



Clearing and Grading Permits

This bulletin explains when customers must obtain a Clearing and Grading Permit and identifies the information required to submit a complete permit application.

When is a Clearing and Grading Permit necessary?

Property owners will need to obtain a Clearing and Grading Permit before doing any of the following - land clearing, filling, and/or grading activities:

1. Cumulative filling and/or excavation exceeding 100-cubic-yards
2. Filling to a depth of three feet or more in any one location
3. Excavating to a depth of five feet or more in any one location
4. Grading an area that produces more than 2,000-square-feet of new impervious surface
5. Clearing within the Urban Growth Boundary
6. Cumulative clearing of more than 7,000-square-feet on rural zoned properties. If your site already exceeds 7,000-square-feet of cleared area, any additional clearing requires a permit
7. Any clearing, filling, or excavating on: Steep Slopes, Landslide Hazard Areas, Channel Migration Hazard Zones, Wetlands, Aquatic Areas, Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, Wildlife Habitat Networks, or any other critical area as defined in King County Code (KCC) Chapter 21A.24
8. Clearing, filling, or excavating within special district overlays, (SO-220 and SO-210)
9. Class IV Forest Practice work

Apply On-Line at MyBuildingPermit.com

Select: King County | Clearing and Grading | Any Project Type | New or Modification



Failure to obtain a Clearing and Grading Permit may result in a code violation. Penalties for violations include fines, doubled permit fees, denial of development applications for up to six years, and/or prosecution.

Whether or not a permit is required, all clearing, filling, or grading must conform to KCC requirements and must have temporary erosion sedimentation control measures to protect adjacent properties. Fill materials shall conform to requirements as defined in KCC 16.82.100(4).

If you have additional questions that are not answered by the information presented in this bulletin, please contact the Department of Local Services, Permitting Division (Permitting) by email at PermitQuestions@kingcounty.gov or click the link to [submit your question online](#).

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Exceptions:

KCC 16.82.050 lists exceptions to the requirements for a Clearing and Grading Permit. Refer to the Clearing and Grading Permit Exception Table in KCC 16.82 and the Allowed Alterations of Critical Areas table in KCC 21A.24 to determine if an activity requires a permit. **If an activity is exempt, it must be exempt on both tables and the work must be completed in compliance with applicable development standards.**

The following are examples of exemptions from Clearing and Grading Permits. See KCC 16.82.050 for the full list:

1. Maintenance of lawns, landscaping and gardening for personal use;
2. Maintenance of public and private roadways (with some limitations adjacent to aquatic areas and wetlands);
3. Construction and maintenance of farm field access roads, subject to an approved farm management plan;
4. Certain agricultural practices including tilling, planting and seeding, and related activities;
5. Construction and maintenance of manure storage facilities, and maintenance of ponds and drainage facilities subject to an approved farm management plan;
6. Clearing or grading that has been approved by Permitting as a part of another development proposal. A separate permit shall be required for each site unless the activity is approved to occur on multiple sites under a programmatic permit. However, fill made up of materials from the excavation, or any excavation having an unsupported height of more than five feet after completion of the structure, is not included in this exception;
7. Cemetery graves, if activity is completed in accordance with standards;
8. When clearing and grading is performed as Class II, III, or IV Special Forest Practice in an F (Forestry) or RA Zone and is conducted in accordance with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 76.09 and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 222;
9. Clearing of invasive vegetation identified on the [county's noxious weed list](#) and limited to cumulatively less than seven thousand square feet annually or conducted in accordance with an approved farm management plan, forest management plan or rural stewardship plan.

When is a *mandatory* pre-application meeting required for a Clearing and Grading permit?

The following are examples of a mandatory pre-application meeting required for a Clearing and Grading Permit. See KCC 20.20.020 for the full list:

1. Clearing and Grading Permit for which the department has issued a determination of significance
2. Extractive operations under KCC 21A.22.050
3. Waivers from Forest Practices Moratorium under KCC 16.82.140
4. Conversion Option Harvest Plans

The pre-application meeting will provide applicants with specific feedback that will help the applicant prepare a more complete and accurate application package. A complete and accurate submittal

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should make the permit review process simpler and faster. If you would like to request a waiver from a mandatory pre-application meeting, please submit a [Pre-Application Waiver Request Form](#).

Voluntary pre-application meetings for Clearing and Grading Permits subject to SEPA are highly recommended. If your project requires a mandatory pre-application meeting or you would like to request a voluntary pre-application meeting, please carefully review the [Pre-Application Meeting Request](#) information before submitting a request form.

Submitting a standard Clearing and Grading Permit application:

Clearing and Grading applications are available through, [MyBuildingPermit.com](#). Complete Clearing and Grading applications require:

1. A completed [Site Areas Worksheet](#);
2. Site Plan for Temporary Erosion Sediment Control (See [Computer Aided Design CAD Templates](#) and Appendix D – [King County Surface Water Design Manual](#));
3. Drainage submittal items as identified on [Drainage Review Checklist](#); To determine type of drainage engineering review, please carefully review the [Step by Step Directions](#) on our website;
4. A completed [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\) Checklist](#) or a copy of a SEPA determination for projects involving:
 - a. More than 500-cubic-yards of earthwork
 - b. More than 100-cubic-yards of earthwork within a steep slope or landslide hazard area
 - c. Earthwork wholly or partly on lands covered by water as defined in WAC 197-11-756(1)
 - d. Clearing more than 5,000 board feet of merchantable timber
 - e. Construction activities that involve greater than 1 acre of site disturbance which requires a license governing discharges to water that is not exempt under RCW 43.21.0383
5. A completed [Flood Hazard Certificate](#) if the project site is located with a regulatory floodplain, FEMA 100-year floodplain, FEMA floodway, or contains a Flood Hazard Area (lake, stream, river, or closed depression);
6. Other requirements that may be defined during a pre-application meeting.

Other applicable requirements:

Once your application is deemed complete, review of your proposal can begin. Additional information may be requested during the review process. Other important requirements may include:

1. If access to the property is from a state highway, a State Highway Access Permit must be obtained from the Washington State Department of Transportation. If access to the property is from a King County road, the access must comply with the King County Road Standards. The Standards include requirements for entering site distance, landings, and other issues that may need to be reviewed. If access will not be directly off existing public roadway, legal access documentation of a recorded easement, or private access tract shall be provided.
2. Copies of any correspondence with King County regarding the project or site must be provided.

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3. Copies of any approvals or permits granted by other agencies, such as the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Ecology, etc., must be provided.
4. If the project is located in a no-burn zone, or if clearing is intended outside the normal burning season or building demolition will be completed as part of the initial site development, a clearing/demolition waste disposal plan must be provided.
5. If the applicant is subject to prior land use action, including but not limited to rezone, unclassified use, conditional use, shorelines, or special use, etc., a copy of the land use approval decision must be provided.

Plan Submittal Guidelines for Clearing and Grading Permits:

A. Site Plan includes:

1. A legal description of the property. Customers can get this from the [King County Department of Assessments](#);
2. A North arrow;
3. A vicinity map drawn to a scale of approximately one inch equals 2,000 feet and include detail to clearly locate the project in relation to arterial streets, natural features, landmarks, and municipal boundaries;
4. Grading plan scale (horizontal and vertical);
5. The size and location of existing improvements within 50-feet of the project, indicating which will be retained and which will be removed;
6. Property boundaries, easements, setback requirements, and clearing limits (e.g., floodplains, shorelines, etc.);
7. Existing and proposed contours (maximum five-foot intervals) that extend 100-feet beyond the edge of the project. This may be waived if not applicable to scope of project.;
8. The location of areas affected by clearing restrictions if such areas are contained within a Special District overlay or in an adopted community plan;
9. Clear marking of any open space tract or conservation easement (KCC Chapter 21A.24);
10. The total area to be cleared on site as a percentage of the total site area;
11. Additional detailed sheet(s) showing at least two cross-sections, one in each direction, showing existing and proposed contours and the horizontal and vertical scales;
12. A stamp and signature from a registered Civil Engineer, licensed to practice in the State of Washington, must appear on the plans that include permanent drainage facilities, structures to be built or construction proposed in landslide hazard areas, or proposed construction or replacement of a structure.

B. Temporary erosion-sediment control and final site stabilization plan. Temporary facilities (i.e., silt fence, mulching, netting, sediment ponds, etc.) must be designed to control runoff during clearing and grading. Permanent facilities (i.e., revegetation, detention ponds, biofiltration swales, etc.) must be designed to control erosion after grading is complete. All facilities must be designed in accordance with the current [King County Surface Water Design Manual](#);

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- C. Geotechnical report prepared for the site must be provided. This provision may be waived for certain permits if the proposed grading is not intended to provide structural support, is not located in a hazard area (landslide, seismic, steep slope, or coal mine), and a covenant is placed in the Title advising of the nature of any fill;
- D. Soil management plan illustrating how you will have the soil moisture capacity restored to areas of your site that are not covered by an impervious surface, incorporated into a drainage facility or are engineered as structural fill or slope (Use [Compost and Topsoil Calculator](#));
- E. For Class IV Forest Practice, the followings shall be provided:
1. Tree removal plan, to include percent of total tree removal, logging equipment proposed, internal road layout, seasonal scheduling, yard configuration, and slash disposal methods.
 2. Haul route agreement depicting haul route(s) for logging trucks and other heavy equipment to be used, identifying all roads/streets to be utilized between the project site and main arterials.
 3. Site stabilization/planting plan for all cleared areas, consistent with the intended/subsequent use.

Additional Resources:

For additional information or questions, applicants may email PermitQuestions@KingCounty.gov or click the link to [submit your question online](#).

Department of Local Services, [Permitting Division](#) website

[Fees](#)

[King County Code](#)