



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Offering Virtual Inspections for Permitted Construction Projects

NEW VIRTUAL MEETING SERVICE PROVIDES CONTRACTORS WITH ALTERNATIVE TO IN-PERSON FIELD INSPECTIONS, ALIGNING WITH COVID-19 PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego Development Services (DSD) Department is expanding its residential and commercial inspection processes by offering optional virtual inspections for 23 common inspections for customer convenience while addressing COVID-19 risks and abiding by social distancing requirements. Earlier this year, DSD began piloting the virtual inspections and allowing customers to submit photos to inspectors of work conducted with no-plan Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing (MEP) Permits.

No-Plan Simple MEP permits are issued for minor installations without the need to submit plans, including relocations of electrical outlets or rewiring of a unit and water heater replacements, among various minor installation and repair projects on existing buildings.

“We’re making it easier than ever to build in San Diego by leveraging technology to help the construction industry get more shovels in the ground faster,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. “The COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to conduct in-person inspections so we’re moving to virtual inspections that will be easier to schedule and help move projects along more efficiently and effectively.”

Each week, the City averages about 2,000 field inspections in both English and Spanish on commercial and residential construction projects as is required before any permitted construction work can be covered, concealed, occupied or placed into use. Inspections that may be conducted as virtual inspections include:

- Electrical vehicle charging stations*
- Drywall *
- Exterior siding*
- Foundation retrofits, including mobile homes*
- Gas air tests*
- Insulation
- Light standard footings*
- Minor framing/shear*
- Re-roofs*
- Reinspection of minor corrections
- Retaining wall footings*
- Rooftop and ground-mount solar photovoltaic*
- Shower pans and tubs*
- Simple heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) change-outs*
- Slab grades*
- Temporary power

- Trash enclosures
- Water heaters*
- Water services and re-pipes*
- Window and door replacements*

* For single-family residences and duplex permit types only.

Customers may request a virtual inspection by completing an Enhanced Inspection form on DSD's website. If the inspection qualifies, assigned inspectors for each project will schedule the virtual inspection. Virtual inspections will be conducted with customers at the job site using the Google Meet conferencing platform. Customers must have a smartphone, tablet or computer. Large or complex inspections, as well as virtual inspections that can't be conducted properly, will still be inspected physically onsite.

“This new tech-driven option can eliminate everyday challenges faced by DSD staff at construction sites, increase efficiency and help meet the [City's Climate Action Plan](#) goals,” said Interim Deputy Director Kelly Charles. “Virtual inspections will help us conduct more inspections each day and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating the need to drive to sites while adhering to physical distancing protocols.”

Typical field inspections are conducted at no additional cost and are performed weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. [Enhanced inspections – after hours, holiday or weekend calls](#) – may be requested and scheduled based upon the availability of inspectors.

Virtual inspections are also an integral part of #DigitalDSD, an initiative to modernize all DSD workplace systems and cost-effectively leverage technology to increase productivity and improve service delivery to customers. #DigitalDSD includes the [rollout of an online permitting system](#) for all new development projects, virtual meetings with customers, a new [Zoning and Parcel Information Portal](#), the [online Small Cell Supplemental GIS Tool](#) and the digitization of more than eight million records.

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