

**William Peduto**

*Mayor*



**Sarah Kinter**

*Acting Director*

PLI's Guidelines for Construction Activity  
During Governor's COVID Emergency Order

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**PURPOSE:** The following document outlines PLI's temporary policies in effect during Pennsylvania Governor Wolf's emergency order to cease non-life sustaining businesses and operations, including construction. It is intended to provide guidance for property owners, applicants, contractors and trade license holders. The policy is effective March 23, 2020 and continuing until the Governor's Order is lifted and/or modified to allow construction businesses and/or operations to continue.

### **PLI Temporary Policy Guidelines – Construction Activities:**

1. **Emergency Order:** Please be aware that Pennsylvania Governor Wolf issued an [emergency order](#) on March 19, 2020 directing all non-life-sustaining businesses and operations, including construction, to cease operations. The Governor has identified two exceptions to this order for construction:
  - a. Commercial Health Care Facilities.
  - b. Commercial and/or residential structure emergency repairs.

**NOTE:** A valid permit is required to perform emergency repairs.

2. **Granted DCED Waivers:**
  - a. **Governor's Office Guidance:** Please note that the [Governor's office issued a letter dated 3/31/20](#) clarifying that any DCED granted waivers for construction are limited to residential structures which are "substantially completed". The Governor has defined "substantially completed" as having been granted a final certificate of occupancy. Commercial structures are not to be granted waivers per DCED guidance.
  - b. **PLI Review Required:** If DCED granted you a waiver for a residential structure, you need to submit the waiver to PLI for review prior to work commencing. PLI will confirm whether the project is "substantially complete". Waivers for commercial structures will not be accepted per the Governor's guidance. Note the exceptions identified in item still apply and do not require waivers.
  - c. **PLI Review:** The PLI Director and/or Assistant Director of Construction, or their designees, shall review these waivers.

- d. Documentation Submission: This documentation shall be submitted to: [pliappstech@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:pliappstech@pittsburghpa.gov) or [PLIConstructionSupervisors@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:PLIConstructionSupervisors@pittsburghpa.gov).
  - e. Work: No work shall commence until PLI has provided written authorization and a valid permit for the authorized work has been issued.
3. **Permit Issuance**: PLI will only issue permits to permits with work that meets one of the exceptions identified by the Governor, see items 1.a and 1.b.
- a. CDC Guidelines: All construction work authorized by PLI shall follow CDC guidelines, including social distancing during the construction work and the inspections.
  - b. Noncompliance with CDC Guidelines: PLI inspectors have discretion to issue a stop work order for work not adhering to CDC guidelines.
  - c. Lender Letters: Please be aware that if your permit is in “Ready-to-Issue” status, PLI can provide a letter to funders explaining why your permit cannot be issued at this time. Please contact [david.green@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:david.green@pittsburghpa.gov) for this letter
4. **Emergency Repairs/Work**: Applicability of item 1.b and 2 will be evaluated by PLI on a case-by-case basis based on the following code standards:
- a. Weatherization: Work necessary to prevent weather damage.
  - b. Unsafe Structure: Emergency repairs due to structural instability, inadequate means of egress, inadequate protection or warning of a fire, or fire hazard, or other condition such that it poses a hazard to life, health, property or safety of the public or occupants of the premises or structure.
  - c. Unsafe Equipment: Emergency repairs to unsafe equipment that is in such disrepair or condition that it poses a hazard to life, health, property or safety of the public or occupants of the premises or structure.
  - d. Structure Unfit For Human Occupancy: Emergency repairs and/or replacement of critical systems (power, heating, ventilation) that if non-functional would make the structure unfit for human occupancy.
5. **How to Apply for and Identify Emergency Repairs**: For work for which item 4 applies:
- a. Application Submission: You must apply for a permit through the OneStopPGH portal and include the following:
    - i. Upload a completed “[PLI Emergency Work Request Form](#)” to identify the nature of the emergency. Additionally, Within the application, please do the following;
    - ii. Upload photos of the emergency condition.

- iii. For work related to structural stability, upload a report from a PA licensed architect and/or engineer assessing the current stability of the structure.
  - b. **PLI Assessment:** The PLI Director and/or Assistant Director of Construction, or their assignee(s), shall assess these requests and determine whether it is appropriate to authorize construction and permit issuance.
  - c. **PLI Assessment Response:** PLI shall provide a notification, within one business day, for additional information, or notification confirming work is emergency and can proceed once all other permit conditions are met, including Plan Review.
  - d. **PLI Plan Review:** For emergency repairs that require PLI Plan Review, PLI will expedite the review based on staff capacity and associated hazard.
  - e. **WORK:** No work shall commence until PLI has provided a valid permit for the authorized work.
- 6. **How to Request Emergency Repairs/Work for Existing Issued Permits:** PLI will also apply Items 1.b to existing issued permits on a case-by-case basis per the same standards identified in item 4. If you believe that suspension of construction activities would create a dangerous or unsafe condition:
  - a. **Complete form:** [LINK] Download and complete the “COVID-19 Emergency Work” form
  - b. **Notification to PLI:** Notify PLI via email at [PLIConstructionSupervisors@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:PLIConstructionSupervisors@pittsburghpa.gov) and include in the email:
    - i. Provide a copy of the “[PLI Emergency Work Request Form](#)” form;
    - ii. Provide photos of the emergency condition;
    - iii. For work related to structural stability, provide a report from a PA licensed architect and/or engineer assessing the current stability of the structure.
  - c. **PLI Assessment:** The PLI Director and/or Assistant Director of Construction, or their assignees, shall review these requests and determine whether it is appropriate to authorize construction.
  - d. **PLI Assessment Response:** PLI shall provide a written response within one business day.
  - e. **WORK:** No work shall commence until PLI has provided written authorization and a valid permit for the authorized work has been issued.
- 7. **Service Level Agreements:** Under the Emergency Order, PLI has elected to continue to accept permit applications and provide plan review services. Applicants who submit during this period accept that PLI’s standard Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are suspended; including the PA Uniform Construction Code time frames for PLI to grant

and/or deny applications. All applicants accept that a permit is not deemed approved until PLI provides written notification. This allows PLI to accommodate fluctuations in staffing under these temporary procedures and still provide basic services. It may take longer than usual for applications to be processed and applications to be reviewed.

8. **Application Submissions:** Permit applications will continue to be accepted through the OneStopPGH online portal, if you encounter problems with the process, please contact [pliapptech@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:pliapptech@pittsburghpa.gov).
  - a. Hard Copy Submissions: As PLI's physical offices are currently closed, PLI will not accept hard copy submissions, including revisions, until the OneStopPGH counter re-opens.
    - i. All hard-copy applications previously submitted cannot be reviewed for the duration of these temporary procedures. Applicants can create an account on OneStopPGH and connect to the application online to upload digital drawings.
  - b. Change From Hard Copy To Electronic Submission: If you elect to modify your application to an electronic submission, follow these steps:
    - i. The electronic submission shall be complete. Please upload and include all drawings and documents previously submitted.
    - ii. If you do not have a OneStopPGH account:
      1. Contact [pliapptech@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:pliapptech@pittsburghpa.gov) to obtain pin number;
      2. Create a OneStopPGH portal account using this pin number;
      3. If the application status is "In Review", you can submit your construction documents as "supplemental documents";
      4. If the application status is "Applicant Revisions", you can upload your construction documents and submit as revision.
    - iii. If you do have a OneStopPGH portal account:
      1. If the application status is "In Review", you can submit your construction documents as "supplemental documents";
      2. If the application status is "Applicant Revisions", you can upload your construction documents and submit as revision.
  - c. Abandonment of Permits: Please note that PLI will suspend calculation of inactivity for abandoned applications for the duration of these temporary measures.
9. **PLI Plan Review:** PLI will continue to review electronically submitted applications. However please be aware that PLI's physical offices are closed and staff is teleworking with limited access, see item 7.

- a. Hard Copy Submission Review: As PLI's staff does not have access to documents submitted in hard copy format, PLI will not review hard copy submissions until the OneStopPGH counter re-opens. This applies both existing and new application submissions.
- b. Modification To Electronic Submission: If you wish to modify your application to an electronic submission, see item 8.c above.

**10. PLI Inspection Services:** PLI has suspended construction inspection services except for those permits identified in items 1, 2, 5 or 6.

- a. Work: No work shall commence without written authorization from PLI and a valid permit for the authorized work has been issued.

**11. Permit Holder Job-site Responsibilities:** The permit holder shall be responsible for complying with the requirements of this section for the duration that these guidelines are in effect.

- a. Interior Job-sites: The following requirements shall apply to all interior inspections:
  - i. Access: The permit holder shall provide the Inspector access to the job-site, including elevator access, without requiring direct contact with on-site personnel or other building occupants.
  - ii. Job-site Prep: The permit holder is responsible to ensure the job-site is vacant for a minimum of 48 hours prior to the inspection. The PLI Director and/or Assistant Director shall evaluate the following alternatives on a case-by-case basis:
    - 1. Use of remote inspections using video software as identified as identified by PLI, to allow the Inspector to perform on-site inspections from the exterior of the structure.
  - iii. On-site Personnel: The permit holder shall be responsible to ensure that:
    - 1. The job-site is vacant of all personnel during inspection.
    - 2. At least one representative is available to communicate remotely with the Inspector to provide information and/or answers related to the inspection(s).
    - 3. On a case-by-case basis, where instructed by the Inspector one representative will be on-site to use video enabled software to assist the Inspector in performing remote inspections from the exterior of the structure. This shall include, but not be limited to, emergency repair of interior electrical, ventilation and/or heating equipment.
  - iv. Alternate Inspections: Inspection reports from UCC certified inspectors as required and authorized by the BCO.

- b. Health Care Facilities Interior Job-sites: Permit holders for permits for health care facilities are responsible to provide PPE for the Inspector(s) for interior inspections, to the best of their ability.
- c. DCED Waiver Holders Interior Job-Sites:
  - i. Permit holders for permits with DCED waivers are responsible to provide PPE for the Inspector(s) for interior inspections. Failure to meet this responsibility will result in a failed inspection and may result in a stop work order.
  - ii. DCED waiver holders may be required by the BCO to provide inspection reports by a UCC-certified inspector authorized by the BCO.
- d. Exterior Inspections: Minimize on-site personnel and maintain a minimum of 10 feet from Inspector.
- e. Permit Holder Non-Compliance: PLI shall not perform inspections for any permit holders who do not comply with their inspection related responsibilities, as outlined in this section. Associated inspections shall result in a failed inspection. Additionally PLI may take any and/or all of the following actions:
  - i. Issue a stop work order.
  - ii. Revoke the permit.

**12. PLI Enforcement of Emergency Order:** PLI inspectors will be monitoring their assigned wards for any construction activities not allowed per items 1, 2, 5, or 6. PLI's enforcement shall include:

- a. Fail inspections if a permit holder does not comply with PLI's guidelines for Permit Holder job-site responsibilities.
- b. Issue a stop work order for any of the following reasons:
  - i. Work without a permit.
  - ii. Work does not comply with PLI's guidelines including, but not limited to, permit holder job-site responsibilities.
  - iii. Continuation of the work poses a hazard.
  - iv. Work is not performed in accordance with CDC guidelines.
  - v. Work is performed in a dangerous and/or unsafe manner.

**13. Revocation of Permits:** PLI's standard revocation procedures are modified as follows:

- a. Generally: PLI shall not determine eligibility for revocation based on the suspension of construction activities due to the Governor's emergency order.
- b. Permits Eligible for Revocation:
  - i. Existing issued permits for which construction activities were suspended, or failed to start, for a period of more than 180 days prior to the adoption of this policy, shall be eligible for revocation.

- ii. Permits that fail to comply with any of the following are eligible for revocation:
  - 1. The requirements of this policy including, but not limited to, permit holder job-site responsibilities,
  - 2. Failure to perform work in compliance with CDC guidelines,
  - 3. Work performed in a dangerous or unsafe manner.

14. **Duration of Temporary Measures:** These policy guidelines shall remain in effect until the Governor lifts and/or modifies the current emergency order to allow construction businesses and/or operations to continue.

### **PLI Temporary Policy Guidelines – License holders:**

#### **1. Trade License Holder COVID-19 Temporary Accommodations:**

- a. Grace Period Extension: Given the cancellation of classes required for license renewals, all trade license grace periods will be extended until **June 15, 2020**. At that time, Grace Period will revert back to the allotted time period per the standard [PLI Licensing Rules and Regulations](#). Trade license holders are encouraged to complete courses still offered online or through other remote learning services. Courses must still meet the basic content requirements of the Licensing Rules and Regulations.
- b. Late Fee Waiver: All trade license late fees will be waived until **June 15, 2020**.

#### **2. All Licenses:**

- a. Tax Compliance: The City of Pittsburgh Department of Finance has extended some tax deadlines until July 15, 2020 and is working in a limited capacity during the emergency period. Likewise, all PLI tax compliance letter requirements for PLI licenses will be waived until **August 15, 2020**. All missing tax compliance letters must be submitted to PLI per the standard Licensing Rules and Regulations by **August 15, 2020**.
- b. Notarized Worker's Compensation Affidavit: [PA law requires](#) notarization in person only at this time; the State has suspended notary transactions for real estate services temporarily during the COVID-19 emergency. Likewise, PLI will suspend notary services for worker's compensation affidavits now and continuing until the Governor's order is lifted.