



Shoreline Regulations and Permits

Customer Information Bulletin #2

Purpose of shoreline regulations

Thurston County's *Shoreline Master Program* governs uses and activities on all marine shorelines and most lake and river shorelines in the County. Why? Shoreline areas are critically important for water quality, flood protection, recreation, shellfish harvesting, and wildlife habitat. The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that development of shoreline areas does not harm public health and safety, the natural environment, or our ability to use and enjoy shoreline areas.

Am I on the "shoreline?"

Your property is subject to shoreline regulations if it is located **within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark** of a water body identified in the Shoreline Master Program and/or **within the 100 year floodplain**. The best way to find out if your property is within this regulated area is to check a shoreline map, available at the Permit Assistance Center or through www.geodata.org. Have your parcel number ready. County maps will tell you what kind of shoreline you are located within. This is very important – the type of shoreline (e.g., "rural" or "conservancy") dictates what regulations apply to you.

NOTE: Even if your property isn't regulated under the Shoreline Master Program, other County regulations may apply.

What activities are regulated?

Some development activities in the shoreline need a permit (see below), and some do not. However, ALL development must be consistent with the policies and regulations of the Shoreline Master Program. You can review this document at the Permit Assistant Center, to find out what applies to your project.

The types of activities regulated by the Shoreline Master Program include **home building, land clearing, and installing or replacing bulkheads, stairways, docks and boathouses**, to name a few. Setbacks from the shoreline, maintenance or creation of native vegetation buffers, and erosion control are some of the methods used to minimize development impacts and protect public safety, water quality, and the environment.

For what activities do I need a shoreline permit?

If your project involves dumping, drilling, dredging, filling, placement or alteration of structures, creation of a subdivision or any activity that interferes with normal public use of the shoreline, regardless of cost, you will need one of the following permits:

Shoreline Substantial Development Permit: Required if the total cost of your project exceeds \$2,500 (including labor and materials), or will interfere with normal public use of the shoreline area.

Shoreline Conditional Use Permit: Required if the use you propose is not specifically addressed in the Shoreline Master Program.

Shoreline Variance: Allowed in extraordinary situations for relief from specific bulk, dimensional, or performance standards that would not allow reasonable use of the site due to the site's physical characteristics.

Shoreline Administrative Exemption: Required for development activities not extensive enough to require a Substantial Development Permit, but which are still subject to shoreline regulations.

JARPA permit requirements

If you need one of the permits listed above, you must fill out a detailed form called a **Joint Aquatic Resource Permits Application** (JARPA), pay a fee (check current fee schedule), and prepare a site plan map that shows the following:

- ◆ General location of site, site boundaries and topography
- ◆ Existing and proposed contours (if grading or filling)
- ◆ Location of existing shoreline, ordinary high water mark, name of waterbody, and direction of water flow
- ◆ Size, location, and height of existing and proposed structures
- ◆ Information on amount and type of material to be dredged or filled
- ◆ Location of all utilities
- ◆ Other details about the site and proposed use.

If you need a Shoreline Substantial Development permit, you also may need to fill out an *Environmental Checklist*. Decisions on all permits (except the Shoreline Administrative Exemption, above, and the Shoreline Administrative Variance, see below) are made by the Hearings Examiner, with review and approval from the State Department of Ecology.

Shoreline Administrative Variance

This type of variance can be applied to building setbacks only, and is approved by the Development Services Department. You will be required to justify your need for a variance, and show how you will prevent harm to the shoreline area. A Shoreline Administrative Variance application, not a JARPA, is required.

Thurston County Development Services

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