



SHORELINE MANAGEMENT



Why Shoreline Regulations?

In the early 1970s, several large developments dramatically impacted public use on Washington shorelines, which led to increased interest in protecting these areas. Public concern with shoreline development translated to legislative action, and the Shoreline Management Act was overwhelmingly passed by citizen initiative in 1972.



Shoreline Management

The Kitsap County [Shoreline Master Program](#) (SMP), Kitsap County Code (KCC) Title 22, is the guiding document that implements the State Shoreline Management Act at the local level. The SMP applies the policies and goals of the state law to Kitsap County. Because the Washington State Department of Ecology adopts the Kitsap County Shoreline Master Program, it has the authority of state law.

This program works with other chapters of the [Kitsap County Code](#) to protect and preserve saltwater and freshwater shorelines throughout the county by managing natural resources and directing use and development suitable for these critical environments.

Shoreline Protection

Kitsap County includes 216 miles of marine shoreline, 54 miles of freshwater lake frontage and 22 miles of SMP-regulated stream channels. The County's shorelines provide places of cultural importance, habitat for fish and wildlife, recreational opportunities for residents of all ages, and regional economic diversity.

Shorelines play a large part in enhancing the quality of life for many of our county's residents. In order to preserve and enhance the natural systems and resources of our shorelines while allowing economic and recreational uses, development practices must be conducted with sensitivity and minimal environmental impact.

Regulated Shorelines

The SMP regulates all marine shorelines, all lakes 20 acres or larger, all streams with a mean annual flow of greater than 20 cubic feet per second, and all associated wetlands and floodways. The program also has jurisdiction over all surface water and extends landward for 200 feet from the Ordinary High Water Mark of the

shoreline. Only certain streams, shorelines, and associated wetlands are exempted from the SMP. Within these areas, all projects must be consistent with the policies and goals of the SMP.

Types of Shoreline Permits and Approvals

Permits are issued for Shoreline Substantial Development, Shoreline Conditional Use, Shoreline Administrative Conditional Use, Shoreline Variance, Shoreline Administrative Variance, and Shoreline Statement of Exemption (for minor development). Note, even if a project receives a shoreline exemption, the requirements of the SMP still apply.

See the [Shoreline Exemptions](#) brochure for more information about exempt projects.

Other Permits and Approvals Required

None of the above shoreline permits may take the place of any other required permit. A project or development may also require one or more of the following: a building permit, a land use permit, a monitoring permit for any required mitigation plan, a Site Development Activity Permit, a State Department of Ecology Water Quality Certification, a State Department of Fish and Wildlife Hydraulic Project Approval, a lease from the State Department of Natural Resources, or a federal Army Corps of Engineers permit for work in navigable waters of the United States. Additional permits and approvals not listed here may also be required.

See the [Critical Area and Shoreline Protection and Monitoring](#) brochure for more information about mitigation plans and monitoring requirements.

Kitsap County Department of Community Development

Your partner in building safe, resilient, and sustainable Kitsap County communities!

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What Should I Do Before Applying?

Before applying, landowners should reach out to Department of Community Development (DCD) staff to discuss their project. Free virtual and in-person meeting options can be scheduled [online](#). DCD Lobby Hours accommodate in-person walk-ins, and Live Chat is also available during select dates and times. See the [Contact Us](#) page for current schedules. Staff will help applicants determine whether a formal consultation meeting is necessary. Per KCC Sections [22.500.105](#) and [22.600.160](#) the following projects may require further review:

- New primary structures or additions within the standard shoreline buffer.
- Shoreline armoring.
- Piers and docks.

Additional Information Required

Most developments requiring a permit under the SMP will also require review for compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The SEPA checklist must be submitted at the same time as the shoreline permit application. SEPA will not be reviewed outside of the regular permit process.

If the application does not provide sufficient information to determine the proposal's environmental impacts, the applicant will be asked to provide additional information as required by SEPA guidelines.

See the [SEPA Review](#) brochure for more information about how the State Environmental Policy Act might affect your project.

DCD may also require applicants to provide additional information or plans to correct deficiencies in the application or to assist in evaluating the application. An application may be denied in accordance with KCC Title 21 [Land Use and Development Procedures](#) and Title 22 [Shoreline Master Program](#) if the applicant fails to supply required information or data after it has been requested in writing by the County.

Permit Application Fees

Fees are due at the time applications are submitted. They are charged in accordance with the current Kitsap County [Fee Schedule](#).