



PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

March 26, 2020 (updated April 7, 2020)

COVID-19 Response: Governor's order requires halt to all new septic construction work

EFFECTIVE THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2020: All commercial and residential new septic and well construction work must cease, through May 4th unless amended by the state government.

The Governor issued a [Construction Guidance letter](#) on March 25 clarifying what work is not allowed under the Stay Home, Stay Safe order. Based on this letter, Kitsap Public Health is updating its guidance related to septic construction and permitting:

Work the Health District will not continue during the Stay Home Stay Safe Order:

The Health District will cease to review any new construction applications, which include:

1. New well construction visits
2. New well site inspections
3. New Building Site Applications
4. New Building Clearances
5. New Installations Permits*

** Any permit previously called in for ready will be inspected. These systems need to be inspected to protect the integrity of the system and the public's health. To maintain social distancing, we will not meet contractors or inspect these systems with people present.*

Any system that has been started, but has not completed or called in for inspection, must be covered to be protected from the elements.

Work the Health District will continue during the Stay Home Stay Safe Order:

The Health District will continue to review the following septic applications:

1. Repair Building Site Applications

2. Building Clearances for emergency repairs (must specify the emergency on the application).
3. Repair Installations Permits.
4. Emergency tank/component replacement permits.
5. Emergency well decommissioning's that pose an imminent health hazard/concern.
6. Emergency minor repair work identified through emergency calls to your offices, maintenance reports, or pump reports.

What about repairs and soil log inspections?

We will conduct these inspections when a joint site visit is needed for repairs only. To maintain social distancing, inspectors will not review the work standing next to the designer. The holes can be dug, the designer can back away, and we can move in to evaluate the soils. Discussions can occur at distances of at least 6 feet or over the phone.

What about Property Conveyances and Water Status Reports?

To support the effort to complete financial transactions, we will continue to perform our property conveyance inspection and water status reports. We will not meet with anyone onsite. If a pump house needs to be unlocked, we will make arrangements to complete this work without someone present. If this cannot be done, we will not be able to conduct the inspection.

The following are very important items related to property conveyances and water status reports:

1. **Timelines may slide.** We will not guarantee a 7-working day turn around. We will do our best, but we are already down staff, and if one of our inspectors becomes sick, they will be sent home. Please remember applications are to be submitted at least 30 days prior to closing. Again, we will do our best to meet timelines as circumstances allow.
2. **The drinking water labs are a factor.** The lab turnaround times can impact our ability to issue a letter. We have been informed that if someone at a lab gets sick, the lab may not continue to operate. These are factors outside of our control. If lab operations are interrupted, we will contact the impacted applicants immediately to work on a contingency plan.

What about Monitoring & Maintenance?

During the time that the Stay Home, Stay Safe order is in place, Routine Monitoring and Maintenance may continue. However, if your client does not wish to have you on the property and you cannot complete the work, please turn in a maintenance report stating that access was not provided due to COVID-19 concerns. For more information please

refer to the [WA DOH Guidance for Essential Functions for Onsite Sewage Systems \(OSS\) and Large OSS \(LOSS\) Operation](#).

Thank you all during this very challenging time. We hope that you, your families and friends stay safe and healthy while we all manage our way through this.

If you have any day-to-day operational questions, please either contact the Drinking Water & Onsite Sewage Program Manager, Kimberly Jones at kimberly.jones@kitsappublichealth.org or call our main number (360) 728-2235 and ask to speak to the inspector of the day.

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