



## Orange Water and Sewer Authority

OWASA is Carrboro-Chapel Hill's not-for-profit public service agency delivering high quality water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services.

### Procedures for the Development Community During the COVID-19 Event

March 26, 2020

In keeping with national and State guidance, OWASA has closed its business office to visitors and enacted precautions to help keep our employees and the public safe during the COVID-19 event. Most employees are working remotely. While OWASA's primary focus throughout this event is to protect the health and welfare of our employees while ensuring provision of safe drinking water and sanitation services to our customers, we intend to continue to support the development community with their projects to the extent possible. This will require some changes in procedures. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this uncertain time.

The ability of OWASA to respond quickly is likely to be diminished during this event. Demands for services have increased, staffing for some services is conducted in reduced shifts, and new processes and techniques can reduce operational efficiency. Nonetheless, OWASA remains committed to assist the development community in furthering their projects as a community benefit, both in terms of the developments themselves as well as an important employer in our community. OWASA is adjusting to perform necessary tasks remotely and electronically where possible and to limit in-person exposure, with social distancing of six (6) feet or greater, to what is absolutely essential. OWASA is using Microsoft Teams to hold remote meetings and can join cloud-based meetings arranged in others' software products.

We will be evaluating these procedures as we go and making adjustments as necessary to facilitate our work as timely and efficiently as possible under the circumstances. This approach is subject to change as guidance from public health officials changes; if OWASA staff are impacted by the virus; or if additional Federal, State or local restrictions impacting operations are enacted.

#### **Plan Review**

Engineering drawings shall be submitted electronically in a PDF file to Nick Parker at [nparker@owasa.org](mailto:nparker@owasa.org). Comments will be returned electronically. Review of complicated plans can be challenging on computer screens, so engineers are encouraged to use colors and additional labeling to facilitate OWASA review. OWASA will be enforcing the requirement that submittal of revised drawings clearly mark all changes from the prior submittal and returning plans not marked as such. Extra attention should be placed on ensuring plans are correct and complete. The Checklist for New Development Projects located on the web at [https://www.owasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Checklist-for-Development\\_091019.pdf](https://www.owasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Checklist-for-Development_091019.pdf) has a detailed list of common errors and omissions that delay approval and should prove helpful in



minimizing repeat submittals, and a summary of the overall development process. OWASA will be accepting documents signed in PDF or signed then scanned in PDF during this event. The North Carolina Division of Water Resources is allowing OWASA to submit fully electronically during this event. See below for information on payment of fees.

### **Construction**

To ensure safety of OWASA inspectors, OWASA is requiring work sites be cleared of workers during the inspection, except for one representative who will accompany the inspector, adhering to social distancing guidelines of six or more feet, to note or address any items of concern. Specific appointment times are required where clear access will be provided. It is the responsibility of the developer to convey to site workers this requirement to ensure that the Utility Superintendent or their designee has the authority to direct the temporary relocation of other workers for the OWASA inspection to occur. Inspectors have been instructed to remove themselves from situations and sites where these requirements are not met.

#### *Service Availability Letters*

Anyone needing a service availability letter from OWASA for a property can contact Joe Leo at [jleo@owasa.org](mailto:jleo@owasa.org) or Carlton Hawkins at [chawkins@owasa.org](mailto:chawkins@owasa.org).

#### *Preconstruction Meetings*

To minimize the numbers of people in one place, preconstruction meetings should be held via Microsoft Teams or other cloud-based meeting software to the extent possible. PDF signatures on the Preconstruction Checklist that are emailed back to the OWASA inspector are acceptable. The OWASA inspector will email the OWASA-approved plans at the time of the preconstruction meeting or immediately thereafter. The Utility Contractor will be responsible for printing the approved plans and maintaining on-site for the duration of construction.

#### *Inspections*

OWASA is required to conduct visual inspection of certain aspects of construction. This list can be viewed in the OWASA Preconstruction Comments form available at <https://www.owasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Preconstruction-Comments-Form-2020.pdf>. As noted above, OWASA inspectors have been instructed to leave any site where employees onsite are unable or unwilling to provide a clear worksite and strict social distancing, and the visit will not be rescheduled until and unless the requirements are addressed.

#### *Outages*

OWASA continues to evaluate the risks and benefits of water outages for project tie-ins. While such outages may be required for a project to become operational, OWASA is sensitive to the needs of our customers who may be quarantining at home, or at home for telework or child care, and with an ongoing need for uninterrupted water. Requests for outages will be evaluated on a

case-by-case basis. Outages that are not required at this time for the project to become operational may not be approved.

### *Testing*

OWASA inspectors will be conducting testing and sampling. The same site requirements described above for this event apply, and the OWASA inspectors have been instructed to remove themselves immediately from any non-compliant situation. Staffing at the OWASA laboratory is reduced and developers should expect longer response time for new line testing. If outages impacting customers are allowed, priority will be placed on testing to restore service as quickly as possible. Adherence to OWASA's Guidance Document for *Improving Purity Sampling Results for Water Lines* located at <https://www.owasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Purity-Sampling-Ways-to-Improve-Results.pdf> should assist developers in getting clear purity samples more quickly and minimize project delays due to resampling.

### *Close-out*

Close out documents shall be submitted electronically to Joe Leo at [jleo@owasa.org](mailto:jleo@owasa.org). When all requirements for project close out have been met, OWASA will generate an invoice for payment of fees.

### **Payment of Fees**

The OWASA administration offices are closed to the public for the protection and safety of its employees. Developers, engineers and contractors are encouraged to use alternative methods for the payment of fees associated with Engineering Invoices and System Development Fees.

- Payment by mail, needs to include a copy of the OWASA Engineering Invoice along with the check made out to OWASA. Send it to the attention of Customer Service at 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510.
- Payments can be made over the phone using a credit card by calling Customer Service at 919-968-4421, please have a copy of the OWASA Engineering Invoice on hand for reference. Maximum dollar amount restrictions do apply to credit card payments.
- Payments can be made by using the OWASA drop box located out front of our Administration Office located at 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510. Please include a copy of your Engineering Invoice along with your check made out to OWASA.

### *System Development Fees, Services, Setting Meters, etc.*

Requests for Invoices shall be sent to Joe Leo at [jleo@owasa.org](mailto:jleo@owasa.org) or Carlton Hawkins at [chawkins@owasa.org](mailto:chawkins@owasa.org). Invoices for setting of meters will not be issued until a project has tentative final acceptance from the OWASA inspector and all required closeout documents have been received.

*Plan review and Construction Observation Fees*

Plan review fees must be paid prior to OWASA reviewing a sealed set of plans for approval. Construction observations fees are due before a Permit to Construct is granted. When all required documents are in hand, OWASA will generate an invoice, to be emailed to the Responsible Party on the Project Fact Sheet. The recipient shall pay the fees as outlined above.

*State Permitting Fees*

The North Carolina Division of Water Resources is allowing OWASA to submit packages for approval electronically during the COVID-19 event. When a package is being emailed to the State, OWASA will copy the responsible person on the Project Fact Sheet as well. The recipient will be responsible for sending the state plan review fees directly to the State with a copy of the project state application form for the State to match the electronic submittal to the check as follows:

Drinking Water Projects:

Public Water Supply  
Archdale Building  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 1304A  
512 Salisbury Street  
Raleigh, NC 27604-1170

Wastewater Projects:

Water Quality Permitting  
Division of Water Resources  
3800 Barrett Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27609

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Godreau at (919) 537- 4244 or [jgodreau@owasa.org](mailto:jgodreau@owasa.org). We greatly appreciate everyone's patience and flexibility during this time.