



# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

As a result of the recent outbreak of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), members of the Home Builders Association of Virginia have urgent questions about how this virus might impact the home building industry. The following are common questions and responses for you to reference when discussing these concerns. Questions? Contact us at [hbavmail@hbav.com](mailto:hbavmail@hbav.com)

## **1. How are local building department handling the issuance of permits and inspections?**

State and local permitting employees remain working albeit electronically or by appointment with social distancing. Unfortunately, this is a learning curve for everyone involved, but we're being told that local departments are trying to work through it. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has pulled together a "snapshot in time" spreadsheet of the current status of local building departments as well as information about approved third-party inspectors for that locality. The Virginia Building Code Officials Association has posted it on the website and will be updated as often as possible. That page can be found [here](#).

DHCD has also posted a [page on their website](#) to provide updates, resources, and guidance to local building departments and contractors. HBAV encourages members to continue to reach out to their local governments for the most up-to-date information.

## **2. Are third party private building inspectors allowed in Virginia?**

Under [Section 113.7](#) of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, the building official may accept reports of inspections and tests from individuals or inspection agencies approved in accordance with the building official's written policy. If Building Officials are unable to inspect or test within two working days of the request, the building official shall accept third party reviews.

DHCD has also posted a [page on their website](#) to provide updates, resources, and guidance to local building departments and contractors. HBAV encourages members to continue to reach out to their local governments for the most up-to-date information.

### **3. We're having issues with recording, indexing, and scanning local land use records. What is being done?**

On Monday, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia issued a declaration of judicial emergency, which suspended all non-essential, non-emergency Circuit and District Court proceedings with some exceptions, which can be found [here](#). The Chief Justice's declaration also stated that "the courts and clerks' offices shall remain operational and provide essential services while balancing the health and safety needs of court visitors and personnel."

We believe that the Chief Justice's declaration and underlying judicial protocols hold that indexing, scanning, and recording by the Clerks' Offices are deemed "essential functions" of the Virginia court system. Your local clerk's office should be doing e-recordings, where available, and drop boxes when e-file isn't available.

HBAV has been in frequent communication with the Virginia REALTORS and the Virginia Court Clerks Association to resolve any challenges that arise during these unprecedented times. Please contact your local Clerk's office to see how they are operating.

### **4. My contractors license is set to expire, how do I renew?**

This morning, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) announced that they will be extending the validity of licenses, certifications, and other credentials issued by its regulatory boards that would otherwise expire during the declared state of emergency or be eligible for renewal or reinstatement during the state of emergency under applicable regulations, until the 30th day after the date by which the state of emergency is lifted.

DPOR also announced that they will be waiving any regulations of regulatory boards under the DPOR that prohibit or limit online, electronic, or distance theoretical instruction, in order to prevent and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). This waiver does not waive statutory requirements or limitations, nor does it waive practical (hands-on) instruction required by a board's regulations. This waiver shall take effect on March 18, 2020, and shall remain in full force until June 10, 2020, unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order.

More information from DPOR can be found [here](#).

## **5. How can I manage COVID-19 in workplace?**

It is crucial to have a plan in place that keeps our members' employees safe and minimizes business disruption as the Coronavirus continues to spread. HBAV Insurance Agency's team at One Digital has committed resources to provide HBAV members with strategic, proactive and forward-thinking leadership during this time.

The [Coronavirus Advisory Hub](#) offers the latest insights on navigating business operations and workforce planning during this uncertain time.

HBAV issued a [10-point plan for a Safer Job Site](#) during the COVID-19 Outbreak. All HBAV members may utilize this and post on all job sites.

## **6. My zoning case was scheduled to be heard in the coming weeks by our local board of supervisors, planning commission, City or Town Council. What is being done to ensure that cases are still being processed?**

In the wake of various recommendations from health officials aimed at preventing and minimizing the transmission of COVID-19, local governing bodies have been struggling to figure out how to conduct business while at the same time being encouraged to minimize or reschedule group meetings.

Currently, the Code of Virginia only allows local governing bodies to meet by electronic communications but places significant restrictions on the ability for local governing bodies to utilize modern technology during these unprecedented times.

Recognizing the significant impact that these restrictions could have on local government's ability to evaluate/take action on various land-use applications, the Virginia Municipal League (VML) proactively sought an Attorney General's opinion on Virginia Code Section 44-146.21. The request for an Attorney General's opinion, [which can be found here](#), was submitted by Senator Jeremy McPike and Delegate Rip Sullivan.

On Monday, March 16, 2020, the Home Builders Association of Virginia contacted the Attorney General's office to reiterate that inaction on this issue could have a significant impact on economic and community development projects around the Commonwealth - and could exacerbate the Commonwealth's already dire housing supply/demand gap. HBAV will continue to provide updates on this matter as they become available.

## **8. My corporate and individual taxes are due April 15. Is that deadline extended?**

The Internal Revenue Service issued [Notice 2020-17](#), extending the April 15 tax payment deadline to July 15, up to specific thresholds. Tax filings are still due April 15. Corporate taxpayers can postpone up to \$10 million in federal income tax payments while individual taxpayers can postpone up to \$1 million. Contact your CPA for more details.

## **9. How should I handle sales calls, appointments, and model homes?**

The Virginia REALTORS have posted a series of sales related Frequently Asked Questions on [their website](#). Please utilize these resources when establishing policies related to new home sales.