



Scottish Borders Council Building Standards Service Applicant Guidance

On Site and Property Inspections during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Scottish Borders Council, as part of the Scottish Governments phased approach to recovery, have developed a suite of processes and procedures in order to enable us to carry out the verification of on-site work, as covered by a Building Warrant.

This paper aims to inform the customer how you should play your part in this process as well as inform you how booking and having an inspection will work.

As normal, you must inform us when a 'key construction stage', as identified in your Construction Compliance and Notification Plan (CCNP) is ready to be verified. This is even more crucial at this time as this will give us and you the opportunity to discuss if the point of verification may be carried out in an alternative way.

In some instances it may be appropriate to accept a photograph to verify a simple installation or obtain confirmation of some, previously identified, remedial work having being carried out.

Another possibility is for the inspection to be carried out using a Remote Virtual Inspection (RVI). Guidance is given below on how this would work. If it is appropriate and there is the ability for an inspection to be carried out using RVI, this will be our preferred option to verify the construction stage.

Accepting on-site evidence by photographic means or through an RVI is at our discretion and for us to decide upon once we have taken the type of inspection, construction and site specific details into account. Do not submit alternative evidence that has not had prior agreement as there is a high chance it will not be accepted.

For all inspections, by whatever means, it is important you provide us with at least two full working days notice in order for us to try and book your desired day of inspection. We will only undertake inspections that have been identified in the CCNP, to check remedial work previously highlighted or where an issue has arisen that requires building standards input. Our service is not a supervisory role and we will not carry out inspections where someone is seeking advice that would normally be a matter between an applicant and their designer.

Requirements to Enable a Site Inspection (Building Site - Developer / Contractor):

The instructions below are relevant for all construction sites, conversions and alterations of buildings that are un-occupied other than by the developer or contractor and extensions / alterations to buildings that are cordoned off from the occupied part of the building.

- You must have your own COVID 19 related site safety measures in place and written COVID 19 standing instructions / action plan. This documentation must be submitted to

us for review prior to the site visit. **We will not book a site inspection where we feel that appropriate safe working procedures are not in place.**

- Contact us at least two full working days prior to the desired inspection date. Please have the Building Warrant reference and site address to hand when getting in touch and confirm any special arrangements for when we arrive on site.
- We will follow your procedures and any necessary induction when attending site. The preference would be to carry out the inspection alone, but where it is necessary for someone to be in attendance, social distancing must be observed.
- Leave all doors, cupboards and hatches open and ready for inspection. Ensure the building has been suitably cleaned down prior to the visit and where possible, arrange for windows to be kept open to aid ventilation of the premises. Lights should be switched on and you may be requested to provide additional artificial lighting depending on the inspection required.
- Ensure COVID related safety measures on site are in place and are being adhered to. If our inspector has concerns that the site and / or operatives are not following your own rules, national guidance or if they feel uncomfortable with any site practices, they will end the inspection and report the matter to Trading Standards / Environmental Health.
- No paperwork should be handed to our inspectors on site. This will not be accepted. All relevant documentation should be submitted to us using the e-building standards online portal.

Requirements to Enable a Property Inspection (Occupied Non-Domestic Premises):

The instructions below are relevant for all non-domestic premises where alterations have been carried out and the building is occupied. If the altered building is partially occupied and part construction site, please also refer to the above instruction for a building site.

- You must have your own COVID 19 related safety measures in place and written COVID 19 standing instructions / action plan. This documentation must be submitted to us for review prior to visiting the property. **We will not book an inspection where we feel that appropriate safe working procedures are not in place.**
- Contact us at least two full working days prior to the desired inspection date. Please have the Building Warrant reference and site address to hand when getting in touch and confirm any special arrangements for when we arrive at the premises.
- We will follow your procedures and any necessary induction on arrival. The preference would be to carry out the inspection alone and have the building vacated, but where it is necessary for someone to be in attendance, social distancing must be observed.
- Leave all doors, cupboards and hatches open and ready for inspection. Ensure the building has been suitably cleaned down prior to the visit and where possible, arrange for windows to be kept open to aid ventilation of the premises. Lights should be switched on and you may be requested to provide additional artificial lighting depending on the inspection required.
- Ensure COVID related safety measures within the building are in place and are being followed by the occupants. If our inspector has concerns that those in the building are not

following your instruction, national guidance or are uncomfortable with any practices, they will end the inspection and report the matter to Trading Standards / Environmental Health.

- No paperwork should be handed to our inspectors on site. This will not be accepted. All relevant documentation should be submitted to us using the e-building standards online portal.

Requirements to Enable a Property Inspection (Occupied Domestic Premises):

The instructions below are relevant for all domestic premises where alterations have been carried out and the building is occupied. If the dwelling is partially occupied and part construction site, please also refer to the above instruction for a building site.

- You must confirm what measures have been put in place to make the building safe and ready for inspection. This must be submitted to us for review prior to visiting the property. **We will not book an inspection where we feel that appropriate measures are not in place.**
- Contact us at least two full working days prior to the desired inspection date. Please have the Building Warrant reference and site address to hand when getting in touch. You will be asked to confirm: if anyone in the household has a high temperature, new and continuous cough or displaying other symptoms related to COVID 19, including loss of taste; if anyone in the household is currently self-isolating or in a high risk group; if there are any pets in the household and how they will be kept out of the way during the visit; if you have requirements for us to follow whilst visiting and if there is anything specifically to be looked at as part of the inspection.
- The preference would be to carry out the inspection alone and have the building vacated, but where it is necessary for someone to be in attendance, social distancing must be observed.
- On arrival we will ring the doorbell / knock on the door and stand back to allow you to answer. We will again confirm the above questions prior to entering the building. Our inspector will likely be wearing PPE, depending on the inspection and the areas to be looked at.
- Leave all doors, cupboards and hatches open and ready for inspection. Ensure the building has been suitably cleaned down prior to the visit and where possible, arrange for windows to be kept open to aid ventilation of the premises. Lights should be switched on and you may be requested to provide additional artificial lighting depending on the inspection required.
- Ensure your stated safety measures are observed. If our inspector has concerns that the building is not safe, they will end the inspection.
- No paperwork should be handed to our inspectors on site. This will not be accepted. All relevant documentation should be submitted to us using the e-building standards online portal.

How a Remote Virtual Inspection is Carried Out (RVI):

A remote virtual inspection is an inspection that is carried out live with the verifier in control of setting the date, time and arrangements for the inspection. It is also for the verifier to decide if the circumstances surrounding the project and / or inspection are suitable for an RVI to be carried out. In a RVI, the facilitator would be directed by the inspector as to what areas should be captured in the live feed.

RVI is particularly relevant for small scale and low risk installations and construction. It is also useful to confirm correction of previously identified issues or carry out less intensive interim visits.

Remote Virtual Inspection (RVI) using MS Teams:

Microsoft Teams is an application that is used by Scottish Borders Council. Anyone can participate in a Teams meeting if they are invited and have a suitable mobile phone device and connection. As such this is the system we choose to use for a remote inspection.

- When you contact us to arrange an inspection, we will request your e-mail address so we may arrange the inspection and send you the invitation.
- You will receive an e-mail which contains the link to 'join Microsoft teams meeting'.
- At the date and time of inspection click on this link and join as a guest and enter your name to join the meeting.
- At the time of the meeting the inspecting officer clicks join meeting. When they have joined the meeting the officer will receive a message informing you are waiting in the lobby. They will admit you to start the inspection.
- The inspector will direct you to where the camera needs pointing and if any measurements are to be taken.
- The inspecting officer will follow up the inspection by sending you a report of any items requiring action.

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1.0	Initial draft.	02.06.2020
1.1	General update	10.06.2020