



# Floodplain Development Permit Information

The Department of Local Services, Permitting Division (Permitting), in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) manages Floodplain Development Permits and Flood Hazard Certificates for unincorporated King County.

This publication explains when customers must obtain a Floodplain Development Permit and/or a Flood Hazard Certificate. The regulations for floodplain management are outlined in King County Code (KCC) Chapter 21A.

For additional information or questions, email [DPERWebInquiries@KingCounty.gov](mailto:DPERWebInquiries@KingCounty.gov).

## Frequently Asked Questions

When do I need a Floodplain Development Permit?

- Prior to conducting work within the County designated floodplain or channel migration hazard area.
- Prior to conducting work on a site or lot that contains or is adjacent to a flood hazard area even if the flood hazard area has not yet been delineated by King County or FEMA. These flood hazard areas include streams, lakes and closed depressions having a surface area of 5,000 SF or more.

*How do I know if my project site or lot is on or adjacent to a flood hazard area if it's not already delineated by FEMA or on the King County floodplain map (see [Property Research and Mapping Resources](#))?*

- If you are unsure of a water body such as a stream, lake, or closed depression on your lot or adjacent to your lot is a flood hazard area contact Permitting and they will make the determination.

*Why does King County require a Floodplain Development Permit?*

- Since any action in the floodplain has the potential to impact other properties, the County tracks development through floodplain development permits to ensure no property is adversely impacted by actions taken by others.

## Floodplain Development Permit Information, continued

- Requiring floodplain development permits is a requirement of King County's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, through which property owners in unincorporated King County can purchase flood insurance. Because the flood insurance rates are partially based on how well the community addresses flood issues, requiring development adhere to county floodplain requirements lowers the cost of flood insurance. More information on FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) can be found on FEMA's website.

### *Do I need to hire an engineer to complete a floodplain development permit?*

- The Floodplain Development Permit application asks for basic information about your property and project site. You are unlikely to need a professional engineer to complete the application. However, you may need to seek a professional for help identifying some flood information. Many different types of professionals can help you with completing the application.
- If your project includes a building, you may need to hire a surveyor for information about the flood elevations and proposed elevations of the building. Check the [King County iMap service](#) to see if a Floodplain Elevation Certificate has been issued for structures on your property. The Certificates do expire, but even expired Certificates will provide valuable background for the submittal of a Floodplain Determination Permit and a new Floodplain Elevation Certificate.

### *Does the floodplain development permit trigger any other permits?*

- A Floodplain Development Permit is required to meet certain other standards like zero-rise, compensatory storage, and others. A Flood Hazard Certificate may be required to demonstrate compliance with these regulations.
- Other permits may be required like building permits or clearing and grading permits.

### *When is a Flood Hazard Certificate required?*

- When development will occur within the floodplain. Development within the coastal floodplain on Vashon Island does not require a Flood Hazard Certificate.

### *What is the difference between the zero-rise floodway and the FEMA floodway?*

- The zero-rise floodway is a county designation and is essentially the floodplain. The FEMA floodway is different. It is only a portion of the floodplain. The FEMA floodway is designated by FEMA and is subject to more stringent flood development standards.

### *What if I think my project site is above the floodplain or I believe the flood maps are wrong?*

- First, check to see if a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) has already been approved by FEMA. Parcels that have LOMA's are identified in the [King County iMap service](#). The mapping service also provides a link to the parcel's LOMA.

## Floodplain Development Permit Information, continued

- If a licensed surveyor is able to demonstrate that your project site or property is above the base flood elevation, then you may be eligible for a Letter of Map Amendment to remove your property from the floodplain. This Letter of Map Amendment can also remove the requirement by your bank to purchase flood insurance, but that is subject to the bank's discretion. For this process, you would apply directly to FEMA. You can learn more here: <https://www.fema.gov/letter-map-changes>.

*How long does my floodplain development permit last?*

- The floodplain development permit will expire if no work occurs after 180 days.

*How much will my permit cost?*

- The fees can be found on the [fee schedule](#). See Guide 5, Flood hazard certification, Other and Site condition or flood elevation certification inspection only.

### Additional Resources

King County

[Department of Natural Resources and Parks \(DNRP\)](#)

[Water and Land Resources \(WLRD\)](#)

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

[Floodplain Development Permit Information, Forms and Application packet](#)

[Property Research and Mapping Resources](#)

[On-line Permit Status, Invoice Payment and Inspection Scheduling](#)

[IVR Inspection Scheduling, phone number and codes](#)

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

[National Flood Hazard Layer Viewer](https://msc.fema.gov/nfhl) (<https://msc.fema.gov/nfhl>)

[Map Service Center](https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home) (<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>)

