

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

# Time limits, decision time periods and our services over Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021

November 2020

  
**Plain  
English**  
Approved by NALA



## About this guide

This guide provides information about:

- the 2020 Christmas and New Year holiday period in An Bord Pleanála,
- how the nine days of Christmas and New Year holidays (from 24 December to 1 January inclusive) can affect you making appeals, applications, observations, requests, submissions with us and the Board's time period to make decisions,
- two important rules on time limits and time periods over Christmas and New Year and examples of how these rules work and how they affect cases,
- our opening hours over the period and when you can view decided case files.

On pages 18 to 20 of this guide, there are handy tables to help you work out the last day to make an appeal on a planning decision over the Christmas and New Year period. We have also included examples that will help you figure out relevant dates for you about cases.

This guide is published to provide general information, assistance and guidance only. It is not a legal interpretation of the legislation. Readers must follow the relevant statutory provision for their own particular circumstances and, in doing so, should obtain their own expert advice if necessary.

### Data Protection

An Bord Pleanála uses your personal data only to provide our services and to fulfil our legal duties. The personal data you supply will be circulated to other relevant parties and made available in the public domain about any matter before An Bord Pleanála.

To view our full policy statements on Data Protection, please go to

[www.pleanala.ie/about/Legal/privacy.htm](http://www.pleanala.ie/about/Legal/privacy.htm)

## Our opening hours over Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021

<b>Monday</b>	<b>21 December</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>22 December</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>23 December</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>24 December</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
<b>Friday</b>	<b>25 December</b>	<b>Closed</b> 🌲

<b>Monday</b>	<b>28 December</b>	<b>Closed</b> 🌲
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>29 December</b>	<b>Closed</b> 🌲
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>30 December</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>31 December</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
<b>Friday</b>	<b>1 January</b>	<b>Closed</b> 🌲

<b>Monday</b>	<b>4 January</b>	9.15am - 5.30pm
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### COVID-19

You can find out the latest information about COVID-19 and An Bord Pleanála on our website at [www.pleanala.ie/COVID-19.htm](http://www.pleanala.ie/COVID-19.htm)

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has awarded this guide its Plain English Mark



## Contents

<b>About this guide</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Our opening hours over Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Terms</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1. Holiday period rule .....	10
2. Weekend rule .....	12
Do both these rules apply to all cases handled by An Bord Pleanála? .....	12
<b>Planning and Development Acts cases</b> .....	<b>13</b>
What do the holiday period rule and weekend rule apply to? .....	13
What happens between 24 December and 1 January? .....	13
Can I still send or deliver items to An Bord Pleanála during Christmas and New Year? .....	13
Three timeframe examples for planning appeal cases .....	15
<b>Handy calendar of last dates to make a planning appeal (November 2020 to January 2021)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Building Control Acts and Water Pollution Acts cases</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Time period for deciding cases</b> .....	<b>22</b>
1. Planning and Development Acts cases .....	22
Three examples of planning cases .....	22
2. Building Control Acts cases and Water Pollution Acts cases .....	24
<b>Viewing decided case files: Public access</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Further information about your case</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Legislation</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Contact us</b> .....	<b>26</b>

## Terms

Some terms we use in this guide are listed below. We recommend that you refer to these as you read the guide:

<b>Appeal</b>	A review of the original decision on a planning application made by a planning authority.
<b>Appellant</b>	An individual or organisation who makes an appeal.
<b>Applicant</b>	An individual or organisation who makes a planning application to a planning authority.
<b>Appropriate Assessment</b>	An examination of a plan or project to evaluate how it might negatively affect a site which is protected under the EU Habitats Directive. (This is a directive about wildlife and nature conservation.)
<b>Board</b>	The Board of An Bord Pleanála.
<b>Building control authority</b>	The local authority – county council, city council or city and county council – responsible for building control in its area.
<b>Invalid</b>	Does not meet all of the statutory requirements needed by law and regulations to be considered a case.
<b>Local authority project</b>	Applications made by a local authority directly to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission for developments proposed to be carried out by or on behalf of the local authority. Examples include: flood works, smaller road projects and housing. Local authority projects also include compulsory land acquisition, for example: compulsory purchase orders.

<b>Lodged, to lodge</b>	To give or submit something to An Bord Pleanála.
<b>Observation</b>	A document submitted by an <b>Observer</b> (see also <b>Submission</b> ).
<b>Observer (Appeals)</b>	Any person, other than the applicant, planning authority or an appellant, who comments on an appeal (see also <b>Observation</b> ).
<b>Observer (Applications)</b>	Any person, other than the applicant, who comments on the application (see also <b>Observation</b> ).
<b>Oral hearing</b>	An oral hearing is a meeting to allow relevant issues in a case to be discussed and examined.
<b>Planning authority</b>	The local authority – county council, city council, or county and city council – responsible for planning in its area.
<b>Point of detail referral</b>	In certain situations, a point of detail referral can ask the Board to make a decision in a case where the participants involved cannot agree (see also <b>Referral (section 5)</b> .)
<b>Referral (section 5)</b>	A case where the Board decides whether a proposal requires planning permission or not (see also <b>Point of detail referral</b> ).
<b>Statutory</b>	Something that is decided, set up or controlled by statute law. Statute law is a law passed by parliament.

<b>Statutory notice</b>	<p>Information required by law that we must send you or make available to the public. A statutory notice may tell you something about a case. It may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer you the opportunity to comment, or</li> <li>• ask or require you to do something.</li> </ul> <p>For example, it may offer you the opportunity to comment on information we have received.</p>
<b>Statutory objective period (SOP)</b>	<p>The time period to make a decision on a case. The time period is a target given to the Board by law depending on the type of case. For example, in planning appeals, the statutory objective period is 18-weeks. In some types of cases, no time period is set by law.</p>
<b>Statutory requirements</b>	<p>Requirements needed by law for a case to be valid.</p>
<b>Strategic housing development (SHD)</b>	<p>Applications for planning permission directly to An Bord Pleanála for certain housing developments.</p>
<b>Strategic infrastructure development (SID)</b>	<p>Applications for planning permission directly to An Bord Pleanála for major infrastructure developments by local authorities and others.</p>
<b>Submission</b>	<p>A document on appeals or applications which may include supporting materials such as photographs, plans, drawings and technical guidance. (The document can be typed or handwritten.)</p>

<p><b>Substitute Consent</b></p>	<p>An application for permission made directly to An Bord Pleanála about development already carried out and which should – but did not – have had some or all of the following assessments carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Impact Assessment,</li> <li>• Environmental Impact Assessment Determination,</li> <li>• Appropriate Assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Valid</b></p>	<p>Meets all statutory requirements needed by law and regulations to be considered as a case.</p>
<p><b>We, our, us</b></p>	<p>An Bord Pleanála.</p>
<p><b>You</b></p>	<p>You as a person, company, group, organisation or State authority.</p>



## Introduction

Over Christmas 2020 and the New Year 2021 period, An Bord Pleanála will be **closed** on four days. These days are:

- **Friday 25 December 2020** 🌲
- **Monday 28 December 2020** 🌲
- **Tuesday 29 December 2020** 🌲, and
- **Friday 1 January 2021** 🌲.

On the days we are open, you can still make appeals, applications, referrals and observations, submissions and request oral hearings. You can also view decided case files in our office, and our staff are available to answer any questions you may have.

### **The holiday period between 24 December and 1 January affects:**

- the time limits when you can send or deliver documents to us,
- the time period the Board has to make a decision on your case, and
- the time limits in statutory notice letters we may have sent to you.

Before we explain what happens between 24 December and 1 January inclusive (nine days), we need to explain **two important rules** which affect time limits and time periods. These are:

1. the **holiday period rule**, and
2. the **weekend rule**.

These rules are explained on pages 10 to 12.

## 1. Holiday period rule

Under the Planning and Development Acts, the holiday period is the following nine days (shaded in the calendar below):

- 24 December
- 25 December
- 26 December
- 27 December
- 28 December
- 29 December
- 30 December
- 31 December
- 1 January

Calendar						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

During the holiday period, we are **open** on three days:

- 24 December
- 30 December
- 31 December

Note: Even though we are open on these days, the holiday period rule below **still** applies.


### How the holiday period rule affects time limits for the public.

If you are due to make or want to make:

- an appeal,
- an application,
- an observation,
- a request,
- a submission, or
- anything else

to An Bord Pleanála on any of these nine days, the holiday period rule gives you an **extra nine days after the due date** to send or deliver your item.

**Example:** If the planning authority makes its decision on a case on Tuesday 1 December, the last date for an appeal would be Monday 28 December. However, that is one of the days in the holiday period, so nine days are added after the due date of 28 December leaving the revised date of **Wednesday 6 January**.

Calendar						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27		29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

### How the holiday period rules affect time limits for An Bord Pleanála.

The Board has a target to make decisions within 18-weeks of a case being received. This timeframe is known as the ‘[statutory objective period](#)’.

The holiday period rule affects this statutory objective period from the Board’s perspective, as it has extra time to make a decision in addition to the normal 18-weeks. Depending on what day in the holiday period the Board was due to make a decision, **between one and nine extra days** will be added to the time period it has to make a decision.

**Example:** If a decision was due on 30 December, seven extra days will be added to the holiday period as 30 December is one of the holiday period days. The decision is now due on **Friday 8 January**.

If the Board is due to make a decision after the Christmas and New Year period on a case, but the 18-week statutory objective period includes the holiday period, nine extra days will be added to the time period the Board has to make a decision. (See time period for deciding cases example 1 on page 22 and example 2 on page 23.)

## 2. Weekend rule

If the last date for us to receive documents is on a Saturday, Sunday, public holiday or other day when our office is closed, we can receive it by 5.30pm on the **next** working day that our office is open.

**Example:** If you are due to send or deliver something on Saturday 2 January, the next working day you can send or deliver your item will be **Monday 4 January**.

### Do both these rules apply to all cases handled by An Bord Pleanála?

When calculating time limits over Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021, the rules that apply depend on the relevant Act as you see in table below.

Under the:	The rules that apply to these cases are ...
<b>Planning and Development Acts ...</b>	... the holiday period rule <b>and</b> the weekend rule apply – in that order. (See timeframe example 1 on page 15 <b>or</b> example 3 on page 17.)
<b>Building Control Acts and Water Pollution Acts ...</b>	... <b>only</b> the weekend rule applies.

The following pages describe how the holiday period rule and weekend rule apply first to Planning and Development Acts cases (see pages 13 to 20 inclusive). They include a very useful calendar on pages 18 to 20. After this we describe, how only the weekend rule applies to the Building Control Acts and Water Pollution Acts (see page 21).

## Planning and Development Acts cases

### What do the holiday period rule and weekend rule apply to?

Both these rules apply if you want to make:

- a [planning appeal](#),
- a [referral](#),
- an [observation](#) on a current appeal or observation on a current application,
- a [submission on documents](#) we have sent you,
- an [oral hearing](#) request,
- a pre-consultation request or application for:
  - [Strategic Infrastructure Development](#)
  - [Strategic Housing Development](#)
  - [Local Authority Project](#)
- an application, appeal or request on any other function under the Planning and Development Acts, for example:
  - [Substitute Consents](#)
  - [Appropriate Assessments](#)

### What happens between 24 December and 1 January?

From 24 December to 1 January, the holiday period rule will apply to time limits and time periods. The weekend rule will **also** apply if the revised last day is a Saturday or Sunday.

### Can I still send or deliver items to An Bord Pleanála during Christmas and New Year?

Yes, you can still send or deliver your items to us during Christmas and New Year on the days we are open – Thursday 24 December, Wednesday 30 December and Thursday 31 December. You **do not** have to wait until after the holiday period to send or deliver your item if you wish. You **must** follow all the statutory requirements to make a valid appeal, application, observation, request or submission. This means you need to please check the [relevant guide](#) carefully.



### Important note 1

Do **not** place your **appeal, application, or request** in the letterbox of our office and **do not** email it to us as your appeal, application, or request will be **invalid**.

We recommend members of the public **do not** place their **observation** in the letterbox of our office or send it to us by email.

For **submissions on appeal documents** you have received from us, please follow the advice in the letter you have received from us or contact us for further help.

**My appeal is due to be received by Thursday 31 December 2020 which is one of the days you are open over the holidays. Does this mean I have to submit by that date?**

**No.** Even though we are working on 24, 30 and 31 December, anyone with an appeal (or other items in the list on page 13) which is due to be received by these dates benefits from the extra time allowed under the holiday rule. These three days are treated as holidays when the rule is being applied. Therefore, if your appeal is due by Thursday 31 December 2020, your revised date after the rule is applied is **Monday 11 January 2021**.



### Important note 2

This is the **only time in the year** when an appeal or other item normally due on a working day we are open is allowed to have the deadline extended. This is **only allowed** because of the holiday period rule.

## Examples

### Three timeframe examples for planning appeal cases

#### Example 1

I want to make an appeal. The planning authority made the decision on the planning application on Friday 27 November 2020.

The time limit to make your appeal is **Monday 4 January 2021**.

#### Why?

1. For a decision made on Friday 27 November 2020, the last day of the four-week period would be Thursday 24 December 2020 (see **X** in calendar).
2. Thursday 24 December is a day in the holiday period. You add nine extra days after 24 December to get the last day to make an appeal. This is even though we are open on 24 December.
3. We add nine extra days to the last day which gives a date of Saturday 2 January, **but** ...
4. ... we are closed on Saturday 2 January 2021, so the last day to make an observation is on the next working day An Bord Pleanála is open. In this example, this is **Monday 4 January 2021** (see **green box** in calendar).

Calendar						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	<b>X</b>	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**In this example, both the holiday period rule and weekend rule are used.**

**First, the holiday period rule is applied; then the weekend rule.**

## Example 2

I want to make an observation on a planning appeal. An Bord Pleanála received the last appeal on Tuesday 8 December 2020.

The time limit to make your observation is **Wednesday 13 January 2021**.

### Why?

1. If the last planning appeal is received on Tuesday 8 December 2020 and you want to make an observation, the last day of the four-week period would be Monday 4 January 2021 (see X in calendar).

Calendar						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	X	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16

2. This four-week period includes all nine days of the holiday period.

3. We add nine extra days to the last day for making an observation to An Bord Pleanála.

4. The last day to receive this observation is **Wednesday 13 January 2021** (see green box in calendar).



### Example 3

An Bord Pleanála has sent me a copy of an appeal on Friday 18 December 2020 and I want to make a submission on it.

The time limit for you to make a submission on the appeal is **Monday 25 January 2021**.

#### Why?

1. If we write to you with a copy of an appeal on Friday 18 December 2020 and you want to make a submission, the last day of the four-week period would be Thursday 14 January 2021 (see **X** in calendar).

2. This four-week period includes all nine days of the holiday period.

3. The last day to make a submission is nine extra days after Thursday 14 January 2021. This is Saturday 23 January when we are closed.

4. The weekend rule applies and the last day to make your submission is the next working day our office is open which is **Monday 25 January 2021** (see **green box** in calendar).

Calendar						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	X	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**In this example, both the holiday period rule and weekend rule are used.**

**First, the holiday period rule is applied; then the weekend rule.**

## Handy calendar of last dates to make a planning appeal (November 2020 to January 2021)

The handy tables below can help you work out the last day to make an appeal when the planning authority has made a decision **on and between** Monday 23 November 2020 and Friday 8 January 2021 (but it does not cover weekends). This table applies the holiday period rule and weekend rule when they are needed.

To find out the last date to make an appeal on a planning authority decision:

1. Find the date that the planning authority made its decision on the planning application in the left-hand column of the relevant table.
2. Then go across to the right to see the last date you can make an appeal to us.  
Remember we are open from 9.15am to 5.30pm on the day shown.

**Example:** The first table below shows that when a planning authority makes its decision on Monday 23 November, then your last date to make an appeal is Monday 21 December 2020.

Planning authority makes a decision on planning application	Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála
Monday 23 November 2020	Monday 21 December 2020
Tuesday 24 November 2020	Monday 21 December 2020
Wednesday 25 November 2020	Tuesday 22 December 2020
Thursday 26 November 2020	Wednesday 23 December 2020
Friday 27 November 2020	Monday 4 January 2021

Planning authority makes a decision on planning application	Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála
Monday 30 November 2020	Tuesday 5 January 2021
Tuesday 1 December 2020	Wednesday 6 January 2021
Wednesday 2 December 2020	Thursday 7 January 2021
Thursday 3 December 2020	Friday 8 January 2021
Friday 4 December 2020	Monday 11 January 2021

<b>Planning authority makes a decision on planning application</b>	<b>Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála</b>
Monday 7 December 2020	Tuesday 12 January 2021
Tuesday 8 December 2020	Wednesday 13 January 2021
Wednesday 9 December 2020	Thursday 14 January 2021
Thursday 10 December 2020	Friday 15 January 2021
Friday 11 December 2020	Monday 18 January 2021

<b>Planning authority makes a decision on planning application</b>	<b>Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála</b>
Monday 14 December 2020	Tuesday 19 January 2021
Tuesday 15 December 2020	Wednesday 20 January 2021
Wednesday 16 December 2020	Thursday 21 January 2021
Thursday 17 December 2020	Friday 22 January 2021
Friday 18 December 2020	Monday 25 January 2021

<b>Planning authority makes a decision on planning application</b>	<b>Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála</b>
Monday 21 December 2020	Tuesday 26 January 2021
Tuesday 22 December 2020	Wednesday 27 January 2021
Wednesday 23 December 2020	Thursday 28 January 2021
Thursday 24 December 2020	Friday 29 January 2021
Friday 25 December 2020	

<b>Planning authority makes a decision on planning application</b>	<b>Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála</b>
Monday 28 December 2020	Friday 29 January 2021
Tuesday 29 December 2020	
Wednesday 30 December 2020	
Thursday 31 December 2020	
Friday 1 January 2021	

<b>Planning authority makes a decision on planning application</b>	<b>Last date to make an appeal to An Bord Pleanála</b>
Monday 4 January 2021	Monday 1 February 2021
Tuesday 5 January 2021	Monday 1 February 2021
Wednesday 6 January 2021	Tuesday 2 February 2021
Thursday 7 January 2021	Wednesday 3 February 2021
Friday 8 January 2021	Thursday 4 February 2021

## Building Control Acts and Water Pollution Acts cases

The Christmas and New Year holidays also affect appeals under the Building Control Acts and Water Pollution Acts.

There is an important difference to time limits on these cases compared to planning appeals and applications. **Only** the weekend rule applies to time limits on these cases.

The holiday period rule does not apply on a case **under the Building Control Acts or the Water Pollution Acts.**

### Example:

I want to make an appeal on a fire safety certificate decision. The building control authority made the decision on the application on Thursday 26 November 2020.

The time limit for you to make your appeal is **Wednesday 30 December 2020.**

### Why?

1. For a decision made on Thursday 26 November 2020, the last day of the one-month period would be Friday 25 December 2020 (see **X** in calendar).
2. We are closed on Friday 25 December 2020. The weekend rule is used and the last day to make an appeal is the next working day our office is open.
3. Therefore, the last day to receive this appeal is Wednesday 30 December 2020 (see **green box** in calendar).

Calendar						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	<b>X</b>	25
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## Time period for deciding cases

This section outlines the time period for deciding each of the following:

1. Planning and Development Acts cases, and
2. Building Control Acts cases and Water Pollution cases (see end of page 23).

### 1. Planning and Development Acts cases

For Planning and Development Acts cases, the amount of time (statutory objective period) the Board has to make a decision on the case will be increased by up to nine days if it is with An Bord Pleanála during the holiday period.

### Three examples of planning cases

#### Example 1

My appeal was made on Tuesday 25 August 2020. The statutory objective period (18 weeks) target date should be Monday 28 December 2020.

The decide-by date for your appeal is **Wednesday 6 January 2021**.

#### Why?

- Without the holiday period, your case would be due to be decided by the Board by Monday 28 December 2020. However, the 18-week statutory objective period to decide this case includes five days of the holiday period.
- These five additional days start after the end of the holiday period, so the decide-by date for this appeal is Wednesday 6 January 2021.

### Example 2

The appeal was made on Wednesday 28 October 2020. The statutory objective period target date should be Tuesday 2 March 2021.

The decide-by date for the appeal is **Thursday 11 March 2021**.

#### Why?

- Without the holiday period, the case would be due to be decided by the Board by Tuesday 2 March 2021. However, the 18-week statutory objective period to decide this case includes all nine days of the holiday period.
- These nine additional days are included in the time period for this case, so the decide-by date for this appeal is Thursday 11 March 2021.

### Example 3

The strategic housing application was made on Friday 16 October 2020 and the 16-week statutory objective period decide-by date should be Thursday 4 February 2021.

The decide-by date for the application is **Monday 15 February 2021**.

#### Why?

- Without the holiday period, the case would be due to be decided by the Board by Thursday 4 February 2021. However, the 16-week statutory objective period to decide this strategic housing case includes all nine days of the holiday period.
- These nine additional days are included in the time period for this case, so the decide-by date for this application is Monday 15 February 2021. (Nine days after 6 February is 13 February which is a Saturday, so the weekend rule applies.)

## **2. Building Control Acts cases and Water Pollution Acts cases**

If the case is under the Building Control Acts or the Water Pollution Acts, there is no holiday period rule. Therefore, Christmas and New Year will not affect the statutory objective period, the normal period of four months will continue to apply.

### **Viewing decided case files: Public access**

You can [view decided case files](#) through our public access service over the Christmas and New Year period on days that we are open. This service is free.

If you want to view a decided case file, please contact us at [publicaccess@pleanala.ie](mailto:publicaccess@pleanala.ie) to arrange a time to view the file or files. This will also allow our staff to have the file or box available in the office when you arrive to view them.

Due to social distancing requirements, we may need to limit the number of people using the public access reading facilities in our office.

### **Further information about your case**

To get further information about how your case is affected by the Christmas and New Year period, please [contact us](#). Our contact information is on page 26.



## Legislation

The laws and regulations referred to in this document are:

- [Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended](#)
- [Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended](#)
- [Building Control Acts 1990 to 2014](#)
- [Local Government \(Water Pollution\) Act 1977](#)
- [Water Services Act 2007](#)

## Contact us

If you want a copy of this document in a different format or if you need more information, please contact An Bord Pleanála.

Visit our offices at:	<b>An Bord Pleanála</b>
Write to us at:	<b>64 Marlborough Street</b> <b>Dublin 1</b> <b>D01 V902</b>
Telephone us on:	(01) 858 8100 or LoCall: 1890 275 175
Email us at:	<a href="mailto:bord@pleanala.ie">bord@pleanala.ie</a>
Visit our website:	<a href="http://www.pleanala.ie">www.pleanala.ie</a>
Send us a fax on:	(01) 872 2684

This edition: November 2020