
MEMORANDUM

TO: Les Blankenship, Deputy County Supervisor
FROM: Ashley Yeh, Director of BCWS Engineering
THROUGH: Doug Tompkins, Director of BCWS
COPY TO: Frank Carson, Alison Simmons, Hank Jackson, Yolanda Ellis, Building Permit Applicants, File
DATE: May 31, 2017
RE: Procedure for Requesting Water and/or Sewer Availability Letters for Building Permits
AMENDED: July 24, 2019

BCWS Engineering is instating new requirements before issuing Availability Letters used to obtain building permits **prior** to issuance of the SCDHEC Permit to Operate (PTO) on water and sewer mains. BCWS established the new requirements for the following reasons.

Administratively

Our office receives a high volume of requests for Availability Letters from developers to obtain building permits. As plan/project review is our number one priority, we discussed ways to address these requests while still maintaining our priority.

Additionally, there have been issues in the past where homes were sold before issuance of the PTO for the utility portion of the projects. The new homeowners were unable to move into their houses on the scheduled closing date because water and/or sewer services were not available. This resulted in developers, homebuilders, and new homeowners requesting expedited plan review for their particular projects.

In the Field

Vertical construction should not commence without access to fire protection. Fire protection is typically unavailable until the completion of the water main construction and inspection.

Houses built prior to the PTO may result in illegal connections to our water and/or sewer systems and in illegal use of water by house construction crews from hydrants and stub-outs.

Housing construction often interrupts and/or makes final inspections and testing of water and/or sewer mains impossible, which results in further delay of PTO issuance.

Requirements

For the reasons above, BCWS established that the following requirements must be met prior to issuance of availability letters for building permits.

Residential Construction

- BCWS Engineering will issue the letter within ninety (90) days of anticipated PTO date for the associated water and/or sewer main construction if the following two requirements are met.
- BCWS must have conducted a final inspection on the water and sewer mains with no major deficiencies found.
- All water and sewer main tests must have been conducted and passed, with the exception of bac-t testing.

Commercial Construction / Apartments

- BCWS Engineering will issue the letter after SCDHEC has issued the Permit to Construct for the water and/or sewer main.
- For projects consisting of a combination of a main extension and a service only connection, BCWS Engineering will issue the letter after SCDHEC has issued the Permit to Construct for the main extension **and** BCWS Operations has approved the plans for the service only connection.

Requesting the Availability Letter

Once the project meets all requirements, please email BCWS Engineering at bcws.eng@berkeleycountysc.gov and provide the following information for **each lot**.

- TMS # in MS Word document
- Project Name associated with the water and/or sewer main construction (not to be confused with the subdivision name)

BCWS Engineering and/or Operations will review the request and the letter will be issued in a timely manner based on current workload.

**** Please note that BCWS shall not be liable for any delay in obtaining a certificate of occupancy should a closing date be scheduled prior to final inspections from BCWS Operations for water and/or sewer services. ****