



Guidance for Inspections Customers

(effective March 26, 2020)

UPDATED DECEMBER 11, 2020

The county has enacted additional restrictions on movement and the operations of business in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. During these critical times, we are committed to meeting the demand of the construction industry, while protecting the health and safety of our customers, staff and the community we serve.

Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement stands ready to meet customers' inspections needs as long as they are legally allowed to maintain operations. As part of meeting that need while protecting customers and staff, with the support of the N.C. Department of Insurance, we will temporarily be increasing our use of Live Remote inspections (LRI). LRIs are inspections that are conducted via "video chat" with a contractor onsite.

Under the governor's Executive Order 181, effective December 11 at 5:00 pm, MCCE will continue inspections of occupied residences and commercial structures. However, the following operations process will remain in effect for the duration of the current Executive Order or subsequent orders covering control of the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Residential Inspections

MCCE will continue inspections of occupied and unoccupied residences. Inspectors will be asking questions about the health of the occupants and inspection attendees as well as requiring all present in the residence to wear a mask for the duration of the inspection. If masks are not available, they can be provided on a limited basis by county personnel. If the occupants or contractors for the occupied residence cannot or will not wear a mask, one of the following options will be offered:

- Vacate the residence for the duration of the inspection while the inspector is in the structure performing the inspection.
- Fail the inspection with a no-charge failure and have the contractor reschedule it for a Live Remote Inspection (LRI) if the type of inspection is eligible for LRI.
- Fail the inspection with a no-charge failure and have the contractor resubmit the request when one of the above options can be met.

Commercial Inspections

MCCE will continue inspections of occupied and unoccupied commercial structures. However, the Inspectors will be asking questions about the health of the occupants and inspection attendees as well as requiring all present in the structure to wear a mask for the duration of the inspection. If masks are not available, they can be provided on a limited basis by county personnel. If the occupants or contractors for the structure cannot or will not wear a mask, one of the following options will be offered:

- Vacate the work area to be inspected for the duration of the inspection while the inspector is in the structure performing the inspection.

- Fail the inspection with a no-charge failure and have the contractor reschedule it for a Live Remote Inspection (LRI) if the type of inspection is eligible for LRI.
- Fail the inspection with a no-charge failure and have the contractor resubmit the request when one of the above options can be met.

If contractor or the occupant is not comfortable with allowing an inspector to enter the structure, we will continue to perform LRI or defer the inspection not eligible for LRI to a later date agreed to by the contractor, occupant, and inspector.

For guidance on what inspections are eligible for LRI, please visit the applicable Inspections Team's website listed below:

Residential:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Inspections/Pages/Residential-Inspections-Team.aspx>

Residential Multi-Trade:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Inspections/Pages/Residential-Multi-Trade-Inspections.aspx>

Commercial:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Inspections/Pages/Commercial-Inspections-Team.aspx>

Mega Multi-Family:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Inspections/Pages/Mega.aspx>

Special Projects:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Inspections/Pages/Special-Projects-Team.aspx>

For Inspections not Eligible for LRI

First-time framing inspections for wood-framed structures, first-time electrical rough inspections, temporary power/temporary utility connections, TCO inspections (available only for commercial projects), and final inspections for occupancy approval will continue to be performed in-person under the operations processes described above. However, we ask that the work area be inspected be cleared of occupants or construction personnel and staff except for those needed for testing of any systems. Any personnel needed to be in attendance will be asked the following questions prior to initiating the inspection:

1. Do you or anyone at the home or project site have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, difficulty breathing?
2. Have you or others in your home had known close contact to someone with COVID-19?

3. Have you or others in your home travelled outside the country within the past 14 days?

Countries that have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

If the answers to all three questions are “no”, then we will proceed with the inspection with the project vacant or, if assistance is needed, while exercising social distancing per CDC guidelines. If the answer to any of the 3 questions is “yes”, then the inspection will be marked as inaccessible without a chargeable failure and the inspection request will need to be resubmitted after 14 days and symptoms have resolved (if applicable).

A Note on Third-Party Inspections

Third-party inspections are an option if the **owner** of a project wishes to use that option. However, it is subject to the approval of the director of Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement and it requires a contract with Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement. The Third-Party Inspector must complete the same training and pass the same North Carolina State certification exams as all inspectors employed by Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ’s). Code Enforcement believes that staff can meet the needs of our customers without leveraging Third-Party Inspections. Additionally, if projects are forced to shut down by the local, state, or federal Governments, any inspections performed by Third-Party Inspectors during the work shutdown, will not be allowable as meeting code compliance.

We understand that we are all in this together, while needing to remain apart for now. Our hope is that these guidelines will help us all continue to operate our businesses while we are legally authorized to do so and to make vital contributions to our local economy.