

By nature, construction activity is often noisy, dirty and generally incongruent with neighbourhood life. The impacts of development can be significant to adjacent businesses and residences over many months of construction activity. This can be amplified when there are simultaneous and serial construction projects going on in a particular area, such as downtown Victoria.

Nonetheless, residents accept construction as a legitimate and relatively short-term impact on quality of life. Despite widespread understanding and acceptance of this inconvenience, frustration can occur when there are unnecessary impacts that could be avoided or mitigated. Residents have reported several impacts from construction sites in the downtown where there has been an elevated level of building activity.

These include:

- Construction noise outside limitations of the Noise Bylaw
- Removal of parking prior to construction period or removed parking not utilized during construction period
- Dust and dirt emanating from construction site
- Unsafe pedestrian corridors adjacent to the construction sites
- Loud music and vulgar language transmitting to adjacent residences
- Back-up beepers and unnecessary idling of engines
- Lack of clarity as to how to report conditions that impact residents

Regulation of Construction

Construction site activity is regulated provincially through WorkSafe BC and the BC Building Code. The municipality governs the construction process through engineering standards and bylaws (e.g. Noise, Blasting, Building and Plumbing).

Construction and other related activities are permitted with adherence to:

- Building Permits, including for demolition and excavation
- Blasting Permits
- Contractors Permits for sub-trades
- Street Occupancy Permits for use of sidewalks and streets
- Sign Permits for any on-site signage
- Noise Bylaw which stipulates sound thresholds for various types of noise for specific geographic areas

Measures to Protect Residents

Generally, construction activity is considered to be the purview of WorkSafe BC, though developers must follow municipal permitting processes and adhere to bylaws that relate to possible impacts, such as noise levels. Where there are concerns about activities at a construction site, residents can contact Bylaw Services, Engineering, Permits and Inspections or WorkSafe BC, depending on the issue.

Communication

As of May 14, 2018, the developer is required to post a “Neighbourhood Notice of Construction” placard as part of the Building Permit process. It must be readily viewable at the site and provide the permit number and contact information for the site. No other information is included with regards to details of the construction process, and no other terms and conditions in the permit itself relate to neighbourhood impacts.

Direct neighbourhood notification is required under the terms of a Blasting Permit. Blasting operations must comply with the Blasting Operations Bylaw, which includes conformance with the Noise Bylaw and Tree Preservation Bylaw.

Notice of Construction	
Project Address:	1234 PANDORA STREET
Project Scope:	NEW - MULTI FAMILY 6 STOREY'S
Site Contact:	ACME DEVELOPMENT INC.
Company Name:	ACME DEVELOPMENT INC.
Representative:	ROGER WADINSKY Phone: (250) 818-9595 Email: ROGER@DEVELOPERCO.CA
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Owner	Building Permit #: BP012345
When starting a residential construction project, you may need to submit a Notice of Project to WorkSafeBC. Please visit worksafebc.com/builders for more information, or call 250.881.3418 . Please post this Notice of Construction so that it is visible from the street.	
 CITY OF VICTORIA	 victoria.ca opendata.victoria.ca 250.361.0342
	 worksafebc.com 250.881.3418

The applicant is required to notify occupants of buildings and dwellings within 100 metres (approximately half a block) from the blasting site at least 48 hours before blasting. A blasting schedule, description of horn signals, provisions for public safety and contact information are required with the notification.

Where a member of the public has a concern, they can communicate with the City through a link posted on the [Permits and Inspections webpage](#) of the City’s website.

Noise

Building permits do not stipulate hours when construction activity can or cannot occur. Noise from construction sites is addressed through [Noise Bylaw](#) requirements. In addition to constraints on general sound levels, the bylaw prohibits radios/music players and vehicles operated in a way that impacts neighbours. Noise complaints are received at the City regularly, and often relate to generators running through the night.

General sound levels in almost all of the downtown must not exceed levels of 60dba from 7am to 10pm weekdays and 10am to 10pm weekends (Intermediate Noise Zone), and 55dba at other times (i.e. night). Construction is allowed a higher threshold of 85dba from 7am – 7pm weekdays/Sundays, and from 10am to 7pm Saturdays. Construction sound levels must adhere to regular bylaw limits on statutory holidays.

Exemptions to the bylaw may be provided by Permits and Inspections where an application is made by a developer. The application must include an impact assessment conducted by an acoustical engineer and letters of support from neighbouring affected properties. Neighbours must be informed of the dates, times and expected sound levels under the proposed exemption.

Sound measurements are taken at the point of reception (e.g. balcony of residence). A reading from a free smartphone sound meter app (e.g. NIOSH) can provide residents with a general indication of dbA levels and whether bylaw limits may be exceeded. Where residents and business owners believe that sound levels exceed bylaw thresholds, they can contact [Bylaw Services](#) by email at bylawservices@victoria.ca or by phone at 250.361.0215.

Bylaw Services respond to noise complaints between the hours of 7pm and 6pm, seven days a week. Any complaints outside of these hours will be followed up the next day. If noise is excessive and/or unbearable outside of these hours, residents can contact Victoria Police (non-emergency) at 250.995.7654.

Parking

Developers must obtain a [Street Occupancy Permit](#) for use of the sidewalks and streets adjacent to their construction sites. Street parking may only be used for active construction activities (i.e. not employee parking). A two metre corridor must also be kept open adjacent to the site and it must be pedestrian and wheelchair accessible.

Where businesses and residents observe that parking removed for construction activity is not being used for active construction purposes or appears to be unnecessarily impacting neighbouring residents or businesses, they may bring it to City staff's attention. Staff will determine if there is an opportunity to adjust the terms of the Street Occupancy Permit to address residents' concerns.

Contact Transportation staff in the Engineering and Public Works Department at eng@victoria.ca or 250.361.0300.

Safety

Safe sidewalk passage must be assured under the terms of the [Building Code](#). Where a public sidewalk is less than 2 metres from the structure, the passage must be covered with sloping

roof at least 2.5 metres high and with sufficient integrity to withstand any possible material falling from above. Hoarding of at least 1.8 metres in height must be in place around the entire site and gates must be kept closed at all times.

Where residents have a concern, they can communicate with the City through a link posted on the [Permits and Inspections webpage](#) of the City's website.

Dust and Dirt

Dust and dirt emanating from a construction site are not specifically considered in provincial or municipal regulations. However, nuisances like this can constitute health and safety concerns for workers on the site (e.g. silica dust). [WorkSafe BC](#) provides an extensive regulatory framework for construction to ensure worker safety. Developers and contractors with good health and safety programs for workers usually have good site management practices and therefore lower neighbourhood impacts.

Where unsafe conditions are observed, residents can contact WorkSafe BC 24 hours, 7 days a week at 1.888.621.7233 to:

- Report a fatality, serious incident or major chemical release
- Report unsafe work conditions
- Report any other urgent health and safety concern

For all other health and safety inquiries (e.g. obtaining information about workplace health and safety or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation), call between 8:05am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday at the same telephone number.

July, 2020