in subsection (h) of this section.
  - 2. Designate a site-specific supervisor to monitor and oversee the implementation of COVID-19 control strategies developed under subsection (a) of this section. The supervisor must remain on-site at all times during activities. An on-site worker may be designated to perform the supervisory role.
  - 3. Conduct a daily entry screening protocol for workers and visitors entering the worksite, including a questionnaire covering symptoms and exposure to people with possible COVID-19, together with, if possible, a temperature screening.
  - 4. Create dedicated entry point(s) at every worksite, if possible, for daily screening as provided in subprovision (3) of this subsection,



# Construction Inspections Updates

Department of Planning and Economic Development

May 2020

or in the alternative issue stickers or other indicators to workers to show that they received a screening before entering the worksite that day.

5. Provide instructions for the distribution of personal protective equipment and designate on-site locations for soiled masks.
6. Encourage or require the use of work gloves, as appropriate, to prevent skin contact with contaminated surfaces.
7. Identify choke points and high-risk areas where workers must stand near one another (such as hallways, hoists and elevators, break areas, water stations, and buses) and control their access and use (including through physical barriers) so that social distancing is maintained.
8. Ensure there are sufficient hand-washing or hand-sanitizing stations at the worksite to enable easy access by workers.
9. Notify contractors (if a subcontractor) or owners (if a contractor) of any confirmed COVID-19 cases among workers at the worksite.
10. Restrict unnecessary movement between project sites.
11. Create protocols for minimizing personal contact upon delivery of materials to the worksite.