

**TO: Michael Schirling, Commissioner
Chris Herrick, Deputy Commissioner**

FROM: Michael Desrochers, Executive Director

DATE: April 10, 2020

SUBJECT: Operational Overview Update - COVID-19

The Fire Academy and 4 district offices remain open with minimal staffing with no face to face engagement with anyone. We continue to receive construction permit applications, electrical work notices, plumbing work notices and licensing renewal applications. As expected, we have made many operational adjustments. It's important to recognize these modifications cost us nothing and in fact, we are saving money. We are engaged with ADS on a new on-line payment portal, the scope of work has been approved and approximately 35 PDF forms are being created.

- Construction permit applications, electrical work notices, plumbing work notices and licensing renewals are still being processed with no face to face interaction.
- We are using Microsoft meetings both at the managerial level and regional office level to conduct our business meetings. This new technology for us has been extremely beneficial and will ultimately change the way we conduct business moving forward and after the pandemic.
- We are resorting to virtual inspections and this seems to be working well. We have accepted face time, video, and electronic data to support the inspection.
- Fire Fighter training is moving forward to an on-line platform allowing many students who were in progress can continue to move forward toward pro-board certification thus, not losing time already invested in training. The Academy staff is working very hard with the curriculum publisher (Jones and Bartlett) to virtualize the training.
- We are aggressively working toward establishing an on-line platform for continuous training for our staff. In short, inspectors will be presented with a number of case scenarios requiring research in the codes and discussions among themselves. Once the questions are answered we will sponsor a training session for all staff and discuss the findings with a focus on enhancing consistency. Some training will include new IT Technology.
- A high percentage of construction drawings are being submitted electronically and reviewed electronically.
- We are standing up virtual on-line testing for electricians and plumbers. The testing sites for those wanting to test for their plumber or electrical licenses are closed. We have worked out a solution with the testing company and the licensing boards to allow the virtual proctoring of the exams. This will allow those who are approved for testing to test.
- Board meetings are currently being scheduled through skype. There are some growing pains here but the more we do them the better they are.
- Our public education safety messages are completed by video (u-tube) and sent live through our social media.
- We are also working on dash board projects on fire department readiness and other fire safety data points that can be expressed visually through dash boards.