



Chesterfield County, Virginia Department of Building Inspection

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Known Enterprise Land Management (ELM) Issues for Customers April Update

On February 16, 2021 we transitioned from our legacy computer system that managed permits and inspections to the new ELM system. Unfortunately, the data conversion process was difficult and resulted in numerous issues for the new ELM system. BI staff and the system implementer are continuing to work to correct the issues with the new system. We know this transition has caused problems and delays for our customers. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this transition period.

April 5, update:

Data Conversion: Progress has been made on data conversion related issues. The fix for the data conversion requires multiple iterations to fix packets of the data. The process is on-going and will be for some time. This has been the source for most of the problems we have faced and incremental improvements across the system will become evident as progress is made on data conversion.

Training:

Staff Training: We polled staff to determine what specific aspects of the new system they were confused about or did not understand. We took that information and had our implementer create custom training for our staff that has been provided over the past two weeks. This has improved staff's knowledge and confidence with the ELM system, which will make them quicker and more accurate working on the back end and better able to assist our customers on the front end. This support training will be ongoing.

Customer Training: Our goal was to provide customer training soon after ELM go-live. Due to the system challenges and the need for more staff training we were not able to prepare and deliver customer training as soon as we had envisioned. We are working towards providing ELM training opportunities in May. We will likely offer training virtually at first but hope to offer in-person at some time in the future.

What you can do:

- Please be patient with staff as they are learning along side our customers. Stay tuned for announcements of customer training dates and times and please attend.

Customer portal: We continue to make improvements to the ELM Citizen Access Portal based on contractor input. We are currently working to improve the instructions. We have determined some areas that are causing confusion, such as selecting natures of work, and are making improvements to that functionality. We are aware of performance and speed issues with the ELM Citizen Access Portal. This is caused by the volume of traffic on the software vendor Accela's East Coast network. We are sending Accela daily metrics

on system speed and pushing Accela to make performance improvements. We are making more information in the system available to contractors through the ELM Citizen Access Portal to reduce the need to call into the office for information. We will provide more information about these new features in the coming weeks.

What you can do:

- Please follow the data entry instruction on the ELM Citizen Access Portal and check for instruction updates each time you log on. Simple things such as entering the data fields in the correct format as instructed make a big difference, improving the experience.

In-ability to receive a response from staff: We know it has been difficult to reach BI staff members for assistance or information. It has been common for customers to not receive email responses from staff for days and to drop off of our phone network after excessive wait times. This is not how we want to do business and have been working to improve response. It is due to the call volume and time we spend on the call with the average customer. With implementation of the new system both the call volume and time per call are up. Our call volume averages around 1,900 calls per month; in March we had 4,111 calls. The good news is that this situation has improved. Call volume is trending back to pre-go-live levels as well as time per call averages. At the worst we averaged 3 minutes and 42 seconds to answer a call but that is an average and we are aware of some waiting over 20 minutes; and, 20 % of callers dropping off because of the excessive wait. We have made improvements. Our phone call wait time average is now 1 ½ minutes with our drop off rate down to 9%. Our goal is to get the wait times back to less than a minute and drop offs to less than 3%.

We are adding additional office staff. We have converted two part time positions to full time and are hiring four new part time staff members. Additionally, we have brought on a temporary part time floater staff member to help. This is being accomplished with existing funding.

What you can do:

- We are getting caught up on emails and phone calls with most email responses within one business day and calls answered within a 1 ½ minutes on average. If you email, or call and leave a message, we will respond within 1 business day. Please do not call and email multiple people for the same question or concern. All of those people must respond, so it adds to the overall staff workload which slows the entire process down.
- For the next couple of months, add in an additional two weeks to your expectation for permit turnaround time. This is temporary and we will do what is necessary to get back to the turnaround times you expect.

Process changes: In addition to offering the ELM Citizen Access Portal for online application and payment submittal, there have been a number of other changes to the permit process. Permit application forms have been updated, county issued contractor ID numbers have been retired, the proffer payment process has changed.

What you can do:

- **Contractor ID:** The customer or contractor ID number issued by Chesterfield BI is no longer used. The DPOR issued contractor license number is the number we use to identify contractors. Please use this number and use it as provided by DPOR. It is a ten-digit number, Arabic numerals only. There are no letters, characters, spaces, decimals or dashes in the number. Your contractor classification and specialties are not part of the license number.

- **Forms:** Please use our latest permit application forms. DELETE any prior editions of our application forms that you have saved and save the latest versions of our application forms. There have been changes to the forms and it slows down permit application entry if you use the old forms. The new forms can be accessed here: [Updated BI Permit Applications](#)
- **Accela Mobile App:** Accela provides an app for your cell phone or tablet. This app will work with the ELM system for things such as inspection scheduling, obtaining inspection results, and permit status. Chesterfield BI cannot provide support for this app, but it is available and does work. Give it a try.
- **Proffer payments:** Cash proffer payments can be made through the ELM Citizen Access Portal. There is no longer a need to pay these in person at the Budget office. To take advantage of this process improvement, please call the Budget office at 748-1548. Budget staff will verify that the record is eligible to be paid and add the fees to the permit record in the ELM Citizen Access Portal. At that point it is the builder's choice to come to the Community Development building customer service center to pay the fees and pick up the CO; or, to pay the cash proffer through the online portal and receive the CO on the document tab of the online portal.
- **Trade Permits:** For residential trade permits, we are committed to returning to the "while you wait" turnaround time for walk-in customers and one day turnaround time for other forms of application submission. We are not there yet, and it will be a few months before we return to that level of service that our customers have come to expect. With that in mind, please have your sub-contractors submit the trade permits as soon as possible. Trade permits can be submitted with or the same day the parent building permit is submitted.

Below are the issues we identified in our February 26 memo. These bullet points are still applicable.

- **The prior PIN number-based Web portal is no longer available to schedule inspections, view inspection history, and permit details-** The PIN based portal has been replaced with the new [ELM Citizens Access Portal](#) (this is a link to the web page). The ELM Citizen Access Portal works best with Google Chrome. The first time you log into the new ELM Citizen Access Portal you will need to create an account. If you submitted an electronic plan in the "eReview" system you already have an account and do not need to create a new one, please use the same username and password that you used for eReview. All the information available in the prior system is available in the new system for permits submitted after 2-16-21. For permits submitted prior to 2-16-21 there may be missing information; that is being corrected, but the process may take several weeks to correct every converted permit. For more information on use of the ELM Citizen Access Portal, please see the attached users guide.
- **Townhome Inspection Scheduling-** Townhome permits applied for prior to 2-16-21 were not properly converted into ELM. We must convert the permits manually. It will take a few weeks to convert all the converted townhome projects. To schedule an inspection on these permits, check the [ELM Citizen Access Portal](#) on our web site to see if the specific permit has been converted. If it has been converted, you can schedule the inspection in the ELM Citizen Access Portal. If it is not in the ELM Citizen Access Portal, you must contact Kirby Rakes at (804) 796-7021 or rakesk@chesterfield.gov to schedule your inspection. Check ACA each day you need to schedule inspections as townhome permits are being converted daily.

- **Permits applied for prior to 2-16-21 and not yet issued-** Some of the permit review processes were not properly converted into the ELM Citizen Access Portal. This is being corrected manually, but it will take a few weeks to correct all the converted permits. If you submitted a permit prior to 2-16-21 and have not received your permit or been contacted about your permit, please email Mike Eutsey at eutseym@chesterfield.gov for residential or Rodger Slate at slater@chesterfield.gov for commercial to check the status of your permit.
- **CO issuance for permits applied for prior to 2-16-21-** The permit data used to generate certificates of occupancy was not properly converted into the ELM Citizen Access Portal for permits applied for prior to 2-16-21. Due to this, it may take longer than you are accustomed to receive an issued certificate of occupancy because there is a manual process necessary to generate the CO for the converted permits. We are working to issue COs within a business day of final inspection approval, but it may take up to three business days.
- **Inspectors no longer print inspection field tickets-** Inspectors now have real time connectivity to the ELM system so inspection results are available online through the ELM Citizen Access Portal immediately after the inspection results are entered. Note that beginning in November we stopped printing tickets as a standard practice, printing by request only, to slowly phase out printing tickets.
- **“BIpermitsandfees@chestefield.gov” submittals-** The email address “BIpermitsandfees@chestefield.gov” has been discontinued. Please do not submit permit applications through this email address, use the [ELM Citizen Access Portal](#).
- **Online payment-** Any payment through the ELM Citizen Access Portal will require payment of all outstanding fees, selective fee payment is not available at this time.