

# SMP FACT SHEET #9

## Shoreline Permits

### Types of Permits

#### Substantial Development Permit (SDP):

- "Substantial development" means any development costing or worth more than \$8,504, or any development which materially interferes with normal public use of the water or shoreline.

#### Exemptions to SDPs:

Some activities are exempt from an SDP (as authorized by state law), although other permits may still be needed. The County will issue a letter of exemption for exempt activities.

- SDP exempt uses include:
  - Maintenance and repair of existing structures.
  - New single-family homes.
  - Bulkheads typical to protect SFRs.
  - Agricultural construction and practices.
  - Docks (subject to limitations).
  - Developments with costs under than \$8,504 that don't materially interfere with normal public use of the water or shorelines of the state.

*\*Development standards still apply.*

#### Conditional Use Permit (CUP):

- CUPs are used to permit activities not specifically listed in the SMP, with conditions. They are also used by the County or WA State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to attach conditions to projects that may have more significant impacts. This is to prevent undesirable effects of the proposed use and/or to assure consistency of the project with the SMA and SMP.

#### Variance:

- Variances provide relief from specific bulk, dimensional, or performance standards in the SMP for properties with certain physical or configuration limitations. Variances must be approved by Ecology.
  - For critical areas in shoreline jurisdiction, uses that required a Reasonable Use Exception (RUE) now require a Variance.



## Shoreline Master Program (SMP)

**\*NOT YET ADOPTED - OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.**

## ASK STAFF

Thurston County's SMP covers most shoreline building projects.

**Contact Us** about your site and which permits may still be required.

## READ THE CODE

**Title 19**  
**TC Current Shoreline Codes**

## FIND IT ONLINE

**Shoreline Master Program** Webpage



## Natural Vegetation & Maintenance

- No permits are required for maintaining existing yards and landscaping.
- **Building a trail?** A variance may be needed if the trail exceeds the limits authorized within the SMP.
- **Vegetation clearing?** NOT permitted in the buffer zone. Limitations apply. May thin vegetation for view purposes, subject to standards. Limb thinning in the Natural SED requires approval by the County.

## Shoreline Permitting & Development

- **New Single-Family Residence:** A variance may be needed if the SFR project cannot meet certain buffer or other dimensional requirements. A CUP would be required within the Natural environmental designation.
- **Docks:** Docks require an SDP unless they meet exemption criteria. The draft SMP refers to the state's Hydraulic Project Approval standards for specific requirements for docks.
- **Bulkheads:** Bulkheads are generally ONLY permitted for protecting existing structures, and ONLY when a bulkhead is the necessary remedy. New homes that include bulkheads are generally not permitted.

## Who Reviews Permits?

- Depending on the type of permit(s), it may be approved by either staff or the Hearings Examiner.
- Permitting standards will continue to be reviewed as the SMP update moves forward.
- Regardless of who approves permits at the County level, all CUPs and variances require Ecology approval before they can take effect.

## Why Shoreline Permits?

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) requires that certain development activities on the shoreline go through a permitting process. Some permits can be issued by the County and others must also be approved by Ecology.

- The draft SMP describes when a permit is required for which type of activity, and the review process that must be followed.
- Details on permits themselves are in Chapter 19.500. Application requirements, development standards, and rules for specific activities for each shoreline environment designation (SED) are found in Chapters 19.400 and 19.600.
- Critical areas within shoreline jurisdiction are protected by the SMP. CAO development standards still apply to these areas but permitting is now conducted solely by the SMP.

*\*Examples in this Fact Sheet are intended to provide general information. Development standards apply. Permit requirements vary by shoreline environment designation. Other local, state, and federal approvals may also apply.*