

**Aiding the Public's Understanding of the Stormwater and Surface  
Water Code**

Prepared in accordance with  
Ordinance 18257, Section 26.A

**December 2016**



**King County**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
Water and Land Resources Division

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	3
Report Requirements	4
Conclusion and Next Steps	5

### Attachments

- Attachment A. Surface Water Design Manual Variances or Adjustments
- Attachment B. Drainage Review
- Attachment C. Short Subdivisions
- Attachment D. Agricultural Buildings
- Attachment E. Residential Building Permit Process

## **Introduction**

Ordinance 18257, Section 26.A requires the King County Executive to transmit a report to the Council that recommends actions the county can take to aid in the public's understanding of the stormwater and surface water code. The ordinance states that:

“In addition to the actions the executive may recommend, the report may include an analysis of the efficacy of the county:

1. Providing plan assistance documents for single family residential and agricultural property owners;
2. Posting plain language summaries of the provisions of K.C.C. chapters 9.04 and 9.12 to the websites of the department of permitting and environmental review and the department of natural resources and parks, water and land resources division or their successor agencies;
3. Allocating additional staff time for community outreach and engagement, with a focus on impacted communities.”

The Water and Land Resources (WLR) Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks supports the goal of this report, as increased public understanding of the stormwater and surface water code is expected to result in better compliance with the code and thus, improve environmental outcomes. To develop this report, the WLR Division assembled a team comprised of staff and managers from the WLR Division and the principal engineer of the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER). This team focused its efforts on analyzing the efficacy of the three strategies listed above, which are described below.

## **Executive Summary**

This report focuses on analyzing the three strategies identified in Ordinance 18257. The report recommends the WLR Division: assist DPER in its ongoing update of Customer Service Bulletins (CSBs); draft plain language narratives about the intent of key provisions of K.C.C. 9.04 and 9.12 and post these to appropriate WLR Division and DPER web pages; and continue current education and outreach designed to aid the public's understanding of stormwater and surface water code.

## Report Requirements

### Strategy #1: Providing plan assistance documents for single family residential and agricultural property owners

DPER currently provides customer service bulletins (CSBs) in hard copy form and on its website at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/permitting-environmental-review/~link.aspx?id=00BDA9DA3D88480795991FA02678795D> to assist the development community, property owners, and the general public. The CSBs are used extensively. Bulletins cover topics pertaining to building and land use as well as financial and general services. Several of the CSBs are focused on agricultural and single family residential clients, such as Bulletin 12 “Residential Building Permits”; Bulletin 58 “Agricultural Buildings”; and Bulletin 25 “Short Subdivisions”. Two bulletins that explicitly address stormwater code requirements are Bulletin 29 “Drainage Review” and Bulletin 34B “Surface Water Design Manual Variances or Adjustments”. Copies of these five bulletins are attached to this report (Attachments A-E). DPER is in the process of updating the CSBs to reflect changes in requirements and to make them easier to use. WLR will assist DPER with the updates.

### Strategy #2: Posting Plain Language Summaries of K.C.C. 9.04 and 9.12 to the DPER and WLR Division websites

The WLR Division finds that posting clear, easily comprehensible narratives describing the intent of the key provisions of K.C.C. 9.04 and 9.12 to WLR Division and DPER web pages may benefit the public’s understanding of the stormwater and surface water code requirements. Based on how similar plain language explanations included in its CSBs have been received, WLR and DPER expect that residents, agricultural interests, businesses, and the public would likely use web-posted narratives of stormwater code requirements to obtain information to assist with their projects.

### Strategy #3: Allocating additional staff time for community outreach and engagement, with a focus on impacted communities

King County provides public education and outreach on stormwater and surface water related issues as required by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Municipal Stormwater permit and County policy. A few examples include leading the Don’t Drip and Drive campaign, outreach to local businesses on best practices for preventing pollution of stormwater, and providing technical and financial assistance to minimize the impact of farming activities on water quality through the WLR Division’s Livestock Program.

As another example of outreach activity, in 2014 the WLR Division formed a diverse stakeholder group of builders, engineers, and municipalities to review and guide the 2016 update of the King County Surface Water Design Manual (SWDM). The WLR Division also engaged in outreach on this update with tribal representatives and the agricultural community, and reviewed and responded to all comments received from the formal public review of the 2016 SWDM and 2016 Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Manual. The WLR Division has provided training on the 2016 SWDM to DPER staff, King Conservation District staff, and select municipalities.

The team reviewed these activities, felt they were effective, and recommends continuing them in the future (with a focus on impacted communities).

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The three strategies identified in Ordinance 18257 were analyzed for efficacy in aiding the public's understanding of the stormwater and surface water code, and were found to be important and effective, and most are currently in use. Based on this review, the following actions are recommended to be taken by the WLR Division:

- Assist DPER in its ongoing update of its customer service bulletins.
- Draft plain language narratives about the intent of key provisions of K.C.C. 9.04 and 9.12 and post these to appropriate WLR Division and DPER web pages.
- Continue current education and outreach designed to aid the public's understanding of stormwater and surface water code.



## Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting)

35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210 • Snoqualmie, Washington 98065-9266 • 206-296-6600 • TTY Relay 711

# Surface Water Design Manual Variances or Adjustments

Permitting Customer  
Information Bulletin #

# 34B

### • FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

*Visit the Permitting Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County Permitting has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

### Surface Water Design Manual Adjustments

As part of the permit review, projects subject to stormwater review must meet the requirements of the County's Storm Water Design Manual (SWDM). If your project will not fully be designed or built in conformance with the SWDM an application for adjustment to the SWDM must be made. This Adjustment if approved by the County allows your project to depart from one or more SWDM requirements in the ways specified in the Adjustment.

#### When to apply for an Adjustment.

The application for Adjustment should be submitted after the preliminary project application is submitted. If the feasibility of the project depends on approval of the Adjustment, you will be allowed to submit earlier than the project application.

Adjustments must be approved before construction begins. Approval of the Adjustment application is not guaranteed. And, even when Adjustments are approved by the County, conditions are often attached to the Adjustment. You risk having to remove or reconstruct work that is not in accordance with the County's stormwater requirements.

#### Why apply for an Adjustment.

There are various reasons for applying for an Adjustment, they include the following:

1. The drainage improvements you are proposing are different than those prescribed in the SWDM.
2. Your site has unusual characteristics that make it unsuitable or unable to meet requirements in the SWDM.
3. Application of the requirements in the SWDM unreasonably affects use of your property.
4. You want to appeal the preliminary approval conditions relating to stormwater requirements.

**How to apply for an Adjustment.**

Application forms are available at the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) in Snoqualmie, calling the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600 or via DPER's web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

To complete the application for Adjustment please include the following information with the application form:

1. The specific section of the SWDM you are requesting to be adjusted.
2. The reason you are requesting the Adjustment. Please note that the cost of meeting the standards is not by itself a sufficient reason for approving an Adjustment.
3. An explanation on how the proposed design will provide compensating or comparable performance as intended by the standards to be adjusted.
4. Other relevant information in support of your request such as an Assessor's map with the boundaries of the pertinent parcel highlighted, vicinity maps, preliminary approval conditions, engineering plans, sketches, photos, etc.
5. Payment of the fees.

Applications more likely to be granted by the County clearly show the Adjustment:

1. Produces a compensating or comparable result (to the standard being adjusted) that is in the public interest, AND
2. Meets the objectives of safety, function, appearance, environmental protection, maintainability AND
3. Is based on sound engineering judgment.

**How Adjustment applications are reviewed.**

The County Adjustment committee reviews the application. This committee includes representatives from DPER and the County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks as well as subject matter experts when needed. The committee reviews the applications and makes a site visit if warranted. In some cases the committee may ask for additional studies or information.

**Adjustment approval.**

Following committee review the Adjustment is either approved, approved with conditions, or denied. You may appeal denials of the Adjustment or conditions placed on the Adjustment to the Director of DPER.

**More information.**

More information can be found in the SWDM at [www.kingcounty.gov/environment/water-and-land/stormwater/documents/surface-water-design-manual.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/water-and-land/stormwater/documents/surface-water-design-manual.aspx). The adjustment process is detailed in Section 1.4. Or you can call the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600.

**Other bulletins that may be helpful.**

Bulletin 29      Drainage Review



## Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting)

35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210 • Snoqualmie, Washington 98065-9266 • 206-296-6600 • TTY Relay 711

# Drainage Review

Permitting Customer  
Information Bulletin #

# 29

### • FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

*Visit the Permitting Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County Permitting has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

### Table of Contents

When do drainage review requirements apply to a proposed project?	1
Drainage review types and requirements	3
Small Project Drainage Review	3
Targeted drainage review	3
Full drainage review	3
Large project drainage review	3
Core requirements	4
Special requirements	4
Definitions	4
Plans required for permit submittal	5
Plans required for drainage review	5
Engineering plan specifications	6
Plans Required for Small Project Drainage Review	6
Small project drainage review requirements	6
Small project submittal requirements	7
Components required for individual lot projects	7
Written drainage assessment	8
Criteria for granting adjustments	8
Where do customers obtain a King County Surface Water Design Manual?	9
Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful	9

### When do drainage review requirements apply to a proposed project?

This bulletin is intended to alert customers to the possibility that a proposed project may be subject to drainage review and to inform customers of the requirements that may apply. This bulletin does not attempt to set out all the standards that must be met or the actions on the part



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

of applicants that will completely satisfy requirements for control of surface and storm water runoff.

If applicants think that a proposed project may require drainage review, please consult the current *King County Surface Water Design Manual (SWDM)* or a Civil Engineer to ensure that appropriate guidelines are followed.

Drainage review is required for any proposed project (except those proposing only **maintenance**) that is subject to a King County **development** permit or approval, including but not limited to those listed below, AND that meets any one of the following conditions:

1. The project adds or will result in 2,000-square-feet or more of **new impervious surface**, **replaced impervious surface**, or **new plus replaced impervious surface**, OR
2. The project proposes 7,000-square-feet or more of **land disturbing activity**, OR
3. The project proposes to **construct or modify** a drainage pipe/ditch that is 12-inches or more in size/depth, or receives surface and storm water runoff from a drainage pipe/ditch that is 12-inches or more in size/depth, OR
4. The project contains or is adjacent to a **flood hazard area** as defined in KCC 21A.06, OR
5. The project is located within a **Critical Drainage Area**, OR
6. The project is a **redevelopment project** proposing \$100,000 or more of improvements to an existing **high-use site**, OR
7. The project is a **redevelopment project** on a single- or multiple-parcel **site** in which the total of **new plus replaced impervious surface** is 5,000-square-feet or more and whose valuation of proposed improvements (including interior improvements and excluding required mitigation and frontage improvements) exceeds 50-percent of the **assessed value** of the existing **site** improvements.

### King County Permits and Approvals

Administrative Subdivision (Short Plat)  
 Binding Site Plan  
 Boundary Line Adjustment  
 Conditional Use  
 Clearing  
 Commercial Building  
 Experimental Design Adjustment  
 Formal Subdivision (plat)  
 Franchise Utility Right-of-Way Use  
 Grading  
 Pre-application Adjustment  
 Right-of-Way Use  
 Shoreline Substantial Development  
 Single Family Residential Building  
 Special Use



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

Unclassified Use  
 Urban Planned Development  
 Zoning Reclassification  
 Zoning Variance

## DRAINAGE REVIEW TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

For most projects resulting in 2,000-square-feet or more of **new** and/or **replaced impervious surface**, the full range of core and special requirements must be evaluated for compliance through the drainage review process. However, for some types of projects, the scope of requirements applied is narrowed to allow more efficient, customized review. Each of the following four drainage review types tailors the review process and application of drainage requirements to a project's size, location, type of development, and anticipated impacts to the local and regional surface water system:

- Small Project Drainage Review
- Targeted Drainage Review
- Full Drainage Review
- Large Project Drainage Review

Each project requires only one of the above drainage review types, with the single exception that a project that qualifies for Small Project Drainage Review may also require Targeted Drainage Review.

### SMALL PROJECT DRAINAGE REVIEW

Small Project Drainage Review is a simplified drainage review for small residential building, clearing, and subdivision projects or small **agricultural projects** that result in either (a) 10,000-square-feet or less of impervious surface added on or after January 8, 2001 (the effective date of the ESA 4(d) Rule for Puget Sound Chinook salmon).

The Small Project Drainage Review process minimizes the time and effort required to design, submit, review, and approve drainage facilities for these proposals. In most cases, the requirements can be met with submittals prepared by contractors, architects, or homeowners without the involvement of a **civil engineer**.

*Note: some projects subject to Small Project Drainage Review may also require Targeted Drainage Review, if they meet any of the threshold criteria.*

### TARGETED DRAINAGE REVIEW

Targeted Drainage Review is an abbreviated evaluation by the Department of Permitting permit review staff of a proposed project's compliance with selected core and special requirements. Projects subject to this type of drainage review are typically Small Project Drainage Review proposals or other small projects that have **site-specific** or project-specific drainage concerns that must be addressed by a **civil engineer** or Permitting Department engineering review staff. Under Targeted Drainage Review, engineering costs associated with drainage design and review are kept to a minimum because the review includes only those requirements that would apply to the particular project.

### FULL DRAINAGE REVIEW

Full Drainage Review is the evaluation by King County staff of a proposed project's compliance with the full range of core and special requirements.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

## LARGE PROJECT DRAINAGE REVIEW

Large Project Drainage Review is applied to development proposals that are large and/or involve resources or problems of special sensitivity or complexity. Because of the large size and complexities involved, there is usually a greater risk of significant impact or irreparable damage to sensitive resources. Such proposals often require a more definitive approach to drainage requirements than that prescribed by the core and special requirements; it may be appropriate to collect additional information about **site** resources, use more sophisticated models, and prepare special studies not specified in this manual.

Large Project Drainage Review entails preparation of a **master drainage plan (MDP)** or limited scope MDP that is reviewed and approved by the Permitting Department.

## CORE REQUIREMENTS

The eight core requirements are:

- Core Requirement #1: Discharge at the Natural Location
- Core Requirement #2: Offsite Analysis
- Core Requirement #3: Flow Control
- Core Requirement #4: Conveyance System
- Core Requirement #5: Erosion and Sediment Control
- Core Requirement #6: Maintenance and Operations
- Core Requirement #7: Financial Guarantees and Liability
- Core Requirement #8: Water Quality

## SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The five special drainage requirements that may apply to the proposed project depending on its location or **site**-specific characteristics are:

- Special Requirement #1: Other Adopted Area-Specific Requirements
- Special Requirement #2: Flood Hazard Area Delineation
- Special Requirement #3: Flood Protection Facilities
- Special Requirement #4: Source Control
- Special Requirement #5: Oil Control

## Definitions taken from KCC 9.04.020

"Construct or modify" means to install a new drainage pipe or ditch or make improvements to an existing drainage pipe or ditch, for purposes other than maintenance, that either serves to concentrate previously unconcentrated surface and storm water runoff or serves to increase, decrease or redirect the conveyance of surface and storm water runoff. "Construct or modify" does not include installation or maintenance of a driveway culvert installed as part of a single-family residential building permit.

"Development" means any activity that requires a permit or approval, including, but not limited to, a building permit, grading permit, shoreline substantial development permit, conditional use permit, special use permit, zoning variance or reclassification, subdivision, short subdivision, urban planned development, binding site plan, site development permit or right-of-way use permit. "Development" does not include a Class I, II, III or IV-S forest practice conducted in accordance with chapter 76.09 RCW and Title 222 WAC or a class IV-G nonconversion forest



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

practice, as defined in KCC chapter 21A.06, conducted in accordance with chapter 76.09 RCW and Title 222 WAC and a county-approved forest management plan.

"High-use site" means a commercial, industrial or road intersection site that generates a higher than average number of vehicle turnovers or has other characteristics that generate the potential for chronic oil accumulation. "High use site" includes:

1. A commercial or industrial site subject to:
  - a. an expected daily traffic count greater than one hundred vehicles per one thousand
  - b. petroleum storage or transfer in excess of one thousand gallons per year, not including routine fuel oil storage or transfer; or
  - c. use, storage or maintenance of a fleet of twenty-five or more diesel vehicles each weighing over ten tons; or
2. A road intersection with average daily traffic counts of twenty-five thousand vehicles or more on the main roadway and fifteen thousand or more vehicles on any intersecting roadway, excluding pedestrian or bicycle use improvement projects.

"Impervious surface" means a hard surface area that either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil mantle as under natural conditions before development or that causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities or at an increased rate of flow from the flow present under natural conditions prior to development. Common impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, roofs, walkways, patios, driveways, parking lots, storage areas, areas that are paved, graveled or made of packed or oiled earthen materials or other surfaces that similarly impede the natural infiltration of surface and storm water. An open uncovered flow control or water quality treatment facility is not an "impervious surface".

"Land disturbing activity" means an activity that results in a change in the existing soil cover, both vegetative and nonvegetative, or to the existing soil topography. "Land disturbing activity" includes, but is not limited to, demolition, construction, clearing, grading, filling, excavation and compaction. "Land disturbing activity" does not include tilling conducted as part of agricultural practices, landscape maintenance or gardening.

"Maintenance" means those usual activities taken to prevent a decline, lapse or cessation in the use of currently serviceable structures, facilities, equipment or systems, if there is no expansion of the structure, facilities, equipment or system and there are no significant hydrologic impacts. "Maintenance" includes the repair or replacement of nonfunctional facilities or the replacement of existing structures with different types of structures, if the repair or replacement is required by one or more environmental permits or to meet current engineering standards and the functioning characteristics of the original facility or structure are not changed.

"New impervious surface" means the creation of a hard or compacted surface such as roofs, pavement, gravel or dirt or the addition of a more compacted surface such as the paving of existing dirt or gravel.

"Replaced impervious surface" means an existing impervious surface proposed to be removed and reestablished as impervious surface, excluding impervious surface removed for the sole purpose of installing utilities or performing maintenance. For purposes of this definition, "removed" includes the removal of buildings down to bare soil or the removal of Portland cement concrete slabs or pavement or asphaltic concrete pavement.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

## PLANS REQUIRED FOR PERMIT SUBMITTAL

Most projects require some degree of drainage plans or analysis to be submitted with the initial permit application. Subdivisions, urban plan developments (UPDs), and binding site plans require engineered **preliminary plans** be submitted with the initial permit application. Short plats require **site plans** (may be engineered or non-engineered) to be submitted with the initial permit application. Preliminary plans and site plans provide general information on the proposal, including location of critical areas, road alignments and right-of-way, **site** topography, building locations, land use information, and lot dimensions. They are used to determine the appropriate drainage conditions and requirements to be applied to the proposal during the drainage review process.

Single family residential building permits and short plats with one undeveloped lot require only a **site plan** with the initial permit application. Commercial permits require full **engineering plans**.

Other permits may have project specific drainage requirements determined by DPER or described in DPER customer information bulletins.

## PLANS REQUIRED FOR DRAINAGE REVIEW

For drainage review purposes, **engineering plans** consist of the following:

1. **Site improvement plans**, which include all plans, profiles, details, notes, and specifications necessary to construct road, drainage, and off-street parking improvements.
2. A **construction storm water pollution prevention plan (CSWPPP)**, which identifies the measures and BMPs required to prevent the discharge of sediment-laden water and other pollutants associated with construction/**land disturbing activities**. The CSWPPP includes two component plans: an **erosion and sediment control (ESC) plan**, which addresses prevention of sediment-laden discharges; and a **storm water pollution prevention and spill (SWPPS) plan**, which addresses prevention of other pollutant discharges.
3. A **technical information report (TIR)**, which contains all the technical information and analysis necessary to develop the site improvement plan and CSWPPP.

**Projects under Targeted Drainage Review** usually require engineering plans, except that only certain sections of the technical information report are required to be completed and the site improvement plan may have a limited scope depending upon the characteristics of the proposed project. The scope of these plans should be confirmed during the **project predesign meeting** with the Permitting Department. For other permits, such as single family residential permits, the scope of the targeted engineering analysis is usually determined during Permitting Department engineering review.

**Projects without major drainage improvements** may be approved to submit a *modified site improvement plan*. Major drainage improvements usually include water quality or flow control facilities, conveyance systems, bridges, and road right-of-way improvements. For projects requiring engineering plans for road construction, a **modified site improvement plan** is not allowed.

## ENGINEERING PLAN SPECIFICATIONS

For drainage review purposes, **engineering plans** must consist of the following:

1. A **TIR** as detailed in the SWDM Section 2.3.1.1 (p. 2-8), AND



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

2. **Site improvement plans** as detailed in SWDM Section 2.3.1.2 (p. 2-19), AND
3. A **CSWPPP**, which includes an ESC plan as detailed in SWDM Section 2.3.1.3 (p. 2-26) and a SWPPS plan as detailed in SWDM Section 2.3.1.4 (p. 2-29). Also, if applicable per Section 1.2.8, a **landscape management plan**, as detailed in SWDM Section 2.1.1.1 (p. 2-32) must be included.

**Projects in Targeted Drainage Review** require a limited scope TIR with site improvement plans and an ESC plan, as detailed in SWDM Section 2.3.2 (p. 2-33). DPER may allow a modified site improvement plan for some projects in Targeted Drainage Review or where major improvements (e.g., detention facilities, conveyance systems, bridges, road right-of-way improvements, etc.) are not proposed.

### Plans Required for Small Project Drainage Review

*Small project drainage plans* are a simplified form of site improvement and ESC plans (without a TIR or a SWPPS plan) that may be prepared by a non-engineer from a set of pre-engineered design details. Small project drainage plans are only allowed for projects in Small Project Drainage Review but may be required for individual lots created by a subdivision project to show how required flow control BMPs and ESC measures will be applied to future lot construction.

For single family residential permits, the level and scope of drainage plan requirements are determined by the Permitting Department during drainage review. Some projects subject to Small Project Drainage Review may also require Targeted Drainage Review.

### SMALL PROJECT DRAINAGE REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

All projects subject to Small Project Drainage Review must comply with the following two basic mitigation requirements in this appendix:

1. Apply **flow control BMPs** to developed surfaces as directed in SWDM Section C.1.3 (p. C-13), and
2. Apply **erosion and sediment control (ESC) measures** to disturbed areas during construction as directed in SWDM Section C.1.4 (p. C-20).

To show how these requirements will be met, project applicants must submit drainage plans and supporting documentation as directed in SWDM Section C.1.5 (p. C-23).

In addition, some small projects may have **site**-specific or project-specific drainage concerns or requirements that must be addressed by a **civil engineer** or County engineering review staff. Examples include the presence of flood, erosion, or landslide hazards on or near the **site**, safe conveyance of storm water through the **site**, and application of special drainage requirements. The County will identify any such issues during Small Project Drainage Review and will require a separate **Targeted Drainage Review** in addition to Small Project Drainage Review to address them (see SWDM Section C.1.2, p. C-9). This may require the additional submittal of **site** information, reports, and/or engineering plans signed and stamped by a **civil engineer**.

### SMALL PROJECT SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

For projects in Small Project Drainage Review, the items listed below must be submitted to the Permitting Department for review unless the item is not applicable or necessary as specified for that item below or as determined by the Permitting Department. See SWDM Section C.5.1 (p. C-121) for a description of the Permitting Department permit review process for Small Project Drainage Review.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

1. A **small project drainage plan**, unless otherwise directed by DPER. These components vary depending on whether the project is an individual lot development or a subdivision. For most projects in Small Project Drainage Review (i.e., individual lot projects), the required components of a small project drainage plan include a flow control BMP site plan, flow control BMP design and maintenance details, a small site ESC plan, and a written drainage assessment with supporting documentation (e.g., soils report, special studies, etc.).
2. A draft of the **declaration of covenant and grant of easement** required to be recorded for application of flow control BMPs on an individual **site/lot**.
3. A copy of any **recorded covenant** that limits the amount of impervious surface or clearing on the **site** for purposes of qualifying for Small Project Drainage Review. If one does not exist or does not include provisions for County inspection, it must be combined with the covenant required for application of flow control BMPs.
4. An **engineering plan** and **technical information report** signed and stamped by a **civil engineer** if needed to address targeted drainage review requirements.

### COMPONENTS REQUIRED FOR INDIVIDUAL LOT PROJECTS

Most of the information required for the small project drainage plan is also required for a residential site plan, which must be submitted with the permit application (see Permitting Department Bulletin No. 9, "Obtaining a Residential Building Permit"). In fact, the residential site plan may be used as a base map for the flow control BMP site plan and small site ESC plan components of the small project drainage plan. Required components for all individual lot projects are as follows:

1. **Flow Control BMP Site Plan.** This is a scale drawing of the individual **site/lot** used to show how required flow control BMPs will be applied to the **target impervious surface** and **new pervious surface** proposed on the **site/lot**. The flow control BMP (FCBMP) site plan is intended to be a recordable document (or reducible to a recordable document) that can be attached to the declaration of covenant and grant of easement required for implementation of flow control BMPs on individual **sites/lots**. The Permitting Department may allow a written version of this plan if they determine there is no need to illustrate the size and location of proposed flow control BMPs.
2. **Flow Control BMP Design and Maintenance Details** (required whenever flow control BMPs are proposed by a project). These are diagrams/figures, design specifications, and maintenance instructions for each flow control BMP proposed. FCBMP design and maintenance details are intended to be recordable to facilitate attachment to the declaration of covenant and grant of easement required for implementation of flow control BMPs on individual **sites/lots**. The Permitting Department may waive all or a portion of this component if they determine there is no need to specify design details or maintenance instructions for certain proposed BMPs (e.g., the reduced footprint BMP).
3. **Small Site ESC Plan.** This is a scale drawing of the **site** or **project site** used to show the limits of disturbance by the project and how required ESC measures will be applied to prevent sediment from leaving the **project site**. The plan must include or be



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

accompanied by any necessary standard details for installation of proposed ESC measures. The figures in Section C.3 may be used as details. The Permitting Department may allow a written version of this plan if they determine there is no need to illustrate the extent and location of proposed ESC measures. *Note: if the project proposes to disturb 1 or more acre, an ESC plan prepared by a **civil engineer** will be required in accordance with the County's ESC Standards (Appendix D of the SWDM).*

4. **Written Drainage Assessment.** This is an overview of the proposed project and its compliance with the drainage requirements of this appendix. It includes a description of proposed **site** improvements, existing **site** conditions, critical areas, existing drainage features, and proposed flow control BMPs and ESC measures, including how they were selected and sized. The drainage assessment should also discuss the results and implications of any soils reports or special studies completed for the **site**.

## WRITTEN DRAINAGE ASSESSMENT

The written drainage assessment is a supporting document of the small project drainage plan and typically includes the following information:

- A **narrative** description of proposed project
- Any proposed **changes** to the project after preliminary approval
- A description of **proposed flow control BMPs** shown on the FCBMP site plan and how they were selected
- A description of **proposed ESC measures** shown on the plans and how they were selected
- A description of any necessary **special studies** or **soils reports**
- A description of any **other information** required by the Permitting Department.

### Are adjustments of the requirements possible?

Adjustments of the core and special requirements and/or other requirements in the *King County Surface Water Design Manual* may be proposed.

## CRITERIA FOR GRANTING ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments to the requirements in this manual may be granted provided that granting the adjustment will achieve the following:

- Produce a compensating or comparable result that is in the public interest, AND
- Meet the objectives of safety, function, appearance, environmental protection, and maintainability based on sound engineering judgment.
- Also, the granting of any adjustment that would be in conflict with the requirements of any other King County department will require review and concurrence with that department.

Requests for standard and complex adjustments will be accepted only for permits pending approval or approved permits that have not yet expired.

### Pre-application Adjustments

The application process is the same as for standard and complex adjustments except that requests will be accepted prior to permit application, but only if:

- The applicant provides justification at a pre-application meeting with the Permitting Department that an adjustment decision is needed to determine the viability of the proposed project, AND
- Sufficient engineering information to evaluate the request is provided.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

### Where may customers obtain a King County Surface Water Design Manual?

A manual may be purchased from the King County DNR Water and Land Resources Division at 206-296-6519. The Surface Water Design Manual may also be downloaded for free at the Water and Land Resources Division Manual Web site at:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/stormwater/documents/surface-water-design-manual.aspx>

### Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 10	Residential Building On or Near Waterfront
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 18A	Zoning Code: Permitted Use Tables
Bulletin 21	Critical Areas Review
Bulletin 34A	Road Variances
Bulletin 34B	Surface Water Design Manual Variances or Adjustments
Bulletin 38	Flood Insurance and FEMA

These and other Permitting Department bulletins are available via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

206-296-6600	Permitting Services Center
206-296-6600	Permitting zoning and land use information
206-296-6600	Permitting drainage review information
206-296-6519	King County DNR Water & Land Resources Division

**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)



King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

## Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting)

35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210 • Snoqualmie Washington 98065-9266 • 206-296-6600 • TTY Relay 711

# Short Subdivisions

Permitting Customer  
Information Bulletin #

# 25

## • FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

*Visit the Permitting Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County Permitting has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

This bulletin explains the requirements and the process for subdividing property in unincorporated King County and answers questions regarding problems that customers may encounter. It is not intended to replace legal, engineering, or other professional services, but should help applicants decide when such expert assistance is needed. Call the King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting) at 206-296-6600, if questions are not answered by the information in this bulletin.

### What is a short subdivision?

When property owners want to sell, trade, or give away a portion of property to someone other than an owner of an abutting property, it must first be subdivided. (Land may be transferred to an abutting property owner through a process known as "Boundary Line Adjustment"). A short subdivision, often called a "Short Plat," is a division of property into four or fewer lots outside the Urban Growth Area and nine or fewer lots in the Urban Growth Area.

Here is an example to help illustrate a short subdivision: If property owners want to sell half of an existing lot, it must first be subdivided into two "Legal Lots," one that the applicant will want to keep, and one lot to sell. Everyone who shares ownership or who has an interest in the property (e.g., spouse, partner, mortgage company, real estate contract holder, etc.) must agree to sign on the face of the final short subdivision document.

For information regarding the laws governing subdivisions, see Chapter 58.17 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Title 19A and 21A of the King County Code (KCC).

### Why are short subdivisions necessary?

State and County Laws require short subdivisions for the following reasons:

- To ensure that the new lots meet minimum zoning requirements for building
- To protect the interests of the seller, buyers, builders, and neighbors
- To prevent or mitigate drainage problems, access and traffic safety problems, and public health hazards
- To plan wisely for community growth and neighborhood traffic circulation
- To maintain accurate public records of land divisions.

## Short Subdivisions

### When is it unnecessary to short subdivide?

Chapter 19A.08.040 of the King County Code provides the following exemptions when a short subdivision is not required:

- Divisions of land for cemetery and other burial plots
- When creating new lots or tracts that are each 40 acres or larger, provided King County zoning requirements allow for 40-acre parcels
- When selling or deeding five acres or more to a public agency
- When executing a will that legally divides property
- When dividing land into lots or tracts under a recorded residential condominium binding site plan
- When dividing land by adjusting boundary lines, as long as the division does not create any new lot or reduce an existing lot to an area insufficient for a building
- When a division is for the purpose of leasing mobile home space in lots with an approved mobile home park site plan
- When dividing land by binding site plan into lots or tracts classified for industrial or commercial use
- When a public road or freeway is planned and constructed that divides property.

**Note: A boundary-line adjustment requires review and approval by King County Permitting. Also see Permitting Public Rules Chapter 19-08, Adjusting Boundary Lines, available via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).**

In all cases where property owners may be considering one of the exemptions listed above consultation with Permitting staff before proceeding is recommended. Parcels that fail to meet King County zoning, health, or access requirements will not be granted a building permit.

### How many lots can be created?

To meet short subdivision requirements, a property proposed to be subdivided must be considered a Legal Lot, as defined in Chapters 19A.04.210 and 19A.08.070 of the KCC. Property owners may short subdivide a Legal Lot into a maximum of four lots outside the Urban Growth Area and nine lots in the Urban Growth Area. The number of lots created depends on how much land a customer owns and the zoning requirements that apply to the proposed property. If an applicant has an ownership interest in two or more contiguous lots, however, eight lots may be created outside the Urban Growth Area. After the recording of a short plat, a property owner must wait five years before short platting again. However, a property owner may further subdivide a short plat lot within the five-year time frame via the formal plat process. A short subdivision may include any number of tracts (land reserved for special uses such as open space, surface water retention/detention utilities, or access). Tracts are not counted as lots, and they cannot be used as residential building sites.

An owner of an existing non-building lot (as designated through an approved short subdivision or subdivision) may have it recognized by King County as a Legal Lot and a legal building site through a short subdivision or short subdivision alteration.

### What are the costs?

Applicable fees for short subdivisions vary significantly and depend on many factors. The fees are subject to change by the King County Council. Refer to the current list of fees, available on the permitting web site for specific amounts.

## Short Subdivisions

### What are the costs? (continued)

Some or all of the King County fees listed below must be paid, depending on the specific circumstances.

- Pre-Application Meeting review fees (Required for all applications.)
- Short Plat application review fee (Required for all applications.)
- Health Department review fees
- Fire Marshal review fee
- State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review fee
- Critical Areas review fee
- Variance review fees
- Engineering review fee
- Inspection fee
- Right-of-Way restoration financial guarantee
- Final Short Plat review fee (Required for all applications.)
- Division of Records and Elections recording fee (Required for all applications.)

Additional costs and expenses include the following:

- Consultant fees for preparing applications and other documents and attending meetings with County staff
- Fees paid to utility districts for the preparation of Certificates of Water and Sewer Availability
- Costs associated with determining the site's suitability for on-site sewage disposal (septic tanks and drainfields)
- Special studies such as a downstream drainage analysis, soils report, wetland study or traffic analysis
- A Short Plat Title Report
- Engineering costs for surface water drainage plans and road plan and profiles
- Costs of constructing and installing roads and drainage systems, water supply lines, sewer lines and other required utilities
- Performance and maintenance bonds
- Fees for the preparation of the final short plat recording documents by a land surveyor.

### What procedures must be followed?

Although obtaining approval of a short subdivision can be described as taking place in generally two phases, preliminary approval and final approval/recording, the following seven steps describe the County process in more detail:

- Pre-application meeting
- Application submittal
- County staff review of the application and granting Preliminary Approval
- Engineering Plan review for required infrastructure improvements
- Construction
- Final review and recording
- Maintenance/Defect Warranty

Before beginning the process of short subdividing a parcel of property, review the following information to thoroughly understand the procedures and steps involved. Most applicants find that hiring a consultant with expertise in the short subdivision process is the best approach to handling their application. Note that the services of a licensed civil engineer and a licensed land surveyor will be required to complete certain steps in the short plat application process.

## Short Subdivisions

### **STEP ONE: Mandatory Pre-application Meeting**

A *Pre-application Meeting* must be scheduled. At this meeting, the short plat process will be discussed in more detail, as well as site-specific issues. Customers will be informed about zoning requirements such as lot size, lot width and density; whether a proposal will be affected by SEPA; whether a site is in a mapped critical area; and general health, access, drainage, and utility requirements. During this meeting, issues involving difficult site constraints may also be discussed.

To schedule a Pre-application Meeting, applicants will be required to submit a completed meeting request form; a proposed site plan drawn to scale showing geographic features such as adjacent streets, existing buildings, and critical areas if any are known to be present; a list of issues and questions; and a monetary deposit. The applicant must attend this meeting with their professional consultant (e.g., civil engineer), and at the meeting County staff will provide detailed written comments on the proposal.

Application packages with instructions for a *Pre-Application Meeting* can be obtained at the Permitting Service Center, or online from the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits). The application package for the *Pre-Application Meeting* must be submitted in person by appointment; at the Snoqualmie Permitting Service Center with a project manager. Attendance at this meeting is required prior to proceeding to Step 2 described below and the filing of a short plat application. **Review fees will be charged for this meeting.**

### **STEP TWO: Application Submittal**

After completing Step 1 above, an applicant must schedule an intake appointment to submit the permit application. This intake appointment can be scheduled by calling 206-296-6797. Please have your pre-application number and fee quote amount available when scheduling this intake appointment.

Every short subdivision application includes the following:

- A completed Short Subdivision Application Form
- A map/site plan prepared in accordance with King County Code 19A.08.150(B), including field survey information developed by a licensed land surveyor
- Preliminary approval by the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health if an on-site septic system or an on-site well are planned, or the submittal of Water and Sewer Certificates from the appropriate utility districts
- A current Title Report
- A receipt filled out by the local Fire District
- Copies of any easements, deed restrictions, or other encumbrances that may restrict the use of the property
- Documentation of lot creation and the date and method of segregation (see Bulletin 2, *Legal Lot*)
- A Certificate of Transportation Concurrency
- A completed Environmental Checklist if the short plat application is subject to the State Environmental Policy Act (see Bulletin 26, *SEPA Process*)
- A Level 1 Drainage Analysis and a conceptual drainage plan for stormwater control
- A copy of completed applications for other permits that are to be processed with the short subdivision application, or copies of related permits that have already been issued

[See King County Codes 19A.08.150 and 20.20.040 for complete application requirements.]

## Short Subdivisions

### Vesting

Once Permitting determines that an applicant has submitted a complete application, a proposed project is vested and will be subject to the rules in effect on the vesting date. However, for short plat applications that are subject to environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the project will be vested to the ordinances in effect at the time of the SEPA threshold determination, if significant adverse impacts will occur without conditions to mitigate the project's impacts. [See Chapter 197-11-660(1)(a) of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).]

Applications containing material errors will be withdrawn, i.e., canceled by permitting, and any resubmittals by the applicant will be treated as a new application. A material error refers to an error in fact or an omission of substantive information that would affect the outcome of the approval.

**Note that if an applicant initiates any changes to a vested application and these changes are not required by County staff but rather by the applicant, and if the changes will result in a substantial change to a project's review requirements, the application will be treated as a new application for the purposes of vesting. Examples of such changes include creating new lots, eliminating open space, or modifying short plat conditions.**

### Public notice

Once customers have submitted an application, a notice must be posted describing the proposed land use action on or next to the property. Notices are mailed to neighbors and to appropriate jurisdictions and may also be mailed to other interested parties, as well as local and community newspapers. King County Permitting will send applicants instructions regarding notice/posting responsibilities.

### **STEP THREE: Application Review and Preliminary Approval/Denial**

A County land use planner, engineer, and other appropriate staff will review an application for a short subdivision to ensure that it meets King County requirements. Review times will vary depending on the complexity of the application. The review process will include a visit to the site by relevant County staff that has not previously seen the property, and applicants may be required to submit additional information or revise a proposal to comply with County regulations such as Critical Area requirements (e.g., wetlands, streams, floodplain, steep slope and landslide hazard requirements).

Note that under state statutes, SEPA review is required for the following short subdivisions:

- Resubdivision of a recorded short plat
- Short subdivisions of land covered by water.
- Short subdivisions where an applicant is required to get a Construction Stormwater General Permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology, prior to beginning construction activities for the short plat. This state permit is required when there will be a cumulative disturbance of 1 acre or more of land to develop the short plat, including consideration of future residential building sites in the short plat.

[For more information on the Construction Stormwater General Permit, visit [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/construction/index.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/construction/index.html). For more information on the SEPA process, please refer to Bulletin 26, *SEPA Process*.]

### Preliminary decision

Following completion of the review process, applicants will receive either preliminary approval with a list of conditions which must be satisfied to achieve final short plat approval, or a notice of denial with an explanation of why an application was denied.

## Short Subdivisions

Preliminary approval is effective for 60 months. If any of the conditions of approval are not satisfied and the final short plat is not recorded within the effective time, the preliminary approval becomes void.

Site construction may not begin until the following requirements are met:

- Preliminary approval has been granted
- Engineering plans, if required as a condition of preliminary approval, are approved
- A financial guarantee for required restoration has been posted and applicable fees paid
- A preconstruction conference has been held with the King County Land Use Inspection Section.

## Appeals

Decisions relating to short subdivision approval or denial may be appealed to the Hearing Examiner by any aggrieved party, including the applicant and neighborhood residents.

**Note: A short subdivision is classified as a Type 2 decision and is appealable to the King County Hearing Examiner. Specific appeal instructions are included with the written decision and the Notice of Decision. Appeals must include a detailed reason for the appeal along with a fee payment.**

If an appeal is filed, the Office of the Hearing Examiner will set a date for the appeal hearing. If a proposed project involves other land use appeals, such as those for SEPA, rezones, or Conditional Use Permits, hearings for the short subdivision and other types of appeals will be consolidated into one proceeding. Chapter 20.20 of the King County Code provides for the consolidation of hearings and authorizes the Hearing Examiner to make final decisions on such consolidations.

The Hearing Examiner may convene a *pre-hearing* conference to identify, to the extent possible, the facts in dispute, issues, laws, parties, and witnesses in the case, and to set a timeline for the presentation of the case. Also, any party to the appeal may request that the Examiner convene a pre-hearing conference. The conference will be scheduled at least 14 days before the scheduled appeal hearing, and at least 7 days notice of the date and time of the pre-hearing conference will be given to those who are Parties-of-Record to the hearing.

## **STEP FOUR: Engineering Plan Review**

Typically, a key requirement for preliminary short subdivision approval is the provision of road and/or drainage improvements. Designing and constructing road or drainage improvements will probably be the most costly requirement for a proposed short subdivision.

If the application is conditioned upon construction of road or drainage improvements, whether public or private, the applicant will likely be required to submit a detailed engineering plan that is prepared by a Civil Engineer licensed in the State of Washington. This engineering plan should show the existing property and proposed improvements. Consult the *King County Surface Water Design Manual* and the *King County Road Standards* for details on plan submittal requirements. King County Permitting reviews engineering plans to ensure that the design complies with the King County standards and specifications for roads and drainage.

To obtain engineering plan approval following short plat preliminary review, customers must address all redline comments, pay review and inspection fees, and post a site and Right-of-Way restoration financial guarantee.

## Short Subdivisions

### **STEP FIVE: Construction**

Following approval of the engineering plans, an applicant and/or the applicant's contractor must set up a preconstruction conference with the Permitting staff. Applicants will not be allowed to construct the improvements as part of a subdivision until after this meeting.

Throughout construction, a site will be subject to regular inspections. If construction is not completed within one year from the date of engineering plan approval, applicants may be asked to pay additional inspection fees.

Inspections are required to ensure that construction follows the approved plan and King County specifications. Applicants may have to correct facilities that fail to meet minimum standards or that were not identified on the approved design. Applicants will also have to regularly maintain erosion control facilities or cover disturbed soils until construction activities cease and the site is stabilized.

When improvements are complete, a final inspection will be necessary for King County approval and release of financial guarantee(s).

### **STEP SIX: Final Review (Recording)**

All short subdivisions require final review prior to recording. The final short plat must be prepared by a Professional Land Surveyor licensed in the State of Washington. The final review application packet shall include five copies of the final short plat plans, a current short plat certificate (Title Report), survey calculations, a copy of the approved engineering plans, fees, and any additional information that may be required by Permitting.

Prior to final approval and recording, Permitting engineer/survey staff will review the final submittal to verify that all technical survey information is consistent with state and local regulations and that all conditions of the preliminary approval are satisfied. The final submittal is also reviewed to verify that all title encumbrances have been addressed.

Property owners have an option to complete road and drainage improvements before recording, or post a performance financial guarantee to ensure that improvements will be completed within two years from the date of recording. Refer to the section of this bulletin that discusses financial guarantees, for more information.

Once a proposed short subdivision is ready to be recorded, applicants will be notified of the exact recording fee. All property taxes and application review fees that are owed must be paid prior to recording. Once all review conditions have been satisfied, King County Permitting staff will process the proposed short subdivision with the King County Department of Assessments, and the Department of Records and Elections. After a short subdivision is recorded, the proposed lots will be considered Legal Lots that may then either be sold or transferred, and for which building permit applications may be submitted.

### **STEP SEVEN: Maintenance/Defect Warranty**

If a short subdivision requires Public Street improvements valued at more than \$1,000, applicants will be required to post a maintenance financial guarantee for the roads. This financial guarantee is required to warranty that the workmanship, materials, and design of the roads will be free from defects for at least two years.

If a drainage retention/detention facility is required for a proposed short subdivision, property owners must post a two-year maintenance and defect financial guarantee. This financial guarantee is required to ensure maintenance of the drainage facilities and repairs of any failures in design, workmanship, or materials for at least two years. King County will monitor drainage systems and may notify property owners of needed maintenance or repair during the two-year period.

## Short Subdivisions

Release of the financial guarantee will require re-inspection by the King County Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

### What road and drainage improvements are required?

Road improvements typically are required to ensure that a proposed property has adequate access. Aspects of neighborhood circulation and road patterns will also be evaluated. Applicants may have to construct or improve roads, both on and off site, to provide adequate access. The following may apply to a proposed short subdivision:

#### Public streets

Applicants may have to dedicate (deed) some land to widen an existing public street right-of-way, to obtain off-site dedications to extend an existing neighborhood street to serve the proposed property, or to ensure that access for future development is adequate. Property owners may also be required to improve a public street if existing construction does not meet current codes.

#### Private roads

Private roads may be permitted when public right-of-way is not required, no public safety hazards will result, and only a limited number of lots are being served.

Right-of-way and improvement requirements for private roads vary greatly, depending on lot size, the potential and actual number of lots served, and the existing street network. To satisfy road improvement conditions, property owners must first obtain approval of the road design plans; then the road construction must be inspected and approved. Under certain conditions, applicants may complete final recording of the short plat before the road improvements are constructed, by posting financial guarantees or other acceptable securities to guarantee completion of the required improvements within one year of final short plat approval.

#### Drainage

Drainage facilities are required to ensure that a short subdivision does not cause an increase in peak surface water runoff to downstream properties. A review for drainage impacts is required for any proposed short plat if any of the following conditions apply:

- More than 2,000 square feet of new impervious surface is created
- The property contains or abuts a floodplain, stream, lake, wetland, closed depression, or a critical area
- Typical drainage requirements include on-site water retention/detention facilities, water quality systems, stream bank stabilization, and the creation of drainage easements and setbacks.

### What additional items may be required for short subdivisions?

In addition to road and drainage requirements, the following approvals are typically required:

#### Public Health

The Seattle-King County Department of Public Health must approve the water supply and means of sewage disposal.

If a proposed project will be on a septic system, preliminary Health Department approval must be obtained *before* filing a short plat application. Final Health Department approval is required before short plat recording. In some cases, preliminary approval from the Health Department requires hiring a consultant to conduct an on-site sewage disposal design. Health Department approvals sometimes are delayed for worst case design conditions (winter percolation tests). The design and delays in obtaining approvals can be very costly if new regulations are implemented, or if zoning is revised before a proposed short subdivision

## Short Subdivisions

application is submitted to King County Permitting. A proposed short subdivision is not vested until a short subdivision application is complete and accepted for processing.

### Critical Areas Designation

If the lots in a short plat application are proposed to be served by either an on-site septic system for sewage disposal, or by a well for the potable water supply, as noted above an applicant must first obtain preliminary Health Department approval. Before the Health Department will accept an application for this purpose, the applicant must determine the location of any critical areas on the site, such as wetlands, streams, ponds, steep slopes and landslide hazard areas. This *Critical Areas Designation* is performed by Permitting technical staff. If an applicant suspects Critical Area features are present on the short plat parcel, it may be advisable to first hire a professional consultant (e.g., a wetlands biologist or geologist) to evaluate and delineate the Critical Area feature before coming to permitting for a *Critical Areas Designation*. Permitting has a preferred consultants list for this purpose, which an applicant may wish to use. This list can be found on the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

**Note that regardless whether the lots in a proposed short plat will be served by a public sewer and water system, or by a private septic system, or by a private or community well, if an applicant suspects that a Critical Area may exist on the short plat parcel, it is advisable to complete a *Critical Areas Designation* before submitting a short plat application, since the presence of a Critical Area can significantly limit the land area of a site which can be developed.**

### Fire safety

Fire hydrants and water mains may be required if the lots in a proposed short subdivision are smaller than 35,000 feet. Actual requirements will depend on the number of lots served, existing water pressure and capacity, fire hydrant location, and accessibility for fire-fighting equipment. A Fire District Receipt must be obtained and approved before recording. This permit will require verification of access, hydrant location, actual water pressure, and flow capacity for fire-fighting equipment.

### Taxes

All past-due taxes must be paid before the short subdivision may be recorded.

### What financial guarantees are required for improvements?

If property owners are required to construct road or drainage improvements as a condition of approval, a financial guarantee must be posted before construction begins, to ensure that conditions are met or the site is restored and stabilized.

The types of financial guarantees and amounts vary according to the types of improvements. The financial guarantees typically required for a short subdivision include the following:

- Right-of-Way and/or Site Restoration Performance
- Maintenance and/or Defect
- A financial guarantee may be in the form of a cash deposit with King County, an assignment of funds with a bank or lending institution, or a bond. Each form also requires a signed agreement from an applicant or a legal representative
- Copies of the financial guarantee forms are available at Permitting (see Bulletin 40, *Financial Guarantees*).

### How soon can a short subdivided property be divided again?

Property owners must wait five years from the date of recording to subdivide again. However, the five-year waiting period does not apply if the formal subdivision process is used. The formal

## Short Subdivisions

subdivision process requires a public hearing before the Hearing Examiner and approval by the King County Council.

Within the five year waiting period, a short plat alteration may also be filed to increase the number of lots within the original short plat, if the total number of lots does not exceed nine within in the Urban Growth Area, does not exceed four outside the Urban Growth Area, and the short plat alteration is consistent with current zoning. The following requirements also apply to all short subdivision alterations:

- Everyone with an ownership or security interest in the original lots to be altered must sign the final altered short subdivision forms.
- If subsequent land development or County planning decisions rely on any features of the original short subdivision, those features must be kept in the altered short subdivision.
- Short subdivision alterations or vacations are generally approved or denied in the same way that the original subdivision was approved, and they must be recorded by Permitting with the Division of Records and Elections.

### **What if land parcels are bought without first being subdivided?**

If a parcel of land is bought without first being subdivided, civil suit and/or criminal prosecution against both the seller and agent may result. A person who knowingly buys a lot that was not legally created will not be able to get building and other permits for the property.

Property owners may offer lots for sale before short subdivision approval. Lots may be advertised, and earnest money may even be paid, but it is against State Law to transfer Title until the short subdivision is recorded. Sale offers should be worded carefully to comply with State Law.

If the purchaser of an illegally created lot is an innocent purchaser, the lot generally will be treated in the same way as a legally subdivided lot. An innocent purchaser is someone who purchases real property for value, has received no notice that the lot was illegally created, and has not previously been granted Innocent Purchaser Status by King County.

To apply for Innocent Purchaser Status, the buyer must file a notarized affidavit with King County Permitting attesting to the above. Please contact Permitting at 206-296-6600 for more information.

## **Short Subdivisions**

If an innocent purchaser buys an illegally created lot, it will be treated in one of the following ways:

- If it meets current zoning requirements for access, lot area, and lot width, it will be treated as if it were a legally subdivided lot.
- If it does not meet current zoning requirements, but did meet the zoning requirements in effect when it was created, the lot will be treated as if it were a legally created substandard lot.
- If it meets neither current zoning requirements nor those in effect when it was created, the innocent purchaser, who cannot be issued a building permit, may sell the lot, but the lot is not eligible for a building permit.

## **Additional information**

If applicants still need more information after reviewing this bulletin, forms and additional information are available via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits), by contacting the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600, or by visiting the Permitting Services Center in Snoqualmie, WA.

## **Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful**

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 2	Legal Lot
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 18A	Zoning Code: Permitted Use Tables
Bulletin 21	Critical Areas Review
Bulletin 26	SEPA Process
Bulletin 29	Drainage Review
Bulletin 34A	Road Variances
Bulletin 34B	Surface Water Design Manual Variances or Adjustments
Bulletin 40	Financial Guarantees

These and other Permitting bulletins are available via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

206-296-6600	Permitting Services Center
206-296-6659	Financial Guarantees Management Unit



## Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting)

35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210 • Snoqualmie, Washington 98065-9266 • 206-296-6600 • TTY Relay: 711

# Agricultural Buildings

Permitting Customer  
Information Bulletin #

# 58

### • FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

*Visit the Permitting Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County Permitting has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

## Agricultural Buildings – Permit Application Requirements and Processing

This bulletin serves as a guide to help customers living in the rural areas of unincorporated King County understand the requirements for obtaining permits to construct agricultural buildings. A variety of programs and resources are available to assist you during this process.

The Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting) has formed an Agricultural Review Team that has been working in conjunction with the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Office of Business Relations and Economic Development, Seattle-King County Department of Public Health and other interested agencies, to develop strategies to assist with the unique challenges that agricultural zones present. Efforts are being made to streamline the review and approval process for structures for agricultural uses while continuing to adhere to the requirements of code compliance for the safety and welfare of King County citizens.

### What is an agricultural building?

Agricultural buildings are structures designed for farming and agricultural practices, including but not limited to growing and harvesting crops and raising livestock and small animals. Specific examples of agricultural buildings include

- barns
- greenhouses
- storage buildings for farm equipment, animal supplies or feed
- storage buildings for equipment used to implement farming and/or agricultural practices
- storage buildings for crops grown and raised on site (cold storage)
- horticultural nursery. (Not including any sales area.)

The International Building Code (IBC) classifies these structures as Group “U” occupancy (Utility and Miscellaneous) and further states that these structures “shall not be a place of human

**Agricultural Buildings**

habitation or a place of employment where agricultural products are processed, treated or packaged, nor shall it be a place used by the public.”

Please keep in mind that if the use of the agricultural structure includes the public (such as public riding arenas); the permit may need to be reviewed under more stringent commercial building code standards. See Permitting Customer Information Bulletin #8, [Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits](#), for more details on the permit process that would be required for these types of structures.

**Does my project require a permit?**

Whether or not, all accessory structures 200 square feet or less in floor area do not require a building permit; all other residential structures and any used for commercial purposes require a permit. An accessory agricultural structure without a primary residential use may be permitted provided; an agricultural use such as farming or farm animal is established on the property and provided an affidavit of use is signed by the applicant. The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) does, however, exclude “temporary growing structures used solely for the commercial production of horticultural plants including ornamental plants, flowers, vegetables, and fruits” that are constructed using a flexible membrane material from requiring a building permit per the State Building Code (for details, see RCW 19.27.065 at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.27.065>). A separate clearing/grading permit may be required in this instance.

**Can I build a pole building?**

Pole buildings often are constructed for agricultural use. Pole buildings are structurally similar to post and beam construction, using repetitive posts in isolated footings. Roof and wall framing systems support the required snow, wind and seismic loads. Pole buildings can be more economical to build and may often be constructed in less time.

However, care must be taken in their design since locations for such buildings are often in areas susceptible to high wind and snow loads. Verifying soil capacities are also critical in the design of embedded columns and footings. Since there is no prescriptive provision for this method of construction in the IBC, King County requires all pole buildings be designed by a professional engineer in accordance with the IBC. Stamped plans and structural calculations from the engineer are required at the time of building permit submittal.

As noted in this bulletin, agricultural buildings can take advantage of reduction in some structural design requirements. Your engineer can help to identify the appropriate allowances. Please contact the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600, if you have any specific questions regarding pole building construction.

**Is a farm management plan required?**

The King Conservation District (KCD – [www.kingcd.org](http://www.kingcd.org)) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS – [www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov)) partner to provide technical and financial assistance to livestock and crop managers with regard to natural resource management. Working with KCD or NRCS, “cooperators” (owners and/or farm managers who enter into the farm plan process) develop farm management plans to meet their land stewardship goals for each farm as a whole. A farm plan may offer Permitting customers a number of additional benefits related to critical areas regulations and permit costs. Such a plan may help property owners determine the best site for the agricultural building, reduce livestock setbacks from streams, and help locate access roads within wetland buffer areas if necessary. In addition, certain agricultural activities may be exempt from the need to obtain clearing and grading permits when undertaken in accordance with an approved farm plan. You may be authorized to use KCD registered plans for manure bins, with an approved farm plan.

## Agricultural Buildings

### What if my farm is located in a flood hazard area?

Thorough research is required to determine what development can occur on property located in flood hazard areas. Typically, new residences are prohibited in the FEMA floodway. However, existing, lawfully established agricultural structures located within the FEMA floodway can be repaired, replaced, remodeled or altered, even if the work qualifies as a substantial improvement under King County Code (KCC) 21A.06.1270, provided the work can meet the applicable development standards. Please refer to KCC 21A.24.230 to 21A.24.270 to determine if your proposed project meets the necessary requirements. For additional assistance, see Permitting bulletin 38, "[Flood Insurance and FEMA](#)," or contact the Permitting Flood Inquiry assistance line at 206-296-6606.

### How much will my permit cost?

Please refer to the current King County Fee Ordinance for applicable charges. Depending upon the size of the building, proposed use and site-specific conditions, permit fees can vary widely. Some agricultural structures may be qualified for reduced fees.

Concerns and questions about agricultural buildings and the permitting process for such structures should be directed to Permitting staff at 206-296-6600.

## Applying for Your Agricultural Building Permit

Before applying for your agricultural building permit, you must complete the pre-submittal services (PSS) offered by KC Department of Permitting daily from 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM except Wednesday which is 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. PSS process provides applicants with specific feedback and identifies technical red flags before permit submittal. Staff specially trained in the review of agricultural structures on agriculture (A) and rural area (RA) zones can meet with you to discuss your individual needs. Depending on the complexity of the project, a formal pre-application meeting may be recommended prior to permit submittal.

Advance preparation and planning will greatly improve your permitting experience. Bring as much of the information needed to the PSS meeting as listed below.

To get a permit for an agricultural building, customers must provide the following information. All forms are available from the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits), by calling Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600, or at the Permitting Services Center in Snoqualmie, WA. A map and directions also are on the Permitting Web site.

1. Affidavit for Application form (which includes your property tax account number and legal description of the property)
2. Proof of legal lot (if this is the first structure on the site; see permitting bulletin 2, *Legal Lot*)
3. Site plan on Permitting template (see Site Plan Requirements and Example handout)
4. Construction drawings (two copies)
5. Structural calculations (if the plans do not meet prescriptive design requirements)
6. Information on heating systems, fireplaces and stoves (if applicable)
7. Health Department approval (required by issuance for properties serviced by on-site septic systems)
8. Certificate of Water Availability (if served by public water and lot is less than 35,000 square feet)
9. Fees for reviews completed before permit approval (or Agricultural Production District deposit if applicable)
10. Contractor's registration number OR Owner Affidavit (required before issuance)
11. A copy of farm plan if prepared. (Optional.)

## Agricultural Buildings

12. SEPA checklist (15 copies) if structure is 30,000 sq ft or more (except feedlots) in an agricultural zone; 15,000 sq ft or more in all other zones
13. Miscellaneous information necessary to review the application. This may include but is not limited to wetland or geotechnical reports.

**Note:** Electrical permits are issued by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries and plumbing permits are issued by the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health. See the “How to request an inspection” section on page six for more information.

### **CAUTION: Mail order plans**

Mail order plans may appear to simplify the permitting process for you, but these plans usually meet the local codes and ordinances in the jurisdiction where they were developed. Additionally, the drawings may not meet KCC requirements and local building practices. Property owners should review the mail order plans with someone familiar with King County Permitting requirements to ensure that these plans are in compliance or to prepare any modifications before application submittal. Customers may find it necessary to seek professional assistance when using mail order plans.

### **Special setback requirements for agricultural buildings**

- The minimum interior property line setback for any building used to house, confine, or feed swine shall be 90 feet.
- The minimum interior property line setback for any building used to house, confine, or feed any other livestock shall be 25 feet.
- The minimum interior property line setback for any manure storage shall be 35 feet.
- The minimum interior property line setback for any other type of building is established by KCC sections 21A.12.030 and 21A.12.040.
- More restrictive setbacks may apply for structures on sites impacted by critical areas.

## **Application Review and Approval Process**

### **Technical assistance and pre-application meetings**

After reviewing this bulletin, associated informational forms and instructions, and King County and Permitting Web site resources, customers may have additional questions about a proposed design or the permit process for agricultural buildings. Permitting offers several methods of assistance before permit submittal. These resources include walk-in customer service hours:

- General Information; Records Center; Over the counter Permits; Pre-submittal Services 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. **(Closed Wednesday.)** See the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).
- Cashier and Reception Desk 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. **(Closed Wednesday.)**

### **Health Department review**

Approval by the Seattle-King County Department of Health (SKCHD) is required for ANY improvements proposed on property serviced by an On-site Sewage System (OSS) to ensure the system is adequate and will not be impacted by the new construction (whether or not the proposed structure has plumbing). Customers must apply directly to SKCDH and a copy of this approval is required prior to building permit issuance. The King County Health application form is available on the permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

## **Agricultural Buildings**

### **Addressing**

If this is the first structure on the site, a street address must be assigned to the property. This will become the official site address, and it is critical for fire, life, and safety services not to use any other address from any other document. Contact the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600 for address information.

### **Fire flow and fire sprinklers**

After permit intake, a site plan and particulars about the proposed building will be routed to the King County Fire Marshal Office for review. KCC 17.08.030 provides an exemption for agricultural buildings from fire flow AND from fire hydrant requirements. This is only for structures classified as Group U occupancy under the International Building Code and that conform to the definition of an agricultural building in Appendix C of the IBC. (See page one of this bulletin for a listing of agricultural buildings that are classified as Group U.) Furthermore, these structures must be located outside an Urban Growth Area as designated in the King County Comprehensive Plan. **If the structure does not meet these requirements, a sprinkler system may be required.**

In addition, fire department access roads are required to meet current King County Roads Standards. This includes driveways on private property and requires a minimum width of 20 feet. You may discuss deviations from this requirement by contacting the King County Fire Marshal Office at 206-296-6600.

### **Site visit / reviews**

Site reviews are determined upon completion of a site visit by Permitting review staff. Site reviews may include but are not limited to drainage, access, wetland, geotechnical, streams, FEMA flood hazard, clearing/grading, shorelines, SEPA, and wildlife protection. Based upon the site visit, the application may be approved without further requirements, conditionally approved with site requirements, or put on hold pending the submittal of additional information. Written requests for such information will be sent directly to the applicant. Site reviews may involve the review and approval of delineations, studies and other technical analysis by licensed professionals and will be reviewed for compliance with rural stewardship, forest, or farm management plans as applicable.

### **Building plans review**

A Permitting Plans Examiner reviews all drawings to ensure they meet current building, mechanical, and energy codes (as applicable). The examiner may ask for technical information or supplementary drawings in an effort to complete the review. If required, a correction sheet may be attached to the approved plans. There are some special allowances for agricultural buildings classified as Group U occupancy in the Building Code as listed on page one. These include reduced structural load, reduced exiting requirements, and increases in allowed building areas. Please consult with your design professional for more information about these standards.

### **Permit approval and issuance**

Applicants will be notified via US Mail when the permit has been approved. The notification will include information about any outstanding fees due and all other requirements that may need to be met before permit issuance. Once all of the requirements have been satisfied, your permit and a copy of the approved plans may be picked up at the department of Permitting in Snoqualmie.

## **Construction and Inspection Process**

**All work must be in accordance with the approved plans and permit conditions.**

**Agricultural Buildings****General construction inspection requirements and information**

Permitting staff provides building and site inspections for agricultural buildings. Inspectors are available from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and can be reached at 206-296-6630. Permitting staff can be reached during normal business hours to answer building inspection questions. It is the responsibility of the applicant and contractor to make inspection requests at the appropriate time and have the approved plans and official permit card on the job site, including final inspection approval.

**Preconstruction conference**

Some projects have significant site and building concerns such as wetlands, shorelines, floodplain, geotechnical, steep-slope, erosion hazard, drainage, excavation near a property line, etc. A preconstruction conference may be required to address these issues with Permitting staff before the start of construction. A notice and condition will be added to your permit package if a preconstruction conference is required. Allow up to two working days after a preconstruction meeting is requested for the meeting to be scheduled.

**How to request an inspection**

**Building inspections.** Inspection requests can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days per week either online at <http://inspections.kingcounty.gov> or by calling the automated 24-hour inspection request line at 1-888-5-INSPECT (1-888-546-7728). Inspection requests received before 3:00 p.m. on a workday will be scheduled for inspection the following workday.

**Plumbing inspections.** The King County Health Department performs inspections for plumbing, septic systems, and wells. Contact 206-296-4932 to request these inspections.

**Electrical inspections.** The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Electrical Division perform electrical inspections for King County permitted projects. Contact the Bellevue Office at 425-990-1400 or the Tukwila Office at 206-835-1111 to request an electrical inspection.

**Site inspections**

- **Erosion and sedimentation control (ESC).** All ESC measures must be installed when the site is cleared. ESC measures are identified in a 'Notice to Customers' form which is included in your permit package. This notice is also available at the Permitting Services Center and can be accessed via the permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits). ESC measures must be maintained throughout construction. ESC measures are verified at the first foundation inspection and monitored during all subsequent inspections.
- **Drainage / critical areas inspections.** The King County Surface Water Design Manual (KCSWD) may require the installation of drainage facilities such as infiltration, dispersal, or routing of surface water to an approved facility as appropriate for the size of the structure. Inspections for drainage facilities may be combined with other inspections or may require a separate inspection. In addition, setbacks from critical areas, buffering, and mitigation approvals will also be inspected in the field.

## Agricultural Buildings

### Building inspections

- **Foundation inspection.** The foundation inspection occurs after the building pad excavation has taken place. For concrete foundations, forms and reinforcing steel must be in place. Inspection approval is required before placement of concrete. For pole structures, the holes must be excavated and cleaned out. For pile foundations, special inspection by an approved agency is usually required. At the foundation inspection, inspectors check building placement per the approved plan, setbacks (from property lines, easements, critical areas and buffers, etc.), soil conditions, ESC, critical areas requirements, forms and reinforcing steel, hold downs and special frame anchors, and any other requirements specified in the approved plans and permit conditions.
- **Shear wall inspection.** Shear wall inspections are necessary when a specific structural design for lateral restraint panels is required in the approved plans. The inspection occurs when the framing, hold downs, sheathing, attachment and strapping are in place in accordance with the approved plans. Elements of shear panels should be left exposed until inspected and approved.
- **Framing cover inspection.** The framing cover inspection occurs when construction of the building framing is complete, plumbing and electrical rough-in is completed and approved, and the windows and roofing have been installed (as applicable). Insulation should not be installed at the first framing inspection. Inspectors verify that structural, ordinance and life safety requirements visible at the framing inspection are in conformance with the approved plans. A required fire sprinkler system requires rough-in approval before framing cover approval. A required FEMA Flood Elevation Certificate must be received and approved for elevation requirements before framing cover approval.
- **Energy inspections (if applicable).** Elements of energy inspections include foundation wall and slab insulation; infiltration barriers; wall, ceiling and under floor insulation; windows; gasketing; and whole house fans. Inspectors provide spot check inspections of these elements at the appropriate inspection for conformance with the approved plans and energy code.
- **Revision resubmittals.** Construction of the building and site improvements are required to be completed in accordance with the approved permit, plans and conditions. If changes are required to the design following permit issuance, the modifications need to be approved separately by Permitting. Minor field changes should be discussed with your building inspector to determine how and if the change is allowed. Major modifications will typically require submitting a revision permit to Permit Center. A revision permit number is assigned and the revisions are routed to the appropriate review disciplines. Ordinarily, an intake appointment is required for the submittal of a revision.
- **Permit extension.** A King County building permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance. A permit extension is required if all required work is not completed by permit expiration. Permit applicants are notified of the pending permit expiration 30 days before expiration if the permit has not received final inspection approval by that time. Permit extensions will be granted in accordance with KCC upon payment of the appropriate fees. Contact the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6630 for more information about the permit extension process.

## **Agricultural Buildings**

- **Final inspection.** The final inspection occurs when all work required by the approved plans and permit conditions and applicable codes has been completed. Building elements inspected at the final inspection include the occupancy separation, egress requirements (including stairs, handrails, guardrails, ramps, porches, doors and landings), etc. Site elements inspected at the final inspection include impervious surface, drainage facilities, final site stabilization and completion of all sensitive/critical areas requirements and mitigation including final plumbing inspection approval (if applicable). A required fire sprinkler system or fire access mitigation must have final inspection approval. A required FEMA Flood Elevation Certificate must have final approval by the Department of Permitting.

### **Other bulletins that may be helpful**

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 2	Legal Lot
Bulletin 6	Working with Contractors
Bulletin 8	Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits
Bulletin 10	Residential Building On or Near Waterfront
Bulletin 11	Street Addresses and Road Names
Bulletin 13	Fire System Permits
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 39	Private Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems
Bulletin 53	Project Management for Building Permits

Permitting bulletins are available via the department Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

### **Other telephone numbers that may be helpful**

206-296-6600	Permitting Services Center
206-296-6797	Permitting Services Center appointment desk
206-296-6628	Permitting Services Center Address information line
206-296-6696	Permitting Records Center

**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)



King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.





## Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting)

35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210 • Snoqualmie, Washington 98065-9266 • 206-296-6600 • TTY Relay: 711

# Residential Building Permit Process

Permitting Customer  
Information Bulletin #

# 12

### • FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

*Visit the Permitting Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County Permitting has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

This bulletin describes the process for obtaining a Residential Building Permit and Building Inspections from the King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting). The general process is illustrated in the flow chart on the following page, and the steps are outlined in more detail throughout this bulletin. The review process may require a slight variation in these steps, depending on project scope and site conditions. Customers are encouraged to contract with an engineer or builder who is familiar with King County requirements. For additional information, see Bulletin 6, *Working with Contractors*.

Permitting residential permits do not include plumbing, gas piping or electrical. Permits for plumbing and gas piping are issued by the Environmental Health Division of Public Health--Seattle & King County (206-296-4932). Electrical permits are issued by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Please contact the following locations for more information:

- North of Renton-Maple Valley Highway - Bellevue Office, Electrical Permits, (425-990-1400);
- South of Renton-Maple Valley Highway - Tukwila Office, Electrical Permits, (206-835-1198).

Before submitting an application, please note this recommendation:

- **Review Bulletin 9, *Obtaining a Residential Building Permit: Submittal Requirements*.** Look through the permit requirements listed in this bulletin and obtain the necessary permit application forms from the Permitting Services Center. Forms are also available via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits) and by calling Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600.

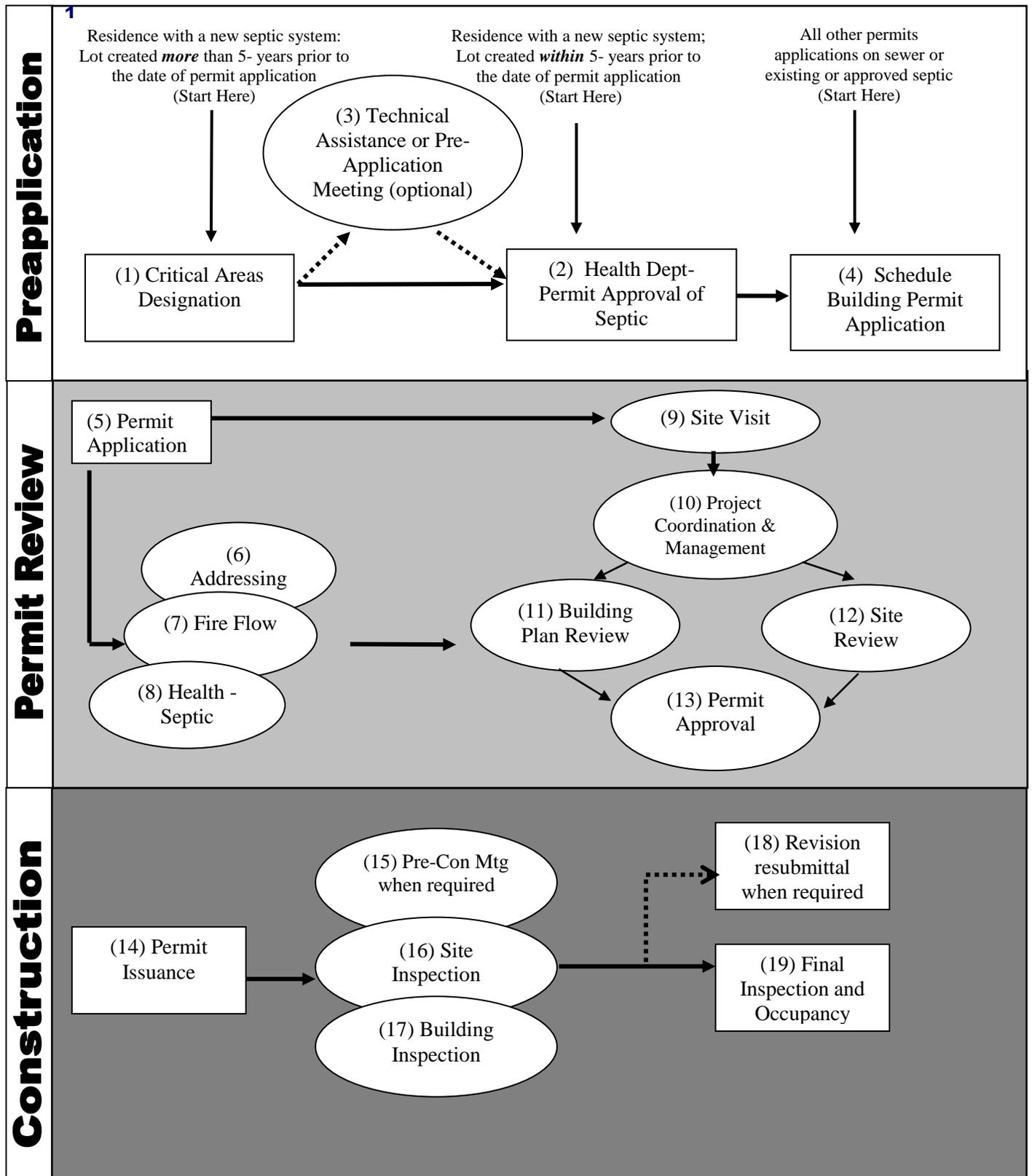


**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

This flow chart represents a typical residential building permit process for a new house. The numbers in each of the boxes correspond to detailed information provided in this bulletin.



## Critical Areas Designation (CAD)

Permitting has established a procedure by which a property owner may request a *Designation of Critical Areas*. A CAD is required if the proposed design includes a new on-site sewage system (septic). This allows Permitting to designate the presence, type, and location of critical areas on a particular property. *Critical Area Designations* are available for streams, wetlands, coal mine hazard areas, landslide hazard areas, and steep slopes. Once completed, the *Designation of Critical Areas* is valid for two years and used by Permitting during review of permit applications on the property.

If a customer applies for a development permit after the two-year period has elapsed, Permitting will still refer to the original Critical Areas Designation Report. However, a field visit will be required to ensure that site conditions have not changed. If site conditions have changed, observations made during the subsequent field visit will take precedence over those described in the Critical Areas Designation.

For additional information about the Critical Area Designation process, please refer to Permitting Bulletin #21.

## 2. Health Department – Septic System Approval

For lots not served by sewers, an approved septic design from King County Health Department is required prior to submitting a building permit application. Health Department staff also review applications for all remodels, additions, and detached structures on any land served by a septic system, ensuring that the system is adequate and will not be impacted by the new construction. Health Department review for additions, remodels and accessory buildings do not require pre-approval from King County Health. Please review the King County Health application forms available on the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits) for more information.

## 3. Technical Assistance and Pre-application Meetings

After reviewing the applicable bulletins, information forms/instructions and Web site resources, customers may have additional questions regarding a proposed design and the permit process. Permitting offers several methods of assistance prior to permit submittal. These resources include:

- General assistance by the Permitting Services Center intake staff for walk-in customers provided throughout the day.
- Technical assistance from the various Permitting review disciplines as a walk-in service at the Permitting office in Snoqualmie. Please check the Web for available times or call the general information number at 206-296-6600.
- Pre-application consultation meetings for more in-depth services and complex projects. Please see the pre-application information form on the Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

## 4. Permit Application Submittal Appointment

As previously mentioned, this is when the permit customer formally submits the permit application. Customers will meet with Permitting Services staff who will review the application package. Please review Bulletin #9 for minimum permit application requirements. A plan reviewer may also be consulted to determine if the proposal is adequate to accept for review. Please be prepared to address any questions regarding the



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

proposed project. Your preliminary permit fees will be calculated and the minimum permit application fee is due at this time.

Either during or following your appointment, the staff will complete the initial review of your application and determine if it is “complete”. If the application is deemed complete, it will be vested and reviewed to the codes in effect at the time of application. If the application is incomplete, the customer is notified of the missing information. Permitting staff will also identify any additional information required prior to processing or approving and determining the appropriate routing system.

Applications are accepted by appointment only and all application materials must be complete at the time of submittal. Please see step 4, Appointment Scheduling.

## 5. Addressing

During the application process, the permit site will be assigned a street address. This will be the official site address. Please do not use any other address from any other document. This is critical for fire, life, and safety services. If it appears that an error was made, contact the King County Permitting Address Information Line at 206-296-6628.

## 6. Fire Flow

After permit intake, a site plan and particulars about the proposed building site will be sent to the Fire Marshal’s Office at the King County Permitting for review. Specifically, water availability and fire road access will be reviewed to determine whether the site is adequately served, or if a fire sprinkler system is required.

## 7. Health Department

This review is required for remodels, additions, decks and accessory buildings when the site is served by a septic system.

- a. For new houses on septic, pre-approval is required (see item #1).
- b. For sites served by sewers and certain minor remodels, this review is not required.

## 8. Site Visit

Permitting staff with expertise in drainage, engineering and critical areas perform a site visit of the subject property to determine if additional site reviews are required. Based on this site visit, the application may be approved without further site requirements, conditionally approved with site requirements or, put on hold pending the submittal of additional information. If additional information is required, formal correspondence will be sent to the applicant.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

## 9. Project Coordination & Management

An evaluation of the site conditions and findings will be made following the site visit. Staff will determine which site reviews will be required and the appropriate fee for those reviews. If it is determined that your project does not require project management, you will receive a written notification regarding any additional reviews that will be required and the associated fees. A determination is also made if the project is considered complex and a project manager should be assigned to your permit. The project manager monitors permit application progress and fees to ensure accountability.

## 10. Building Plans Review

A Plans Examination Engineer reviews all drawings to ensure that they meet current building, mechanical, and energy codes. The examiner may ask for technical information or supplementary drawings in an effort to complete the review. If required, the Engineer will attach a correction sheet to the approved plans.

## 11. Site Review

Site reviews are determined upon completion of the site visit. Site reviews may include, but are not limited to, drainage, access, wetland, geotechnical, streams, FEMA flood hazard and wildlife protection. Site reviews may involve the review and approval of delineations, studies and other technical analysis by licensed professionals.

## 12. Critical Areas Notice on Title

If critical areas exist on the site, landowners will be required to file a notice on the title to their property with the King County Records and Licensing Services Division. The Critical Areas Notice on Title states that critical areas and their associated buffers are present on the property, that the King County Critical Areas Ordinance Regulations apply, and that these regulations may limit development actions in the critical areas and in the buffers. Landowners must provide copies of the recorded documents to King County Permitting before any development permits can be issued for the site. A small fee may be required for recording these documents.

## 13. Permit Approval and Issuance

Applicants will be notified via US mail when the permit has been approved. The notification will include information regarding any outstanding fees due and all other requirements that may need to be met prior to issuance. Once all of the requirements have been met, your permit may be picked up at Permitting Services Center in addition to the approved plans.

## 14. General Inspection Requirements and Information

The Department of Permitting provides building and site inspections for single-family residential projects. Inspectors are available from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and can be reached at 206-296-6630. Staff can be reached during normal business hours to answer building inspection questions. It is the responsibility of the applicant and contractor to make inspection requests at the appropriate time and have the approved plans and official permit card on the job site and all required inspection approvals.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

**Inspection Requests:**

**Building Inspections:** For building and new construction fire inspections in unincorporated King County, requests can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days per week either online at <http://inspections.kingcounty.gov> or by calling the automated 24-hour inspection request line at 1-888-546-7728. Inspection requests received before 3:00 p.m. on a workday will be scheduled for inspection the following workday. Go to inspections on the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits) for more information.

- **Plumbing Inspections:** The King County Health Department performs inspections for plumbing, septic system and wells. Contact 206-206-4932 to request these inspections.
- **Electrical Inspections:** The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Electrical Division perform electrical inspections for King County permitted projects. Contact the Bellevue L&I Office at 425-990-1400 or the Tukwila Office at 206-835-1111 to request an electrical inspection.

**All work must be in accordance with the approved plans and permit conditions.**

**15. Pre-Construction Conference**

Some projects have significant site and building concerns such as wetlands, shorelines, floodplain, geotechnical, steep-slope, erosion hazard, drainage, excavation, near a property line, etc. A pre-construction conference may be required to address these issues with Permitting staff prior to the start of construction. A notice and condition will be added to your permit package if a pre-construction conference is required. Please allow up to two working days after a pre-construction meeting is requested for the meeting to be scheduled.

**16. Site Inspections**

**Erosion and Sedimentation Control (ESC):** All ESC measures must be installed when the site is cleared. ESC measures are identified in a 'Notice to Customers' form which is included your permit package. This notice is also available at the Permitting Services Center and can be accessed via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits). ESC measures must be maintained throughout construction. ESC measures are verified at the first foundation inspection and monitored during all subsequent inspections.

**Drainage Inspections:** The King County Surface Water Design Manual (KCSWD) required that drainage facilities for single family residential construction be installed in accordance with small project best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs include infiltration, dispersal and routing surface water to an approved facility. Inspections for drainage facilities may be combined with other inspections or require a separate inspection.

**17. Building Inspections**

**Foundation Inspection:** The foundation inspection occurs after the building pad excavation has taken place. For concrete foundations, forms and reinforcing steel must be in place. Inspection approval is required prior to placement of concrete. For pole structures, the holes must be excavated and cleaned out. For pile foundations, special inspection by an approved agency is usually required. At the foundation inspection, inspectors check building placement per the approved plan, setbacks (from property lines, easements, critical areas and buffers, etc.), soil conditions, ESC, critical areas



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

requirements, forms and reinforcing steel, hold downs and special frame anchors, and any other requirements specified in the approved plans and permit conditions.

**Underfloor Inspection:** The underfloor inspection is intended for structures with crawlspaces. This inspection occurs when all girder beams, posts, joists, piers and hold-downs are installed and prior to floor sheathing attachment. Inspectors check the size and location of floor framing and lateral resistance elements for conformance with the approved plan.

**Shear Wall Inspection:** Shear wall inspections are necessary when a specific structural design for lateral restraint panels is required in the approved plans. The inspection occurs when the framing, hold downs, sheathing, attachment and strapping are in place in accordance with the approved plans. Elements of shear panels should be left exposed until inspected and approved.

**Framing Cover Inspection:** The framing cover inspection occurs when construction of the building framing is complete, plumbing rough-in is completed and approved, electrical rough-in is completed and approved, and the windows and roofing have been installed. Insulation should not be installed at the first framing inspection. Inspectors verify that structural, ordinance and life safety requirements visible at the framing inspection are in conformance with the approved plans. A required fire sprinkler system requires rough-in approval prior to framing cover approval. A required FEMA Flood Elevation Certificate must be received and approved for elevation requirements prior to framing cover approval.

**Energy Inspections:** Elements of energy inspections include foundation wall and slab insulation; infiltration barriers; wall, ceiling and under floor insulation; windows; gasketing; and whole house fans. Inspectors provide spot check inspections of these elements at the appropriate inspection for conformance with the approved plans and energy code.

## 18. Revision Resubmittal

Construction of the building and site improvement are required to be completed in accordance with the approved permit, plans and conditions. If changes are required to the design following permit issuance, the modifications need to be approved separately by Permitting. Minor field changes should be discussed with your building inspector to determine how and if the change is allowed. Major modifications will typically require submitting a revision permit to the Permitting Services Center. A revision permit number is assigned and the revisions are routed to the appropriate review disciplines.

## 19. Final Inspection and Occupancy

**Final Inspection:** The final inspection occurs when all work required by the approved plans and permit conditions and applicable codes has been completed. Building elements inspected at the final inspection include the occupancy separation between the house and attached garage, egress requirements, (including stairs, handrails, guardrails, ramps, porches, doors and landings), smoke alarms, decks, etc. Site elements inspected at the final inspection include impervious surface, drainage facilities, final site stabilization and completion of all sensitive/critical areas requirements and mitigation including Final plumbing inspection approval and approval of septic system as-builts are required. A required fire sprinkler system or fire access mitigation must have final inspection approval. A required FEMA Flood Elevation Certificate must have final approval by Permitting.



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

**Temporary Occupancy:** Temporary occupancy may be approved by the building inspector if there are minor corrections noted at the final inspection. Temporary occupancy will not be approved for a building or portions of a building if there are outstanding life safety requirements that have not been mitigated in an approved manner. Temporary occupancy also will not be approved if there are outstanding site issues that create an environmental hazard, a drainage or erosion hazard and/or a traffic hazard. All outstanding fees due to Permitting must be paid prior to temporary occupancy approval.

**Final Certificate of Occupancy (CO):** A Final CO will be issued upon completion of all requirements of the approved plans, permit conditions, approval of related ancillary permits and approval from other applicable agencies. All outstanding fees due to Permitting must be paid prior to issuance of the Final CO. For single-family residential projects, the inspection record card at the job site with the final inspection block signed by the building inspector.

**Permit Extension:** A King County building permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance. A permit extension is required if all required work is not completed by permit expiration. Permit applicants are notified of the pending permit expiration 30 days prior to the expiration if the permit has not received final inspection approval by that time. Permit extensions will be granted in accordance with King County Code upon payment of the appropriate fees. Contact Permitting Services Center staff at 206-296-6630 for additional information about the permit extension process.

Note: The most important thing customers can do to ensure that applications are reviewed without delay is to submit complete and accurate information. Please take the time to review all applicable Customer Information Bulletins, all of which are available via the Permitting Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits), by calling the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600, and in the Permitting Services Center located at 35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210, Snoqualmie, WA 98065-9266.

**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)



King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

### Other Bulletins and Telephone Numbers That May Be Helpful

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 3	Demolition Permits for Commercial and Residential Structures
Bulletin 4	Damage Repairs
Bulletin 6	Working with Contractors
Bulletin 8	Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits
Bulletin 9	Obtaining a Residential Building Permit
Bulletin 10	Residential Building On or Near Waterfront
Bulletin 11	Street Addresses and Road Names
Bulletin 13	Fire System Permits
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 23	Certified Wood Stoves
Bulletin 39	Private Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems

Permitting bulletins are available via the department Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

### Other Telephone Numbers That May Be Helpful:

206-296-6600	Permitting Customer Service / Customer Information Line
206-296-6797	Permitting Services Center Appointment Desk

**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)



King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.

