

On March 12, 2020, Governor Evers declared a public emergency in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. In response, all City facilities, including City Hall went into “lockdown” mode in which public access was suspended. The Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned the Safer At Home Act, however the State or Columbia County have not implemented plans or recommendations on reopening. Therefore, all businesses and organizations may re-open without restriction or limitation. We do suggest that before opening doors to the public, a plan for re-opening should be developed and implemented which provides for the protection of employees and the public.

The Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has provided guidance for the development of such a plan which may be viewed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>.

Additionally, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) provided guidelines for businesses and organizations to use in their reopening plans which may be viewed here: <https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines/>

The City of Portage will be utilizing the criteria, benchmarks and recommendations as provided from the CDC, WEDC and the Department of Health Services in the “Badger Bounce Back Plan” in our re-opening plan for public access to City facilities and programs. This plan provides a methodical and incremental or phased opening. A link to this plan which includes constant updates on COVID-19 may be found here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/prepare.htm>

CITY HALL REOPENING PROTOCOL:

We are in the process of installing additional barriers at City Hall for the protection of employees and users. Until those barriers are in place, we are restricting public access to the building as follows:

- Effective June 1, 2020 the Lobby will be open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday, however a maximum of 2 persons in the lobby at any time.
- Persons are strongly encouraged to visit our website at www.portagewi.gov or contact City Hall via telephone at (608) 742-2176 to find online applications or answer any questions you may have before visiting City Hall.
- Persons entering City Hall shall wear masks.
- Only 1 person may use the front counter at a time.
- We encourage the use of the drop box located at the front entrance for payment of fees, court fines or dropping off correspondence.
- Anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (coughing, fever or shortness of breath) or who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 should stay at home and should not enter any public building.

USE OF MEETING ROOMS

- All public meetings will be held via teleconference until Phase II is attained in the Badger Bounce Back Plan. Please review the City calendar at <https://www.portagewi.gov/calendar/> to determine the status of a meeting.
- The basement meeting room will be closed to the public until Phase II is attained in the Badger Bounce Back Plan.

BUILDING & ZONING PERMITS

Online Applications for building permits may be found here: [Building Permit Application](#). Mike Bortz, Building Inspector will hold office hours for questions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at 608-697-1206 or email mbortz@generalengineering.net.

Online applications for zoning amendments, variances, conditional use permits, etc. may accessed here: [Land Use Application](#). Questions on these permits may directed to Steve Sobiek, Director of Bus. Development & Planning at 608-745-0038 or email steven.sobiek@portagewi.gov.

MUNICIPAL COURT

Until further notice all Municipal Court appearances shall be held online. You will receive a notice from the Court Clerk Dawn Wilcox with information on how to appear and when. If you have any questions please contact Dawn Wilcox at (608) 742-2258 or email at dawn.wilcox@portagewi.gov.

ELECTIONS

If you have not already registered, all voters are strongly encouraged to register to vote and request an absentee ballot for the August 11 Primary Election and/or November 3, 2020 Presidential Election.

Preferred ways to request an absentee ballot:

- MyVote Wisconsin, <https://myvote.wi.gov>
- Email (marie.moe@portagewi.gov or Rebecca.ness@portagewi.gov) or mail a request ([Application for Absentee Ballot](#) (City Clerk, 115 West Pleasant Street, Portage, WI 53901). If you do not wish to use the application, send an email or letter including your name, address, which election you are requesting a ballot and copy of photo id.

If you have not already registered to vote, we encourage you to also register online through MyVote Wisconsin at <https://myvote.wi.gov> or download the [Wisconsin Voter Registration Application](#) and mail it to City Hall (or place in the drop box in a sealed envelope addressed to City Clerk) along with proof of residence.

LICENSE APPLICATIONS

Operator (Bartender) and Taxi Cab Operator license applications may be found online here:

- Operator, [Operator Application](#)
- Taxi Cab Operator, [Taxi Cab Operator Application](#)