



OREGON BUILDING OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION



Oregon Construction Coalition

March 21, 2020

Business and government has formed a new working partnership to provide contractors and government officials information on our COVID-19 response. The construction industry is a critical part of state and local economies. During this time of crisis, it is important for critical and essential functions to continue, while taking steps to ensure personal and community protection.

This newly formed partnership represents Oregon’s construction contractors and over 1,000 building officials and professional building inspection staff in Oregon. Through the leadership of the Oregon Building Official Association and the newly formed Oregon Construction Coalition, we have identified a series of real-world, common sense solutions to keep development projects moving forward while also adjusting our practices to keep government and industry professionals safe.

We encourage our state and elected leaders to recognize this unique, proactive partnership as part of the Oregon way of doing business. Our organizations came together (in a responsible electronic setting) to develop “best practices” that address jobsite safety needs related to COVID-19. Businesses and government have agreed to take all necessary steps, including following CDC guidelines and ensuring personal space distances, are maintained as we work through this crisis. This partnership establishes a working collaboration to address mutual needs for personal safety and governmental directives.

We have also committed to a series of measures to assist each other to provide safe, durable construction through Oregon’s regulatory processes. Those measures include:

- A commitment to support the use of advanced technology such as drones, video, and electronic equipment to keep project sites safe and moving forward.
- Support for full acceptance, where practical, for e-signatures, processes and information routing.
- Support for local government flexibility to deploy staff based on availability, knowledge, and new state certification flexibility for government officials.
- Support for new local administrative practices necessary to adjust timelines and make local determinations on permit, inspection, and plan review requirements.
- Support for additional resources allowed under the state building code regulation for special inspectors to aid field review of construction work.
- Lastly, an open communication line between the organizations to monitor our progress and address work site conditions necessary under the COVID-19 crisis.



The Oregon Building Codes Division recently enacted this temporary rule for COVID-19 Response Inspection Flexibility:

OAR 918-098-4000 Inspections During COVID-19 Emergency

- (1) The purpose of this rule is to provide greater flexibility to building departments to meet demand and provide services to Oregonians during the COVID-19 emergency without compromising safety.
- (2) Notwithstanding OAR 918-098-1015, 918-281-0020, and 918-695-0400, a person with an Oregon Inspector Certification and a code certification issued by the Building Codes Division may perform inspections and review plans beyond the scope of work for their code certification if both of the following conditions are met:
 - (a) The relevant building official determines the person has the skills necessary to perform the specific inspection or plan review without compromising safety; and
 - (b) The relevant building official authorizes the person, in writing, to perform the inspection or plan review.
- (3) Consistent with ORS 455.020 and the discretion granted to building officials, nothing in OAR Chapter 918 should be construed to limit the ability of building officials to employ creative solutions and technology in service delivery, including but not limited to the use of virtual inspections, drones, electronic signatures, pictures, granting of written request to reconnect an electrical installation pursuant to ORS 479.570 and OAR 918-311-0070, or any other solution designed to provide service delivery while maintaining safety.
- (4) Authorizations under (2) are only valid while this rule is in place. No authorization under (2) may be in effect beyond the effective date of this rule.

Statutory Authority: ORS 455.020, 455.030, 455.720
Statutes Implemented: ORS 455.720

For more information, please contact any one of our partnership association members.

