
March 20, 2020

Building Service Notice – COVID-19

As many of you are aware, the Township of Springwater is applying precautionary measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As much as possible, we are attempting to maintain business continuity; however, we have had to modify many of our daily procedures. Currently, the Township of Springwater Administration Centre is closed to the general public but we are still working on your building permits.

Based on the questions we received over the last few days, we have created a list of questions and the answers to help you understand what is happening in Springwater Building Services at this time.

1. Is Building Services (Township of Springwater) still open?

Township facilities, including the Administration Centre at 2231 Nursery Road, are closed to the public. Staff are continuing to operate, as best we can, with some modifications procedures. To ensure business continuity, Building Services staff have been split into two teams who will be rotating. One team will work remotely, the second will be in the office and be undertaking inspections (see 6 also).

2. May I still speak to staff to assist me with my application?

Yes. With the office closure, the best form of communication will be by phone or e-mail. Please note that due to the reduced staff in the office each day, there may be a time lag between when you leave your message and when we are able to return your call or email. Delayed responses may be more particularly an issue when requesting to communicate with a specific team member. Keep in mind that the remote staff may not necessary have access to your physical building permit file and may need to refer prior to a response. As always, if you need to speak to someone more urgently, please call 705-728-4784 Ext 2017 and we will do our best to have someone assist you.

In-person meetings with building staff will not occur during this period. Please contact staff by phone 705-728-4784 Ext 2017 or by email to building@springwater.ca.

3. May I still apply for a building permit?

Yes. During the public office closure, we will still be processing building permit applications, but the procedure will be altered due to the circumstances. (See 4)

4. How do I apply for a building permit if the office is closed to the Public?

We are offering you a couple of ways to submit your building permit, e.g.:

a) Email your applications, drawings and support documents to building@springwater.ca.

Scan all of your application forms, site plan, drawings and related information that you would normally submit, by attaching them to the e-mail above. If there are file-size restrictions by your internet provider, you may need to send multiple emails. The maximum size Springwater can receive is 30MB.

If you email the application, please note “New Building Permit Application” and the address of the project in the subject line, e.g.:

Re: “New Building Permit Application – 123 Springwater Road

Township staff will confirm receipt of your application via return e-mail.

b) Use the temporary “General Delivery Box” by the main doors at the Administration Centre.

General Delivery Box at 2231 Nursery Road

Please note this box is not locked nor secured. Please call 705-728-4784 Ext 2017 or email building@springwater.ca before, or shortly after, you place your application package in the “General Delivery Box”. We will then know to watch for your application/document and retrieve it in a timely manner during regular business hours.

5. Will you be able to issue a building permit?

Yes, but again, as much as is possible, we will be using digital opportunities when possible. Payment of permits can also be accepted electronically or via cheque. Call 705-728-4784 Ext 2017 to discuss payment and permit pick-up options when ready. As much as possible, we will be returning the reviewed documents to you via e-mail, but it may be necessary to use the General Delivery Box as well.

6. Will you undertake building inspections?

Yes, though there will be some restrictions, for example:

- Generally, we will not undertake inspections within occupied dwellings or buildings. We will review each individual situation to determine if the inspection can be undertaken with no unnecessary risk to Township staff or our residents.
- We have adopted a “Social Distancing” policy to ensure that inspectors can maintain a minimum distance of 2 meters from anyone on site. We will ask that inspections be arranged when only very limited or no contractor/applicant is on site. Some inspections can be undertaken with no one on site, provided necessary safety equipment is available to the inspector e.g. footing inspections. Similarly, an Occupancy Inspection (at an unoccupied home or building) can be done without a contractor/applicant present. Simply provide the inspector with access to the building via a lock box or unlocked door. Inspection Reports will be emailed or left on site as directed to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- We have also advised the inspectors that if the social distancing cannot be maintained, the inspection should be terminated immediately.

If you have been ill or believe that you have been at risk to COVID 19 do not attend the site and postpone the inspection. Inspectors have been instructed to ask questions regarding possible self-isolation or infection issues and will be terminating any inspection where they feel their health and safety cannot be maintained.

We have also asked our staff to stay home if they are not feeling well and to follow the directions of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Again, we are doing this for your safety as well as that of Township staff.

7. Will you consider alternative forms of inspections?

During this period, we may consider alternative inspection methods subject to the type of inspection and situation presented. This may mean taking photographs, videos or providing reports from architects and engineers; however, in any instance, these options must be discussed with the inspector prior to covering or continuing

construction. If covered without direction and approval by the inspector, you may be asked to uncover.

8. How can I submit engineer reports, truss repairs, revisions etc....?

We will be asking that these be submitted via email or to the General Delivery Box prior to the inspection. We are attempting to reduce site interactions/transactions as much as possible. Having all necessary documentation prior to the inspection will greatly assist with completion of inspections.

In closing, we would like to advise that the procedures may change as the conditions of the pandemic change. As such, we will do our best to communicate any and all changes as soon as possible.

I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation. Should you require further clarification or direction, we are here to assist you.

On behalf of the Springwater Building Service Team

Thank you