



## 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 Pandemic

August 11, 2021

In keeping with national and state guidance, OWASA has enacted precautions to help keep our employees and the public safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While OWASA's primary focus throughout this pandemic 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.

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 able to process most paperwork electronically and will continue to limit in-person exposure 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.

This document is subject to change as guidance from federal, state or local public health officials' changes.

#### **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 design engineers are encouraged to use color coding (water=blue, sewer=green, reclaimed water=purple) and additional labeling to facilitate OWASA review. Resubmittal of reviewed drawings shall clearly mark all changes from the prior submittal and OWASA will return plans not so marked. Extra attention should be placed on ensuring plans are correct and complete. The Checklist for New Development Projects is located on the web at <https://www.owasa.org/developers-contractors-engineers/> then selecting *Standards, Policies and Forms/Plan Review Checklist*. This checklist has a detailed list of common errors and omissions that delay approval and a summary of the overall development process, and should prove helpful in minimizing repeat submittals. OWASA will be accepting documents signed in PDF or signed then scanned in PDF during the pandemic. The North Carolina Division of Water Resources is allowing OWASA to submit fully electronically during this pandemic. See below for information on payment of fees.



### **Construction**

The assumption is that anyone—even asymptomatic, vaccinated individuals—could have and transmit COVID-19. To minimize possible exposure and help ensure safety of all during inspection or testing, OWASA will be requiring work sites to follow the three W's while OWASA is present – *wait* 6 or more feet away, *wear* a mask when 6-foot distance can't be reliably maintained, and *wash* hands.

**For exterior spaces**, the restricted area for EVERY inspection must be established as follows:

- The owner shall limit the number of individuals in the overall vicinity of the OWASA employee to the minimum absolutely required. **One owner representative** will accompany the inspector to note or address any items of concern. The representative will also adhere to strict social distancing guidelines by **remaining a minimum distance of six feet** or more at all times and will wear a **face mask** if the distance cannot be reliably maintained. Any additional employees present must be approved as necessary in the immediate area by the OWASA Inspector. To reduce foot traffic near the location being inspected or tested, the site can either be cleared of workers or the entire area can be cleared to a distance of **50 feet** from where the OWASA inspector needs to operate. This area shall be marked off with caution tape, rope, or some other unbroken horizontal barrier, including an entry path, away from primary walking routes.

**For interior spaces**, the restricted area for EVERY inspection must be established as follows:

- **Isolate the construction area** from all occupied areas. Minimum separation is 6 mil plastic sheeting with adequate access limitations. A greater effort to separate the workspace may be necessary for certain sites.
- Preferred access to the work area is through a **separate entrance**. If access is through an area in shared use with the occupants, it must be **unused for 30 minutes** before the inspection starts. The contractor is responsible for coordinating this before the inspector arrives. Windows are not considered adequate access.
- One **contractor/** contractor representative shall **accompany the inspector** and shall **wear a mask and maintain a minimum 6' distance** throughout the inspection.
- The **construction area** (building or floor, depending on the size of the project) **and any related common areas shall be cleared of all occupants or construction staff for the inspection. If the inspector must visit an area outside of the isolated construction area**, that area must be unused and unoccupied for 30 minutes before the inspection starts. The contractor is responsible for coordinating this before the inspector arrives.
- Be prepared to honestly answer **health status screening questions** about those on site when the inspector calls to provide a timeframe for the inspection.

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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.

If a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified onsite or with staff working or visiting the site, the superintendent of that project is expected to **immediately** contact OWASA reps via email or telephone notification to Jessica Godreau ([jgodreau@owasa.org](mailto:jgodreau@owasa.org)) and the Construction Inspector: either Roy Blackwood ([rblackwood@owasa.org](mailto:rblackwood@owasa.org)) or Donnie Nolf ([dnolf@owasa.org](mailto:dnolf@owasa.org)). Information on the dates, times, and areas that person entered from two days prior to positive specimen collection or onset of symptoms to the last time they left the site; information on the dates, times and places anyone in close contact [defined by the CDC as within 6 feet of the infected individual for at least 15 minutes] with the person entered for the same time frame; and information on any subsequent sanitization that has been performed must be provided to OWASA. OWASA will remain off-site until a determination can be made that the infected employee and their close contacts did not enter the area the inspector needs to enter, seven days have passed since the infected employee and close contacts have been onsite, and/or the area has been documented properly sanitized. **It is the responsibility of the project representative to perform contact tracing**, and to contact all others that were present onsite during the exposure period. This includes reps from Orange County, the towns, NCDOT, etc.

#### *Service Availability Letters*

Requests for a Service Availability Letter for a location are now made online at <https://www.owasa.org/developers-contractors-engineers/> and selecting *Service Availability Request Form*.

#### *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 online at <https://www.owasa.org/developers-contractors-engineers/> and selecting *Standards, Policies, and Forms/Preconstruction Comments* at the bottom of the page. OWASA Inspectors have been instructed to leave any site where employees onsite are unable or unwilling to provide a

clear worksite with strict social distancing, or are not equipped with proper PPE in the inspector work area. 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 yet critical path 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 under “Construction” apply, and the OWASA inspectors have been instructed to remove themselves immediately from any non-compliant situation. If an outage impacting customers is 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/developers-contractors-engineers/> and selecting *Standards, Policies, and Forms/Improving Purity Sampling Results for Waterlines* at the bottom of the page 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 the assigned Engineering Technician for the project: Joe Leo at [jleo@owasa.org](mailto:jleo@owasa.org) or Rick O’Hara at [rohara@owasa.org](mailto:rohara@owasa.org). When all requirements for project close out have been met, OWASA will generate an invoice for payment of fees.

### **Payment of Fees**

For the protection and safety of all, developers, engineers, and contractors are encouraged to use remote methods for the payment of fees associated with Engineering Invoices and System Development Fees.

- Payment by mail: Include a copy of the OWASA Engineering Invoice along with the check made payable to “OWASA”. Send it to the attention of Customer Service at 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510.
- Payments by phone: Call Customer Service at 919-968-4421 with your credit card. Have the OWASA Engineering Invoice on hand for reference. Maximum dollar amount restrictions apply to credit card payments.
- Payments by drop box: Use the OWASA drop box located out front of our Administration Office located at 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro, NC 27510. Please

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include a copy of your Engineering Invoice along with your check made payable to "OWASA".

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

Requests for Invoices shall be sent to the assigned Engineering Technician for the project: Joe Leo at [jleo@owasa.org](mailto:jleo@owasa.org) or Rick O'Hara at [rohara@owasa.org](mailto:rohara@owasa.org). Invoices for setting of meters will not be issued until a project has tentative final acceptance from the OWASA inspector, all required closeout documents have been received, and the owner is ready to set a meter within 10 days.

*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 pandemic. 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.