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This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention for Small Projects

Assistance Bulletin

#90

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Stormwater pollution prevention review is the evaluation by PDS that a proposed project meets the requirements of Snohomish County Code (SCC) Chapter 30.63A (Drainage). This bulletin explains the purpose of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs), when an abbreviated (non-engineered) SWPPP is allowed for small projects. It provides an overview of the small project review process. This information is provided as general information to guide applicants proposing projects such as a single-family residence or accessory buildings that create less than 2,000 sq. ft. of hard surface, on lots that do not have prior approved drainage plans and other small project development permits.

Q: When is drainage review required?

A: All land disturbing activity for new development and redevelopment is subject to drainage requirements and review unless the proposed activity is exempt from all drainage requirements. Small projects may only need to comply with soil erosion and sediment control requirements codified in Chapter 30.63A SCC Minimum Requirement 2 (MR 2). Compliance with (MR 2) is obtained through the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Q: What is a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan? (See SCC 30.91S.598)

A: A SWPPP is a narrative and site plan that identifies measures such as best management practices that prevent soil erosion and sedimentation.

Q: What is the purpose of a SWPPP?

A: A SWPPP is a narrative and site plan designed to reduce, eliminate, and/or prevent the discharge of stormwater pollutants through the use of best management practices. Proper implementation of a SWPPP will:

- Prevent violations of surface water quality, groundwater quality, and sediment management standards.
- Prevent adverse impacts to receiving waters by controlling peak rates and volumes of runoff.
- Eliminate the discharges of unpermitted process wastewater and other illicit discharges to stormwater drainage systems.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

Q: What is a Best Management Practice? (See SCC 30.91B.080)

A: “Best management practices” or “BMPs” are schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, structural practices or managerial practices, that when used singly or in combination, prevent or reduce the release of pollutants and other adverse impacts to waters of Washington State.

Q: What is “new development”? (See SCC 30.91N.044)

A: “New development” means the following land disturbing activities: Class IV - general forest practices; structural development, including construction or installation of a building or other structure; creation of hard surfaces; and subdivisions, short subdivisions, residential condominiums, single-family detached units (SF DU), residential condominiums, planned residential developments (PRD) and binding site plans.

Q: What is “redevelopment”? (See SCC 30.91R.070)

A: “Redevelopment” is the following activities that take place on a site that already has 35 percent or more existing impervious surface coverage: The creation of new hard surface(s); structural development including construction, installation, expansion or replacement of a building footprint or other structure; replacement of existing impervious surface that is not maintenance; and land disturbing activity.

Q: What are “hard surfaces”? (See SCC 30.91H.035)

A: Hard surfaces include impervious surfaces, permeable pavements and vegetated roofs.

Q: How do I know if my project is a “Small Project”?

A: “Small projects” must meet the requirements of SCC 30.63A.810 to utilize the abbreviated SWPPP format provided in Appendix I-F of the Drainage Manual to meet minimum requirement 2 to control soil erosion and sediment.

Q: What criteria must my project meet to be a small project? (See SCC 30.63A.810)

A: A small project must meet the following criteria:

- The land disturbance is less than one acre in size and is not part of a common plan of development.
- Creates, adds or replaces, or any combination thereof, impervious surface area in an amount less than 2,000 square feet.
- Moves less than 100 cubic yards of material graded on site or 500 cubic yards of material under the foundation of a building that will be built pursuant to an approved building permit.
- Causes less than 7,000 square feet of land disturbing activity.
- Is located outside of a floodplain or shoreline designation.
- Will not adversely impact a wetland, stream or water of the state or change a natural drainage course.
- Does not require engineering to comply with Chapter 30.63A SCC.

Q: What projects may use a small parcel (abbreviated or non-engineered) SWPPP?

A: Projects that meet the small project criteria in SCC 30.63A.810 may be created without an engineer. However if site circumstances or proposed activities trigger best management practices that require additional drainage requirements in chapter 30.63A SCC or engineering such as stabilization of channels or outlet protection would be required to submit a full construction SWPPP under chapter 30.63A SCC.

Q: What is a “common plan of development”? (See SCC 30.91C.185)

A: A “common plan of development” or sale is a site where multiple separate and distinct construction activities are taking place at different times on different schedules, but are being performed as part of a single plan. If a project is part of a common plan of development or sale, the disturbed area of the entire plan shall be used in determining permit requirements.

Q: What are examples of common plans of development?

A: Subdivisions, binding site plans and:

- Phased projects and projects with multiple phases or lots, even if the separate phases or lots will be constructed under separate contracts or by separate owners (e.g., a development where lots are sold to separate builders).
- A development plan that may be phased over multiple years, but is still under a consistent plan for long-term development.
- Projects in a contiguous area that may be unrelated but are under the same contract, such as construction of a building extension and a new parking lot at the same facility.

Q: What is “grading”? (See SCC 30.91G.075)

A: “Grading” is any excavating or filling or combination of both.

Q: What is “land disturbing activity”? (See SCC 30.91L.025)

A: “Land disturbing activity” is any activity that will result in movement of earth or a change in the existing soil cover or the existing soil topography (both vegetative and non-vegetative), including the creation and/or replacement of impervious surfaces. Land disturbing activities include, but are not limited to, clearing and grading. Compaction that is associated with stabilization of structures and road construction also is a land disturbing activity.

Q: Are agricultural plowing and tilling and vegetation and drainage facility maintenance performed according to standards adopted by Snohomish County land disturbing activities?

A: No

Q: What is “clearing”? (See SCC 30.91C.112)

A: “Clearing” is the destruction or surface removal of vegetation by cutting, pruning, limbing, topping, relocating manually or mechanically, application of herbicides or pesticides or other chemical methods, or any application of hazardous or toxic substance that has the effect of destroying or removing the vegetation.

Q: What is a “flood hazard area”? (See SCC 30.91F.370)

A: A “flood hazard area” is defined by as, “the land in the flood plain that is subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year.” In general this means the land included within the 100-year flood elevation. If you plan to grade in a flood hazard area, you will need a flood hazard permit, regardless of whether or not the grading itself is exempt from a grading permit.

Q: What are “critical areas”? (See SCC 30.91C.340)

A: “Critical areas” include:

- Wetlands
- Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including:
 - Sole source aquifers
 - Group A well head protection areas
 - Critical aquifer recharge areas

- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, including:
 - Streams
 - Lakes
 - Marine waters
 - Primary association areas for critical species
- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas, including:
 - Erosion hazard areas
 - Landslide hazard areas
 - Seismic hazard areas
 - Mine hazard areas
 - Volcanic hazard areas
 - Tsunami hazard areas

Q: How do I find out about critical areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, streams, lakes on my property?

A: PDS will have the information available if the property is a lot within a plat or short plat, where the plat and short plat maps have identified these areas or if the lot has been developed previously with a dwelling and these features were identified as part of the site plan review process for the building permit. Most lots created by plat or short plat prior to 1995 do not contain this information. To assist you in the process, Snohomish County offers a “Pre-Application Conference.” This is recommended for owners of raw pieces of land that have streams, wet areas or other conditions that may cause potential site-related development issues. The process may involve a staff biologist, a site reviewer and/or a drainage reviewer who will visit the site and review it for potential development issues. A meeting is then held here in the PDS office to go over the findings of their reviews. (Visit the PDS Applications Packets webpage for pre-application information and request forms.)

Q: Is this property in a flood zone?

A: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) determines what areas are in flood zones. For FEMA flood map information, call 1-800-358-9616 (Bothell office 425-487-4678), or visit www.fema.gov for an online flood map. You may also visit our website at www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1943 and view the interactive permit/zoning map or call our office for flood zone information.

Q: What are the elements that must be considered in a SWPPP?

A: There are 13 elements in a SWPPP. They are:

- Mark clearing limits
- Establish construction access
- Control flow rates
- Install sediment controls
- Stabilize soils
- Protect slopes
- Protect drain inlets
- Stabilize channels and outlets
- Control pollutants
- Control de-watering
- Maintain BMPs
- Manage the project
- Protect on-site stormwater management BMPs for runoff from roofs and other hard surfaces.

Q: What are the elements of a SWPPP that must be considered for small projects?

A: Applicants submitting on the abbreviated SWPPP must consider all twelve elements of the construction SWPPP; however, some SWPPP elements may not apply to a particular project. If an element is not applicable, an applicant must identify the SWPPP element and indicate why it is not applicable.

Q: Where are the regulations and rules for developing a small project SWPPP?

A: Small project SWPPP submittal requirements are found in Volume I, Appendix I-F of the Snohomish County Drainage Manual.

Q: How do I develop a Small Project SWPPP?

A: Complete the Small Project SWPPP form by taking the following steps:

- Answering the questions on the Small Project SWPPP Submittal form to create a SWPPP narrative.
- Check the BMPs you selected to be used to meet required SWPPP elements.
- Attach a SWPPP site plan to the SWPPP form and graphically depicts where the BMP will be placed or put the information on your project site plan if legible.
- Attach a copy of the selected BMPs to the SWPPP form.
- Keep the SWPPP on site with your permit packet.

Q: What if I have other questions?

A: Call (425) 388-3311 or submit questions online at AskPermitTech@snoco.org. Remember, asking questions first can save lots of headaches, heartaches and money!

Q: What other bulletins or resources are available to help me?

A: [Bulletin #85](#) Land Disturbing Activity Terms
[Bulletin #91](#) Preparing a Small Project Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
[Bulletin #92](#) Best Management Practices for Small Project SWPPPs
[Bulletin #89](#) Drainage Review for Projects Vested on or after September 30, 2010