

Property and Site Inspections during the COVID-19 Outbreak - Guidance for Applicants

In the light of the current COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar Building Standards, have developed processes and procedures to enable us to carry out the verification of site work, covered by a Building Warrant, during this period. All inspections will be risk-assessed by the inspecting officer, on a case by case basis, to ensure the safety of both the officer and the site or household personnel.

The guidance in this document will inform the customer of what is required of them as part of the process as well as how arranging inspections will work.

As noted on the CCNP document, that forms part of the approval documents, several 'key construction stages', will have been identified as actions that require notification to us. 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. However, the acceptance of alternative evidence by photograph or other media is at our discretion and will be considered after we have taken relevant factors 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 three full working days' notice in order for us to try and arrange 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.

The following guidance is divided into two different sections; Section 1, for Non-domestic inspections, and Section 2 for Domestic inspection. Please study whichever applies in your particular case and follow the instructions and guidance given.

Section 1 - Property and Site Inspections for Non-Domestic Premises

The instructions below are relevant for all non-domestic premises whether occupied or un-occupied.

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 three 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. 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. 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.

Section 2 - Property and Site Inspections for Domestic Premises

The instructions below are relevant for all domestic premises where works have been carried out that are subject of a building warrant and the building is occupied or unoccupied.

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 three 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: where the property is occupied, 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 some form of 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, i.e. door handles etc, 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.

For small scale and low risk installations and construction it may be possible to carry out an inspection remotely. This is assessed on a case by case basis and is at the discretion of the inspecting officer.