



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801  
OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

## **COVID-19 Alternate Procedures for the Department of Community Development**

Document Updated: March 27, 2020

Effective March 26, 2020 the Department of Community Development’s front counter for services will **not** be available to the public until further notice in light of the COVID-19 health emergency. Personnel are still available to answer all questions and assist as best as possible by telephone at 540-432-7700 or via email. Email contacts are found at the following link: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/contact-community-development>.

The Department website is also a great resource, where many questions can be answered or to download forms and applications: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/community-development>.

For all pre-application and submittal questions, please call the Department to discuss your project (i.e. building or sub-trade permits, engineered comprehensive site plans, or for planning and zoning-related applications). If discussion with multiple City departments is necessary, either a virtual/online meeting will be coordinated by staff or staff will provide the applicant with contact information for City departments so the applicant can call departments individually.

In all situations, staff will determine the best course of action with everyone’s health and safety in mind.

Below are specific revised operations for many of our Department’s services:

- Building Inspection Division Operations..... 3
  - Permitting ..... 3
  - Inspections ..... 4
  - Property Maintenance..... 4
- Engineering Division Operations..... 5
  - Site Plan Review..... 5
  - Site Plan Permitting Procedures ..... 5
  - Erosion & Sediment Control (E&S) and Stormwater Management (SWM) Inspections ..... 5
- Planning and Zoning Division Operations..... 7
  - Zoning and Other Code Complaints and Inspections ..... 7

Home Occupation Permits..... 7  
Sign Permits..... 8  
Zoning Verification Letters ..... 9  
Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Applications ..... 9  
Chicken Permits..... 10  
Rezoning, Special Use Permits, Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Major Subdivisions  
(Preliminary Plats), Minor Subdivisions, Street and Alley Closings, and Public Utility  
Requests in Rockingham County Applications ..... 11

## **Building Inspection Division Operations**

### Permitting

1. All applications can be submitted through the Department's online portal at <http://permits.harrisonburgva.gov/>, via email, or regular mail to:

Department of Community Development  
Building Inspections  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with "Department of Community Development, Building Inspections."

If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop- off/exchange method.

At this time, we are deferring all \$30.00 non-refundable processing fees.

Applications can be downloaded and more information is available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/permits>.

2. If applicable, payments for permits can be paid by mail (to the address listed above) or deposited in the City Hall drop box. Make checks payable to "City of Harrisonburg" and include the property address or project name on the check.

To reduce potential delays with issuing permits, applicants are encouraged to pay the full permit fee at the time of submission.

If you are unsure of your permit fee total, please call the office.

3. Individuals who have submitted applications online will receive a notification by email when the application has been approved and can print a copy of the permit from their own computer.

If submitted by email, regular mail, or by appointment, staff will contact the applicant (by phone or email) once the applications are approved or if additional information is required. If permit approval documents can be emailed, staff will email those documents.

If permit approval documents cannot be emailed, staff will communicate and coordinate an appropriate pick-up/exchange method.

## Inspections

1. Our goal is to limit personal contact as much as possible.
2. When an inspection is requested, please let staff know if anyone on site is sick, or in quarantine.
3. At the discretion of the Building Code Inspector or Building Official photos and videos in lieu of in person inspections may be allowed.

In addition, the use of third-party inspectors is possible with prior approval by the Building Official.

**Important:** Neither of the above inspection methods should be utilized without prior approval of the Building Official. No concealment of work should be done until after the Building Official or Building Inspections Division staff has reviewed the submission(s) and has communicated approval of the submission(s).

4. For residential inspections in occupied structures, we ask, if possible, that the structure be vacated during the inspection. If not possible, Building Inspections Division staff will determine the best approach on a case by case basis.
5. For all other inspections, we ask that you limit the number of people on site or in the inspection area as much as possible. To practice social distancing, please maintain a distance of six (6) feet or more from the Building Code Inspector.

Furthermore, we will not enter job trailers/mobile offices. The Building Inspector may ask for all required documents to be brought outside of such spaces.

## Property Maintenance

1. Our goal is to limit personal contact as much as possible.
2. When an inspection is requested, please let us know if anyone on site is sick, or in quarantine.
3. Building Inspections Division staff will only respond to imminent life safety complaints (i.e. gas leaks, electrical hazards, improper venting of fuel fired appliances, potential structural collapses, and others). All other complaints will be received and documented, however we will process them once regular operations have resumed.
4. We ask that, when possible, the structure be vacated during our inspection. If not possible, we will determine the best approach on a case by case basis.

## **Engineering Division Operations**

### Site Plan Review

1. The Engineering Division has devised procedures to provide for electronic submission and review for site plans with the goal of eliminating or substantially reducing the need for personal contacts or hard copy documents. See Engineering's *COVID-19 Alternate Site Plan Review Procedures* document. This document has been sent to the development community and is available at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/site-development>.
2. Marked up sets of plans will not be provided following review, except on smaller excerpt pages attached to the comment letter if necessary to adequately convey a comment. Staff reviewers have been instructed to write comments appropriately to convey comments absent a marked-up plan set.

### Site Plan Permitting Procedures

1. The Engineering Division has devised procedures to provide for electronic submission and review for the post plan approval documents needed for permitting with the goal of substantially reducing the need for personal contacts or hard copy documents. See *COVID-19 Alternate Site Plan Acceptance and Permitting Procedures* document. This document has been sent to the development community and is available at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/site-development>.
2. Certain documents may need to be managed in hard copy (such as final plan sets and SWPPPs) as needed to best manage projects going to construction and to comply with State requirements. Specific decisions on which documents will be needed in hard copy will be determined on a project-by-project basis. BMP Maintenance Agreements will be reviewed up front in draft format electronically, but execution and recording will be deferred to project/permit closeout following construction.

### Erosion & Sediment Control (E&S) and Stormwater Management (SWM) Inspections

1. City E&S and SWM Inspectors will continue to inspect all sites on our regular schedule, using social distancing protocols. Inspectors have been advised to let contractors/operators know they are coming to a site for inspection and will perform the inspection without accompaniment. After the inspection has been completed, Inspectors will communicate with contactors/operators via phone or email if they see a significant issue that needs immediate attention.

If the contractor/operator is unwilling to allow independent inspections, then inspectors will go ahead under escort and are instructed to use good judgement and social distancing practices. To practice social distancing, please maintain a distance of six (6) feet or more from the Inspector.

2. Review of SWPPP binders, that typically would require close contact with the operator/contractor inside a work trailer, will be postponed. Inspector focus will be on field implementation and maintenance of E&S protective measures.

3. City VSMP administrative staff will expect that Operators of projects under a VPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit will continue to maintain their SWPPPs and perform and document the required regular inspections. As usual, projects near completion that are completely stabilized and awaiting permit termination, and if authorized by City SWM Inspector, may be put on a limited SWPPP inspection schedule as determined by the City Inspector.
4. These inspection protocols are subject to change should the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ), City management or other proper authority issue mandates or other special inspection provisions. If so, contractors/operators will be advised as to any new policies.

## **Planning and Zoning Division Operations**

### Zoning and Other Code Complaints and Inspections

1. Individuals can continue to submit complaints related to zoning (use, occupancy, building setbacks, and others), junk vehicles, and tall grass and weeds by telephone by calling the Planning & Zoning Division at 540-432-7700. Along with the description of the complaint (including location address), please leave your name and phone number and indicate, for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) purposes, if you would like for your complaint to be anonymous (redacted from city documents) or not.
2. During this time, staff will investigate anything that does not require in-person interaction, such as potential violations that are viewable from the public street, from within a vehicle, or conducted by telephone/email.

Investigations of complaints that would require in-person interaction with community members will be received, documented, and processed once regular operations have resumed.

### Home Occupation Permits

1. Applications can be submitted through the Department's online portal at <http://permits.harrisonburgva.gov/>, via email to [Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov) or regular mail to:

Department of Community Development  
Planning & Zoning  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with "Department of Community Development, Planning & Zoning." If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop-off/exchange method.

Applications can be downloaded and more information is available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/home-occupation-permit>.

2. Individuals who have submitted applications online will receive a notification by email that the application has been approved and can print a copy of the permit from home.

If submitted by email or regular mail, staff will contact you (by phone or email) once the applications are approved or if additional information is required. If permit approval documents can be emailed, staff will email those documents. If permit approval documents

cannot be emailed, staff will communicate and coordinate an appropriate pick-up/exchange method.

### Sign Permits

1. Applications can be submitted through the Department's online portal at <http://permits.harrisonburgva.gov/>, via email to [Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov), or regular mail to:

Department of Community Development  
Planning & Zoning  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with "Department of Community Development, Planning & Zoning." If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop-off/exchange method.

Applications can be downloaded and more information is available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/sign-regulations>.

2. Payments for permits can be paid by mail (to the address listed above) or deposited in the City Hall drop box. Make checks payable to "City of Harrisonburg" and include the property address or project name on the check.

To reduce potential delays with issuing permits, applicants are encouraged to pay the full permit fee at the time of submission.

If you are unsure of your permit fee total, please call the office.

3. Individuals who have submitted applications online will receive a notification by email when the application has been approved and can print a copy of the permit from their own computer.

If submitted by email, regular mail, or by appointment, staff will contact the applicant (by phone or email) once the applications are approved or if additional information is required. If permit approval documents can be emailed, staff will email those documents.

If permit approval documents cannot be emailed, staff will communicate and coordinate an appropriate pick-up/exchange method.

Zoning Verification Letters

4. Requests can be submitted via email to [Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov) or regular mail to:

Department of Community Development  
Planning & Zoning  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with “Department of Community Development, Planning & Zoning.” If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop- off/exchange method.

Applications can be downloaded and more information is available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/zoning>

5. If applicable, payments for applications can be paid by mail (to the address listed above) or deposited in the City Hall drop box. Make checks payable to “City of Harrisonburg” and include the property address or project name on the check.
6. Staff will email completed zoning verification letters. If the recipient cannot receive email, staff will communicate and coordinate an appropriate pick-up/exchange method.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Applications

1. Appeals or variances will be accepted via email to [Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov) or regular mail. Mail the completed application and supporting materials to:

Department of Community Development  
Planning & Zoning  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with “Department of Community Development, Planning & Zoning.” If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop- off/exchange method.

Applications can be downloaded and more information is available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/zoning>.

2. Staff will contact applicants (by phone or email) once the application is processed or if additional information is required and/or to discuss next steps.
3. Payments for applications can be paid by mail (to the address listed above) or deposited in the City Hall drop box. Make checks payable to “City of Harrisonburg” and include the property address or project name on the check.

If you are unsure of your application fee total, please call the office.

#### Chicken Permits

Note: Issuance of new chicken permits is suspended during this time and will be resumed when regular operations are resumed.

1. All applications and supporting materials can be submitted through the Department’s online portal at <http://permits.harrisonburgva.gov/>, via email to [Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Rachel.Drescher@harrisonburgva.gov), or regular mail to:

Department of Community Development  
Planning & Zoning  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with “Department of Community Development, Planning & Zoning.” If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop- off/exchange method.

Applications can be downloaded and more information is available at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/chicken-permit>.

2. Payments for permits can be paid online if submitting online, submitted by mail (to the address listed above) or deposited in the City Hall drop box. Make checks payable to “City of Harrisonburg” and include the property address or project name on the check.
3. Chicken permit applications will be forwarded to Animal Control who will schedule inspections with applicants once regular operations have resumed.

Rezoning, Special Use Permits, Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Major Subdivisions (Preliminary Plats), Minor Subdivisions, Street and Alley Closings, and Public Utility Requests in Rockingham County Applications

1. All applications and supporting materials will be accepted via email to [Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov) or regular mail. Mail the completed form and supporting materials to:

Department of Community Development  
Planning & Zoning  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Submissions can also be deposited in the drop box located in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Please label all envelopes with “Department of Community Development, Planning & Zoning.” If the applicant cannot submit applications by one of the previously described ways, contact the Department to coordinate an appropriate drop-off/exchange method.

Applications and more information can be found at:

- Rezoning, special use permits, and zoning ordinance amendments: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/zoning>.
  - Major and minor subdivisions: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/subdividing-property>.
  - Street and alley closings: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/street-alley-closings>.
  - Public utility requests in Rockingham County can be obtained from the Department of Public Utilities who will initiate coordination. Public Utilities can be contacted at 540-434-9959.
2. Payments for applications can be paid by mail (to the address above) or deposited in the City Hall drop box. Make checks payable to “City of Harrisonburg” and include the property address or project name on the check.

If you are unsure of your application fee total, please call the office.

3. Staff will contact applicants (by phone or email) once the application is processed or if additional information is required and/or to discuss next steps.