



Town of Northborough

Building Department

63 Main Street
Northborough, MA 01532-1994
Office (508) 393-5010
Fax (508) 393-3130

The construction industry has been classified as essential by the Governor's office. However, the following comments should be balanced against the continuation of construction activity:

*The continuation of construction activities are conditional that there shall be sanitizing stations, maintaining social distances, limiting the concentration of personnel, distancing non-essential personnel, proper training of ALL persons on the job site, sanitizing of all shared tools and materials. A protocol document has been published for this. The building and health departments have the authority to shut down non-conforming construction projects until the offenses are corrected.

*Using common sense, the Governor has issued a shutdown of non-essential workplaces in an effort to 'flatten the curve'. With that in mind, every construction activity should be evaluated to determine if the activity is truly essential in the face of the COVID-19 emergency. I would classify a kitchen renovation with the family occupying the house to be non-essential.

*The Carpenters Union (Massachusetts Building Trades Council, 75,000 carpenters) has suspended ALL construction activities until further notice. Many large commercial projects (including in Northborough) have voluntarily shut down.

*Most building Inspectors' Associations have asked for a construction shutdown for the protection of suppliers, contractors, customers, and inspectors.

*The requirement for boards, committees, permit applications and inspections have not gone away. The permitting process will slow because virtually ALL building officials are working remotely. Likewise, inspections will take longer as they are done with photos and videos. Very often, the evidence submitted does not show all the details required for a successful inspection. This results in multiple photo submissions, further delaying the process. Contractors need to be more flexible when scheduling construction activities.

*Individuals should consult the local building departments for updates because these regulations can change hourly, and without widespread distribution. Additionally, there is a tremendous amount of false or outdated information out there.

*The building department can't stop construction activity, but the contractors should ask themselves, 'is it worth the risk?'