

# ORDER TO COMPLY (PART 2): WHY ONTARIO REIS MUST ACT FAST (AND WHAT “FAST” ACTUALLY MEANS)

In Part 1, we covered what an Order to Comply is and the common reasons investors get one.

This Part 2 is about the piece most REIs underestimate: speed.

Because once an Order is served, the City’s file is open, the clock is running, and “I’ll deal with it later” usually turns into bigger scope, higher cost, and less control.



## The Order Isn’t a Suggestion — It’s a Timeline

Most Orders come with:

- **specific deficiencies**
- **a compliance date**
- **a named officer/inspector**
- **a re-inspection plan** (even if it’s not written in friendly language)

At that point, you're not in "planning mode." You're in **enforcement mode**.

And here's the part people miss: delaying doesn't pause anything. It just compresses your options and raises the stakes.

Failing to comply with certain orders (Building / Fire / Property Standards) can lead to charges or penalties depending on the authority and Act involved.

## Why "Waiting a Few Weeks" Usually Backfires for REIs

### 1) The City assumes you're ignoring it

Inspectors see the same patterns over and over. If there's no response and no plan, the file tends to escalate: more inspections, more pressure, less flexibility.

### 2) Your fix becomes more expensive (even if the problem didn't change)

Real world: by the time you scramble, trades are booked, engineers are rushed, and you're paying premium dollars to hit a deadline.

### 3) Refinancing and sale timelines get crushed

Open orders and unresolved violations have a habit of showing up at the worst possible time—when lenders, insurers, and buyers start asking questions. The fastest way to protect your exit strategy is to get ahead of the paper trail.

### 4) Tenants don't wait politely

Even when tenants aren't the source of the complaint, an active compliance file can trigger tenant stress, rumours, and unnecessary conflict. If the situation affects life safety (exits, alarms, separations), it can become urgent very quickly.

## The Most Common REI Mistakes After Getting an OTC

I've watched investors lose months by doing **"reasonable"** things that look bad to inspectors:

- Arguing the wording instead of solving the deficiency
- Starting construction before confirming what the City will accept
- Doing partial fixes (that create new issues) and hoping it "passes"
- Sending the City a paragraph instead of a plan
- Letting a contractor "handle it" without drawings, specs, or a permit strategy

Inspectors don't need a speech. They need evidence you're controlling the situation.

### **What "Acting Fast" Looks Like (A Practical 72-Hour Game Plan)**

This is the sequence that keeps you in control:

#### **Step 1: Triage the Order (same day)**

- Identify which department issued it (Building, Fire, Property Standards, Zoning/By-law)
- Highlight the **compliance date**
- Separate issues into:
  - **Life-safety / immediate risk**
  - **Permit / documentation required**
  - **Zoning / use / unit legality questions**

#### **Step 2: Stop guessing and confirm the target (within 24–48 hours)**

Call or email the issuing officer and get clarity on:

- what they need to see at re-inspection
- whether a permit submission is required to show "active compliance"
- whether an extension is possible *and what they require to grant it*

#### **Step 3: Document existing conditions (within 48–72 hours)**

A clean "existing conditions" package is often the turning point. It typically includes:

- accurate floor plans (as-is)
- exits and egress paths
- fire separations where applicable
- door and window sizes (when egress is in question)
- basic building data (construction type, number of units, basements/attics, etc.)

You're building an **inspector-ready narrative**: *This is the current condition, this is what's wrong, this is the correction plan.*

## **Appeals and Reviews: Know They Exist (But Don't Use Them as a Delay Tactic)**

Some Orders (especially Property Standards) may have an appeal route through a Property Standards Committee / Appeal Committee, depending on the municipality.

Fire-related orders can have review mechanisms under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act framework.

The practical point: **appeals are procedural tools**—not a strategy to “buy time” unless you actually have a defensible position. If you appeal and still haven't addressed obvious deficiencies, you often end up worse off.

## **One More Ontario Reality: Don't Touch Posted Orders**

If an Order is posted on-site, don't remove it or cover it up. Ontario templates and enforcement language make it clear this is treated seriously.

## **How Rojas Empire of Design Helps REIs Move Immediately (Without Creating New Problems)**

When an investor calls us after receiving an Order, our goal is speed **with control**, not speed with chaos.

We help by providing:

### **Rapid Compliance Triage**

→ What department issued it, what it really means, and what the City is likely expecting at the next step.

### **Site-Verified Existing Conditions Plans**

→ Accurate “as-is” drawings that match what inspectors see in the field.

### **Permit + Approval Strategy (not just drawings)**

→ If zoning, unit status, or life-safety upgrades are involved, we map the cleanest route to compliance.

### **Consultant Coordination When It's Truly Needed**

→ Structural / mechanical / fire protection support only where it's required—so you don't overpay for unnecessary reports.

### **Inspector-Facing Documentation**

→ A response package that reads like a professional compliance plan, not a panicked email.

## Final Thoughts

For Ontario REIs, an Order to Comply is a **time-sensitive business problem**, not just a paperwork problem.

The faster you respond with a clear plan, the more control you keep over:

- scope
- schedule
- cost
- tenant impact
- financing risk

If you've received an Order (or you suspect your property is one complaint away from one), send us a message. We'll help you take control of the situation and close it cleanly.