

**City of Portland
Bureau of Development Services**

**Operating Plan – July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2017
Updated July 2015**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

OAR 918-020-0080 Delegation of Building Inspection Programs

"The division and every municipality that administers and enforces a building inspection program or desires to assume responsibility to administer and enforce a building inspection program shall prepare an operating plan describing the manner in which the municipality or the division will do so. The operating plan shall establish specific processes and goals, consistent with the program standards described in ORS 455.153 and OAR 918-020-0090."

This operating plan was developed to comply with the administrative rule quoted above. This plan reflects the standards, policies, procedures and services administered and offered through the building inspection programs of the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) of the City of Portland. The Plan will be updated as necessary to reflect service changes.

The City of Portland has been regulating building construction since the late 1800's, with local ordinances passed by the City Council as early as 1892. In 1973 Portland's Bureau of Buildings began enforcing State-adopted codes with State-certified personnel. BDS was created in 1999 as the Office of Planning and Development Review, through a merger of the Bureau of Buildings and the Land Use Review Division of the Bureau of Planning. The Bureau was renamed BDS in 2002.

B. Building Inspection Programs

BDS administers the following "building inspection programs" under authority granted in ORS 455.148:

- Structural (Commercial Building) Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Mechanical Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Plumbing Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Electrical Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Residential Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Manufactured Dwelling Installation Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Manufactured Dwelling and Parks Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Energy Efficiency Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Solar Installation Specialty Code Plan Review and Inspection
- Electrical Master Permit Program
- Facility Permit Program
- Field Issued Remodel Program
- Mechanical Minor Label Program
- Commercial Reroof Permit Program

Through an intergovernmental agreement, BDS also administers the same list of programs for portions of unincorporated Multnomah County located adjacent to the City. See the discussion of jurisdictional boundaries on page 9.

C. Reporting Period

This is the Operating Plan for the preceding programs for the reporting period of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017.

D. Additional Programs

In addition to the "building inspection programs" listed above, BDS administers programs for:

Abatement of dangerous buildings	Flood hazard
Zoning and land division	Signs
Parking and driveway surfaces	Street use
Clearing, grading and erosion control	Floating structures
Emergency management response	Building addressing
Housing maintenance regulations	Property nuisances
Tree and landscape planting	

BDS also coordinates the reviews of development applications performed by Portland Fire and Rescue and the Bureaus of Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Water. Elements of these programs are fully integrated within the building inspection programs administered by BDS. Although this Operating Plan does not specifically address these additional programs, it does distinguish elements from other programs where they are integrated into the building inspection programs.

E. Director and Building Official

The Director of BDS serves as the Building Official for the City of Portland and the Bureau's chief executive officer. Within Portland's commissioner form of government, BDS is currently within the portfolio of the Commissioner of Public Affairs, Dan Saltzman. The portfolio assignment can change at the discretion of the Mayor of Portland.

BDS's authority and duties are assigned in Chapter 3.30 of the Portland City Code. Comments, inquiries, and notices regarding this Operating Plan should be sent to by mail to the Bureau of Development Services, 1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 5000, Portland, Oregon, 97201; by phone to (503) 823-7308; or online at bds@portlandoregon.gov.

II. OPERATING PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The Operating Plan is available from BDS upon request. Copies are available to the public at the Development Services Center and at the Director's Office, located on the 1st and 5th floor, respectively, of the 1900 Building, 1900 SW Fourth Ave., Portland. The Plan is on file with the State of Oregon Building Codes Division and has been distributed to surrounding jurisdictions. The availability of the Operating Plan and significant revisions to the Plan will be announced in BDS's outreach newsletter, *The Plans Examiner*.

A. Ongoing Public Interaction

On a regular basis BDS seeks input from clients and the community through a variety of methods. With the other development review bureaus of the City of Portland, BDS gathers ideas, concerns, and suggestions on regulations and the permitting process from various stakeholder and community groups. In addition, customers and community members are periodically surveyed about their use of BDS programs and services.

1. Development Review Advisory Committee

Since 1998, the Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC), a customer and community stakeholder group, has worked with BDS on improving the Bureau's plan review and inspection processes, as well as its budget and permit fee structures. The DRAC is a standing advisory committee of seventeen members representing stakeholder groups with interests in the outcome of policies, budgets, regulations, and procedures that affect development review processes (e.g. architects, engineers, general contractors, homebuilders, neighborhood associations, business associations, etc.). This group also advises the Bureau on operations and customer service.

The purpose of the DRAC is to foster a timely, predictable and accountable development review process that implements the City's goals for land use, transportation, housing, economic development, neighborhood livability and the environment. The DRAC advocates for and supports the consistent and fair application and implementation of regulations.

Each year, BDS's budget is approved by the Portland City Council through a public process. A key element in budget development is a review of the budget proposal by the DRAC and representatives of various client groups, including the Building Owners and Managers Associations (BOMA), contractors, trades, design professionals, the Oregon Home Builders Association, Oregon Remodelers Association, and representatives of neighborhood and general citizen interests. The Bureau also uses a Budget Advisory Committee – composed of external stakeholders and employees – to give input into its budget process and decisions.

2. SWAT Team

Twice each month, BDS convenes a meeting with representatives from all the bureaus that participate in the development review process, including BDS, Portland Fire and Rescue, and the Bureaus of Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Water. This group is referred to as the “SWAT Team.”

The purpose of the group is to identify, implement, and monitor improvements to the development review process; develop standardized informational materials to assist the public in the use of City services; and communicate changes in policies, procedures, and codes that may affect the permitting process.

3. Informal Advisory Groups

BDS staff meets periodically with trade and industry representatives to discuss their concerns and issues related to BDS and development in Portland. BDS staff also routinely participates with constituent organizations, including the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), Independent Electrical Contractors of Oregon (IECO), Plumbing/Heating/Cooling Contractors (PHCC), Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association (PMCA), Northwest Sign Council, Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland (HBA), Oregon State Employees Association (OSEA), Oregon Remodelers' Association (ORA), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48, and United Association (UA) Local 290.

B. Submittal to Building Codes Division

The last major update to the Operating Plan was submitted to the Buildings Codes Division (BCD) in December 2012.

C. BCD Review

The Building Codes Division verifies that the BDS Operating Plan complies with the standards, policies and procedures contained in OAR 918-020-0090.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Adequate Funds and Other Resources

Based on a Portland City Council policy that requires building construction programs to be 100% fee-supported, BDS collects adequate revenues to fund all of the Bureau's inspection and plan review/permit issuance programs. Revenues from construction permit, plan review, and inspection fees, and from the collection of penalties and liens constitute over 95% of the Bureau's total revenues. The remainder of Bureau revenues come primarily from the City of Portland's General Fund, and support BDS's local code enforcement programs. From time to time, the City Council will allocate general fund resources to initiate new programs or increase levels of service.

BDS is set up as a separate operating fund within the City of Portland's financial structure. BDS's revenues are all directed to programs within the Bureau. These revenues are used to support permit and plan review related activities. Revenues and expenditures of each program are accounted for separately. (Programs administered by BDS such as land use and zoning have separate funding sources, such as the City's general fund or program-specific fees. Generally, State Building Code administration fees are not used by these other programs. However, in the past, building permit revenues have been used to fund portions of planning and zoning reviews that are incidental to the issuance of building permits.)

The principal construction programs are structural/mechanical, plumbing, and electrical. Administrative costs are charged to each program.

Each autumn, BDS staff prepares preliminary revenue forecasts and expenditure projections for the current fiscal year (beginning July 1) and five subsequent fiscal years. Revenues and expenditures are compared to determine annual cost recovery rates and whether the Bureau's reserve will be drawn down or increased. The Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) reviews the level of service to customers and makes recommendations on the budget for the subsequent fiscal year. The DRAC also reviews the revenue estimates and provides feedback on the Bureau's recommendation for fee increases.

Along with the DRAC, the BDS Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) is a key participant in BDS's annual budget development process. The BAC meets several times in the autumn and periodically through the rest of the year to review and give input regarding BDS's financial status, future projections, service levels, and potential budget decisions. Fees are set each year to maintain the Bureau's service level and financial integrity.

BDS has a reserve fund that may be used to supplement the Bureau's budget when the economy is weak and revenues do not meet expenses. The goal of the reserve is to allow BDS time to recognize and respond to unanticipated declines in revenues and to maintain the staffing needed to carry out the Bureau's obligation to provide services for permits that have already been paid. The size of the reserve determines how much time the Bureau will have to adjust to economic changes while still providing necessary services. The reserve does not insulate BDS from making significant budget adjustments in response to lower revenues and reduced workload over the long term. The reserve does, however, allow BDS to remain stable and meet its prepaid obligations, provides time for the Bureau to respond to economic changes, and reduces the severity of budget cuts in the short term.

The BDS reserve fund was drawn down significantly in 2008 and 2009 as the Bureau's permit revenue declined precipitously due to the effects of the national economic crisis on local development. The bureau rebuilt its reserves to \$10.2 million in FY 2011-12, \$24 million in FY 2012-13, and \$35 million in FY 2013-14. In the first half of FY 2014-15, reserves continued to increase and stood at over \$41 million as of January 1, 2015. However, a portion of the reserve will be used to pay for BDS's Information Technology Advancement Project (ITAP). Even with this expenditure, the Bureau is projected to maintain healthy reserves over the next five years.

Equipment

All staff members are provided with the equipment and other resources needed to complete their work in an efficient and service-oriented manner. Such equipment includes, but is not limited to, office space, vehicles, cellular telephones, personal protective equipment, codes and code-related publications, business and identification cards, and networked personal computers.

B. Authority

Section 24.10.050 of the Portland City Code (P.C.C.) authorizes the Director of BDS to enforce the provisions of the Building Code. To fulfill this duty, the Director is authorized to appoint officers, inspectors and other assistants. Similar provisions are contained in P.C.C. Titles 25, 26, and 27, which adopt plumbing, electrical, and mechanical regulations, respectively. Each position within BDS is delineated in a detailed classification specification which, when appropriate, includes certification requirements.

C. Appeal Processes

Persons aggrieved by BDS's interpretation or application of the Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, Residential, and other Specialty Codes enforced by the Bureau, or persons seeking acceptance of alternative materials or methods of construction, may apply for an appeal on forms established for that purpose. Most appeal applications are submitted electronically, and those received Tuesday through start of business Monday are reviewed the following Wednesday. Reviews of appeals are performed by the Building Official (or the Building Official's designee), technical advisory staff representing the plan review and inspection sections of the Bureau, and staff from Portland Fire and Rescue. Appeal proposals that are deemed equivalent to the intent and purpose of the standards of the relevant code and that meet other statutory requirements are granted under the authority of the Building Official. Appeal decisions may be further appealed to Commissioner-appointed (or Mayor-appointed) citizen appeal boards set up for each Specialty Code. All appeal decisions are documented in BDS's permanent records. BDS hears about 900 appeals and alternate materials and methods proposals each year; approximately 95% are resolved at the administrative level.

In accordance with ORS 455.475 and OAR 918-008-0120, applicants and permit holders have the option of appealing through BDS processes, or they may appeal directly to the appropriate Chief Inspector of the State Buildings Code Division. As per ORS 455.690, any person aggrieved by the final decision of the City's appeal boards may, within 30 days after the date of the decision, appeal to the appropriate State advisory board.

D. Accounting Practices

1. Expenditures

The expenditures of each section of BDS are accounted for separately. The Bureau uses the City of Portland's automated accounting system and receives reports each month on expenditures. Expenditures are also accounted for by line item.

2. Revenues

Since the adoption of the Buildings Operating Fund in 1988, BDS has analyzed expenses and revenues by program. Cost recovery rates are calculated for each program every month. The Bureau's Five-Year Financial Plan includes tracking of reserve funds for each program.

3. Administrative Overhead

Administrative overhead costs are allocated proportionally to each Bureau program, and losses and surpluses are tracked by program.

E. Income/Expense Projections

Each fiscal year, BDS strives for realistic expenditure and revenue projections. BDS's revenues are directly related to commercial and residential construction activity in the larger Portland Metropolitan area and are very susceptible to changes in the economic conditions of both the state and the nation.

The list of macroeconomic parameters influencing the Bureau's revenues includes, but is not limited to: total wage and salary employment; construction employment; housing starts; population; measures of income; short and long-term interest rates; housing prices; loan delinquency and charge off rates for loans secured by residential and commercial real estate; homeownership rates; and inflation. The high susceptibility of the Bureau's revenue to so many macroeconomic parameters makes revenues difficult to project.

Revenues for most of the Bureau's programs are projected to increase moderately in FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17. Those years are projected to be followed by limited declines in revenue in FY 2017-18, FY 2018-19, and FY 2019-20.

F. Records Retention and Retrieval

BDS Resource Records maintains records for building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical permits, as well as records for each board of appeals. The Portland City Auditor coordinates the City's records retention schedules to meet minimum State requirements; however, BDS maintains some records longer than the minimum standards. Some records date back to 1903; electrical permits date from only 1983. These are all permanent records and are kept in various forms, including hardcopy, electronic, and microfilm. The records include permitting information for both the City of Portland and the portion of unincorporated Multnomah County that is in BDS's service district.

Customers and community members may access BDS records online or through the public record request process. Records available online include:

- **Permit and Case History Search** - Active and historical building permit, trade permit, land use review, and enforcement case information (from 2000 to present).
- **Plumbing Records Search** - Plumbing permit history.
- **Appeal Records Search** - Most building, electrical, mechanical, or plumbing code appeals.
- **Notices, Hearings, Decisions & Pre-application Conferences** - Land use notices, hearings, decisions and pre-application conference pdf documents.
- **Metro Reports** - Weekly and monthly summary reports providing summary information on all permit and land use review types.

Building and land use review records can also be researched in person at the Development Services Center (DSC) on the first floor of the 1900 Building, 1900 SW Fourth Avenue, or requested via phone (503-823-7660). The findings can be mailed or faxed. Some documents are stored at the City's archive facility and can be retrieved within two working days. Building plans are stored on microfiche and can be researched and ordered through the DSC. BDS intends to digitize all future permit and land use review records and make them available online within the next few years.

BDS's website includes a page with instructions for requesting records and links to required forms at <http://www.portlandonline.com/bds/index.cfm?c=54732&>. The Bureau charges a minimum fee of \$15 for records requests.

G. Inquiries, Complaint Process

BDS has a well-defined, established process for reviewing customer concerns. Concerns about service that are not resolved at the supervisory level are referred to the Director's Office for resolution. Concerns are investigated by staff and customers are contacted in writing or by phone with the results. Complaint records are kept for a two-year period. Quarterly reports include information on the types, numbers, and resolutions of concerns. All complainant information is kept confidential.

H. Permit Application Center

The Development Services Center (DSC) is located on the first floor of the 1900 Building, 1900 SW Fourth Avenue. The DSC is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Thursdays.

BDS Permitting Services is located on the second floor of the 1900 Building, and is open to assist customers from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Thursdays.

The rest of BDS's offices are located on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th floors of the 1900 Building and are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Primary interaction with the public occurs at the DSC and at main reception on the 5th floor. The phone number for the DSC is (503) 823-7310.

I. Jurisdictional Boundaries

BDS provides inspection programs within the limits of the City of Portland and within all portions of unincorporated Multnomah County located west of the City of Gresham and a line which includes properties on both sides of 162nd Avenue to the north of SE Stark, and properties on both sides of 174th Avenue to the south of Stark. A map of the jurisdictional area is posted in the DSC and a general location map is on the Bureau's web site (www.portlandonline.com/bds).

IV. PERMITTING STANDARDS

A. Office Hours

BDS offices are open Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., except for the Development Services Center (DSC) and Permitting Services (see section III.H., above).

B. Application Submittal and Intake

Information on preparing/receiving building permit applications can be obtained at the DSC and on the Bureau's website (www.portlandonline.com/bds). BDS also publishes numerous brochures, Code Guides, Program Guides and other handouts designed to assist various customer groups in navigating the permitting process. All of the key brochures assisting homeowners have been translated into Vietnamese, Russian, and Spanish and are available on the Bureau's website.

Permit applications that require plan review are received in the DSC. All permit intakes, reviews of minor projects, fee payments, and customer service inquiries occur in the DSC.

1. Receiving Applications Online

Permit applications that do not require plan review are referred to by BDS as Trade Permits. They include plumbing permits for non-complex structures, electrical permits in which the panel does not exceed 400 amps, and mechanical permits that do not involve fire resistive construction or loads in excess of 400 pounds. Applications for Trade Permits may be submitted by mail, obtained in person in the DSC, or many can be purchased online through the Bureau's website (www.portlandonline.com/bds). Online permit applications are issued immediately. Customers can then schedule inspections and monitor their projects online. BDS currently processes approximately 19,000 permit applications online annually.

2. Determining Application Completeness and Informing Applicants

All building, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical permit applications requiring plan review are reviewed for completeness by either technical or professional staff. Building permits are reviewed for completeness during the intake process in the presence of the applicant, and applicants are informed verbally of any inadequacies. Plans that are obviously very incomplete are not accepted; those having minor inadequacies are accepted, but review of the inadequate areas does not occur until either the plans have been revised or the needed information has been provided.

C. Application Review

1. Application Review Goals

BDS has set the following goals for permit review:

PERMIT TYPE	WORKING DAYS TO 1 ST REVIEW	WORKING DAYS TO RECHECK
Residential Alterations	7	3
Commercial Alterations	10	5
RS Additions	15	5
CO Additions	20	5
RS New Construction	15	5
CO New Construction	20	5
Projects Assigned to a Process Manager	As above unless per written agreement with Process Manager	As above unless per written agreement with Process Manager

The Bureau's success at meeting these goals is dependent upon the availability of staff, the number and complexity of submitted permit applications, and the completeness of the plans provided. As a general rule, complex projects (greater than 4 stories and/or valuation greater than \$7 million) are provided the option of working with a Process Manager.

2. Issuing Permits - Reasonable Time

The Bureau issues Trade Permits (walk-in and online) the same day, and approximately 60% of all building permit applications while the customer waits. Permits for new single family residences are reviewed within 15 working days. Issuance times depend on applicants' response times to checksheets and on when fees are paid. Projects that are complex or of significant size may be broken down into phases and partial permits issued, if appropriate. As an example, for a new multi-story commercial building, it is not uncommon to issue separate permits for site work/utilities, foundation and structural shell, and the main building permit. Applicants requesting phased permits need to work with a Process Manager and plans reviewers prior to plan submittal to establish appropriate phases and timelines for phased plan reviews. Applicants are informed that the issuance of a phased permit does not guarantee that a permit will be issued for the entire structure. The Bureau also issues separate permits for deferred submittals (items designed by the contractor generally after the main building permit has been issued). Using this approach, the Bureau has been reasonably successful in meeting timeline goals on most projects.

D. Policies for Permits Without Plan Review; Waiving Life Safety and Structural Plan Reviews; Emergency Permits; Master Permits and Minor Labels

1. Permits Without Plan Review

See B.1. above (p. 10).

2. Waiving Life Safety and Structural Plan Reviews

Pursuant to 2003 Oregon Senate Bill 711 (SB 711; see ORS 455.628, OAR 918-311-0040, and OAR 918-780-0040), the City of Portland may in certain cases waive the requirement for life safety and structural plan reviews for one and two family dwellings that are of conventional light frame construction, as defined in OAR 918-408-0130. To qualify for a waiver of these two reviews, the plans must be designed and stamped by a professional engineer registered under ORS 672.092, or by an architect registered under ORS 671.060. The engineer or architect must also be certified by the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services under ORS 455.720 as a one and two family dwelling plans examiner.

To request a waiver of the life safety and structural plan reviews, the applicant must submit appropriately-stamped plans. The stamp must show the registered professional's certification number, and the plans must bear the registered professional's signature. The applicant must also submit a completed *Request for Exemption from Plan Review & Statement of Plan Review Certification/Licensure* form. This form identifies the project and includes the certification information of the registered professional who stamped the plans. The form may be obtained online at www.portlandonline.com/bds or at the DSC.

The applicant is initially charged a Building Plan Check Fee while the plans are reviewed for compliance with SB 711 requirements. If the plans meet the requirements, the life safety and structural plan reviews are signed off as approved, with comments noting the exemption from those plan reviews only; all other reviews required by City and State codes must still be performed. The Building Plan Check Fee is then credited toward the remaining permit fees for the project, and a Special Program Processing Fee is added. The plans are then forwarded for other reviews as required by City code.

If the plans do not comply with SB 711 requirements, the Building Plan Check Fee remains and the plans receive life safety, structural, and all other plan reviews required by State and City codes.

3. Emergency Permits

a. Structural/Mechanical Work

Emergency Permits, such as those associated with floods, landslides, or wind damage are given the highest priority by the Bureau. Inspection teams utilize the ATC-20 (Applied Technology Council) program for determining building safety. Emergency shoring and temporary repairs without permit are allowed on a limited basis. Work may commence before issuance of the permit provided that the contractor informs the Bureau immediately, calls in for an inspection as soon as is practical, and files applications for permits as soon as the scope of the work is known.

Permanent construction to repair damage requires permits, which must go through the normal permitting process. The review of these applications is given the highest priority.

b. Plumbing Work

BDS allows emergency plumbing work to be started without permit, provided the contractor calls in to have the work inspected within 48 hours and takes out the required permit as soon as is practical after the emergency event. Emergency work may also be carried out under a minor label, provided that it falls within the scope of the work allowed under the label.

c. Electrical Work

BDS allows emergency electrical work to be started prior to permit issuance, provided that the contractor notifies the Bureau as early as possible, requests an inspection of the work as soon as is practical, and takes out the required permit within seven days. An electrical minor label may also be used, provided that the emergency work falls within the scope of the work allowed under the label.

4. Master Permits

a. Repetitive Design

Builders who want to repeat the same house plan on a number of lots may do so, provided the changes are minimal and clearly defined. In such case, the plan review fee is reduced by 50%.

b. Combination Permits

BDS issues Combination Permits for new construction and alterations to single family structures and duplexes (two unit structures). This permit combines building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work. All fees are paid when the building permit is issued. Subcontractors with a current contractor's registration and license can then fax in an application for a plumbing, electrical, or mechanical permit attached to the combination permit, at no additional cost. This process reduces paperwork for both the City and the subcontractors and insures that all permits are taken out in a timely manner.

c. Facility Permit Program

The Bureau implemented a comprehensive master permit program called the Facility Permit Program (FPP) in 1998. FPP is a fast-track permitting and inspection process for interior tenant improvements and maintenance/repair work in commercial and industrial facilities. The program currently serves more than 100 clients with over six hundred buildings. Plan review and inspection services are provided by teams of appropriately certified inspectors. FPP is funded predominantly through hourly billings.

d. Field Issuance Remodel (FIR) Program

The Field Issuance Remodel (FIR) Program began as a pilot program in 2003 and was approved by BCD as a permanent program in 2006. The FIR Program facilitates rapid plan review and inspection processes for alterations and additions made to one- or two-family dwellings. FIR staff works closely with applicants through every stage of their projects, from plan submission to final inspection. Over the years this highly successful program has seen the number of participating contractors grow from 10 to over 80.

5. Minor Labels

The Minor Label Program is an alternative inspection program established by the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). The program utilizes minor installation labels and random inspections instead of regular permits and inspections. This program is administered in the Portland metro area through the Oregon State Building Codes Division (BCD).

Electrical and plumbing minor labels are available to both residential and commercial contractors and must be purchased directly through BCD. Mechanical minor labels for commercial work are available and BDS is currently piloting an expansion of this program to include the use of one and two family residential mechanical minor labels by licensed contractors.

Contractors provide documentation to BCD showing how the electrical and plumbing minor labels were used, and the BCD selects one of every 10 labels and sends inspection requests to BDS Residential Inspections and Commercial Inspections. BDS office staff in these sections then schedule inspections with property owners. Minor Label Program rules require that inspections be completed and results returned to BCD promptly.

More information about this program can be found on the BCD Web site at http://www.oregonbcd.org/programs/minorlabel/minor_label_programs.html.

E. Requiring Proof of Contractor Registration

BDS verifies contractors' registration data through an automated permit tracking and issuance system that is linked to the State Construction Contractors Board (CCB) database. If the Bureau is not able to verify that a contractor has a current registration, the State is notified or the contractor is asked to provide proof of a current registration.

V. PLAN REVIEW STANDARDS

A. Plan Review Policies to Assure Compliance with Codes

1. Structural/Mechanical

BDS has specialists for various permit types and review categories, as follows: residential and commercial permits, fire/life safety/energy/accessibility, geotechnical, structural, and mechanical. Plans are screened and assigned in accordance with the project complexity. All projects in flood or slope hazard and other site areas with suspected or potential soil stability problems are assigned for geotechnical review; all commercial projects and those residential projects having non-standard structural components are assigned for structural review; and all commercial mechanical projects are assigned for mechanical review. Most projects which disturb soil are required to provide erosion control plans. Plans and supporting documents are reviewed against the standards and regulations contained in the State Specialty Codes, including architect and engineer licensure laws. Any inconsistency or inaccuracy with regard to the code requirements is identified and a written notice (checksheet) is e-mailed or mailed to the applicant. The applicant is required to redraw the plans or to note the corrections on the drawings when redesign is not required. Plans are reviewed again before the permit is issued.

BDS coordinates the review of all commercial projects with Portland Fire and Rescue, which provides three full-time plan review staff available to the DSC and two specialty reviewers/inspectors (sprinklers and alarms) off-site. Portland Fire and Rescue staff also participates with other development bureaus on the SWAT Team (see Section II.A.2. on p. 4) and acts as BDS's liaison with the State Fire Marshal.

BDS continues to develop a variety of handouts to guide permit applicants through permit application and plan review processes, including brochures, Code Guides, and Program Guides.

2. Electrical

Plans examiners in the Electrical Inspection Section review electrical plans for compliance with the Oregon Electrical Specialty Code. ORS, OAR, and the Portland City Code (Title 26) require plan review on all complex structures as defined by OAR 918-311-0040. Plans must have sufficient detail to show compliance with the Oregon Electrical Specialty Code. A copy of the electrical plan review policy is available to the public upon request to BDS.

3. Plumbing

Plans examiners in the Plumbing Inspection Section review plumbing plans for compliance with the Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code. ORS, OAR, and the Portland City Code (Title 25) require plan review on all complex structures as defined by OAR 918-780-0040. Plans are to have sufficient detail to show compliance with the State Plumbing Specialty Code. In the case of food preparation, plans must also comply with Multnomah County Health Department regulations and the requirements of the Oregon State Agricultural Department. Copies of the applicable Multnomah County and State agricultural regulations are available to the public upon request to the Bureau.

4. Land Use Services

BDS Planners review plans for compliance with the Portland Zoning Code. Plans and supporting documents are reviewed against the standards and regulations contained in the Zoning Code. Any inconsistency or inaccuracy with regard to the code requirements is noted in writing (checksheet) and e-mailed, or mailed to the applicant. The applicant is required to redraw the plans, or note the corrections on the drawings when redesign is not required. Plans are re-reviewed before the permit is issued.

B. Contracts for Plan Review

BDS is not currently contracting with any outside firms to provide plan review services. The Bureau has maintained such contracts in the past when unusually heavy work loads and/or staff shortages increased review turnaround times to an unacceptable level and when sufficient funding was available. BDS may explore this option should the need arise.

BDS occasionally contracts with specialty engineering or consulting firms when special needs arise. These occasions include, but are not necessarily limited to, large numbers of structural failures caused by natural events such as earthquakes, floods, or heavy winds, or soil stability issues caused by such natural events. This contracting is done only when the events are in such numbers and/or of such an immediate nature that Bureau engineering staff cannot respond adequately. Prior to contracting with these firms, the Bureau ensures that the staff involved in the contracted work has the required State licenses and/or certifications.

C. Plan Review Personnel

BDS maintains a list of all certified staff. BDS uses a computerized database program to document the type of certification held, the certification number, and the date issued for each staff member. BDS also maintains copies of the employees' certifications. As employees complete their continuing education credits, the description of the class and the number and type of credits are entered into a training database. The Bureau can track each employee's progress in obtaining required continuing education credits. The Bureau also maintains the original training authorization documents.

VI. INSPECTION STANDARDS

A. Inspection Services

BDS provides inspection services from the 1900 Building, 1900 SW Fourth Avenue. Inspection staff is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with more limited availability from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Field inspectors are normally available from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. for phone calls. Field staff normally makes inspections Monday through Friday.

B. Inspection Requests

BDS uses an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone scheduling system for inspections. The system allows customers to use their phones to schedule, cancel, or reschedule inspections, obtain inspection results and messages from inspectors, and obtain plan review status. The IVR system is available 24 hours a day. To obtain an inspection for the same day, customers must call prior to 6:00 a.m.

C. Inspection Process

Upon arriving at a job site, the BDS inspector will verify that a permit has been posted and that approved plans, if required, are available. After completing the requested inspection, the inspector will fill out an inspection report which describes any items that require correction in accordance with the applicable specialty code. The inspector will leave a copy of the report on the site in a conspicuous location. If it is an electrical inspection or a commercial plumbing inspection, Bureau staff will also send a copy to the permit holder. If the inspector finds that all minimum code requirements have been met, the inspector will indicate approval on the job card on the site or will leave on the site an inspection report noting approval.

The special inspection requirements outlined in Chapter 17 of the Oregon Structural Specialty Code are overseen by BDS's Commercial Structural / Mechanical Inspections section. The employees working in the section monitor all of the special inspection work carried out in the city by certified testing labs and other designated special inspectors. Section staff regularly makes field inspections to observe tests, check that only appropriately-certified inspectors are on site, and verify that they are performing their inspections correctly.

A contractor or owner who disputes an inspection report can request to speak with a supervisor by calling the following section numbers:

Residential Inspections	503-823-7388
Commercial Structural/Mechanical	503-823-7303
Commercial Plumbing	503-823-7302
Commercial Electrical	503-823-7304

A contractor or owner who needs to speak with a field inspector can call the above numbers or the inspector's desk phone between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m.

D. Inspection Personnel

BDS maintains a list of all certified inspection staff. The Bureau uses a computerized database program to document the type of certification held, the certification number and the date issued. BDS also maintains copies of the employees' certifications. As employees complete their continuing education credits, the description of the class and number and type of credits are entered into a training database. The Bureau can track each employee's progress through the year in obtaining continuing education credits. The Bureau also maintains the original training authorization documents.

E. Authority to Issue Stop Work Orders

Portland City Code authorizes the Building Official, in the person of the BDS Director (or the Director's designee), and his/her authorized representatives to issue stop work orders. Authorized representatives include all BDS inspectors.

F. Enforcement of Plumbing and Electrical Licensing and Registration Requirements

BDS field inspectors verify compliance with plumbing and electrical contractor licensing and registration requirements on a routine basis, as well as in response to complaints. If a licensing violation is noted, inspectors follow prevailing State procedures. BDS has been participating with the State Building Codes Division and various industry groups in the implementation of a pilot enforcement procedure resulting from 2003 Senate Bill 906 (ORS 455.080). The goals of the pilot procedure are to provide a uniform method for checking license status and issuing citations for licensing requirement violations, and to provide a consistent basis for enforcement of licensing requirements and treatment of violations, including fine amounts.

G. Expired Permits

Portland City Code provides administrative procedures for addressing the expiration of permits, consistent with the provisions of each State specialty code. Permits may become null and void if no inspection approval has taken place for a period of six months or more. Notification letters are mailed to permit holders prior to and upon the expiration of any permit. Each time an inspection approval is granted the permit is extended for six months, until final approval is granted. A requested extension is allowed if a permit holder is unable to complete the work necessary for an inspection approval within a six month period. Inspection approvals are recorded in the Bureau's permit tracking system, and the IVR system allows permit holders to verify inspection approvals by telephone following each inspection.

Inspection results may also be obtained through the BDS website at <http://www.portlandmaps.com/maps/bds/>, and inspectors make approval notations on the permit job card maintained on-site.

VII. COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS

BDS operates a Compliance Services program aimed at assisting property owners and the public to comply with minimum requirements of the State specialty codes in the most efficient manner possible. Compliance Services building inspectors investigate violation complaints regarding specialty code regulations. Compliance Services provides administrative support to other inspection staff and sections within BDS by administering the Bureau's code enforcement procedures.

Common construction violations include work done without a permit, work beyond the scope of an issued permit, or failure to submit a special inspection final summary report. Compliance Services also inspects and enforces codes related to dangerous buildings, fire-damaged properties and building moves.

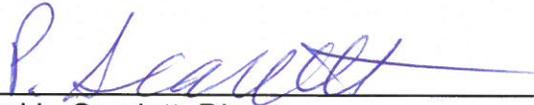
Violation complaints received are entered into BDS's permit tracking database, and site inspections and research are conducted to confirm the violation. If a violation is identified, a notice is sent to the property owner of record and occupants. The notice provides information on the code section that is being violated, the requirements for correcting the violation, and a deadline for compliance. The notice also lists the consequences of failing to correct the violation, including monthly code enforcement penalties and a hearing before the City Code Hearings Officer. The Code Hearings Officer may impose additional penalties of up to \$1,000 per day for violations. Monthly code enforcement penalties change yearly and vary depending on the use of the property. The code enforcement fee schedule can be found at <http://www.portlandonline.com/bds/index.cfm?c=34184>.

Monthly penalties may begin 30 days after notice of violation is given. An appeal of the proposed penalties may be requested. The penalties continue to accrue until violations are corrected and inspected. If violations are not corrected within three months, the monthly penalties double. If penalties are not paid, they become liens against the real property.

See Section VI.F. for investigation of plumbing and electrical licensing and registration.

VIII. CERTIFICATION

I certify that the Bureau of Development Services is operating as indicated in the preceding Operating Plan.



Paul L. Scarlett, Director
Bureau of Development Services

7-20-15

Date