

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Environmental Health (EH) program at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will be limiting services and temporarily changing the way we do business.

Offices will limit access to the general public except in cases where there is a scheduled appointment with clients. Interaction with clients is to be transitioned to telephone, email, fax, mail, and other means that do not require clients to physically come into local health departments. Special exceptions can and will be made for clients who have no other means to speak with EH staff (e.g., no access to internet or fax). The Local Health Department (LHD) will schedule appointments with clients who must come into the office during hours that will limit exposure to other VDH clients.

Applications and Payments:

- The LHD will continue to accept applications for services. Whenever possible, applicants should utilize private sector services until further notice.
- Ideally, applications will be provided to the general public via mail, email or fax.
- Applications are to be received by the LHD by way of email, fax or mail. Payments for applications can still be received via check through the mail, or by credit card over the phone.
- Applicants seeking fee waivers or eligibility will be requested to do so electronically; or they are required to schedule a visit to perform income verification.
- Hardship and eligibility details have been temporarily altered in response to COVID-19.

WELL AND SEPTIC APPLICATIONS

Applicants should utilize the private sector as much as possible.

- Septic applications can be provided by Onsite Soil Evaluators (OSE), Alternative OSE & Professional Engineers (PE).
- Well applications can be provided by Private Well Drillers, OSEs, AOSEs and PEs.

The LHD will provide the following WELL services in the event private sector cannot be utilized:

- Replacement wells (private and agricultural)
- New Construction – If the applicant meets the hardship requirements
- Other (irrigation, geothermal, etc.) – If the applicant meets the hardship requirements

The LHD will provide the following SEPTIC services in the event private sector cannot be utilized:

- **Bare application repair** designs where owner meets eligibility requirements under the hardship guidelines: The LHD will require private sector evaluations and designs for all repairs, unless there is sewage on the ground, whereas the LHD can conduct the repair evaluation. If there is no sewage on the ground, the LHD will require the owner to be at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) to conduct services.
- **Bare application for new construction and Safe Adequate and Proper (SAP) evaluations** where owner meets eligibility requirements under the hardship guidelines: The LHD will request that an applicant postpone bare application and SAP submittals to be conducted by LHD, or utilize private sector evaluations and designs for all new construction applications and SAPs. The LHD will conduct bare applications and SAPs if the owner is at or below 100% of FPG.
 - The LHD will require SAP requests to come from the local building official (as outlined in GMP 2017-03). This will ensure that the SAP request is associated with a current project that requires an immediate response. SAP requests that can be postponed should be submitted at a later date. LHDs can still receive and process private sector SAP evaluations via mail, email, or fax.

FOOD and GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

EH staff will continue to conduct risk-based inspections while maintaining social distancing.

- **Permit applications:** The LHDs encourage new and renewal permit applications to be postponed until further notice, unless it is determined necessary, appropriate and acceptable to request a permit. If a Facility must be permitted due to being an essential business (and is allowed per the most recent Executive Order), the LHD will consult with the applicant via phone or email. Permit Applications are to be received via mail, email, or fax.