



Grading and Parking Lot Permits

BP-46

Department of Building and Planning

This brochure is intended to provide an overview as to when grading permits are required by County code.

When are grading permits required?

- For the construction of private roads not within an approved preliminary or final subdivision, binding site plan, etc.
- Grading or road construction within a proposed subdivision prior to preliminary approval, or prior to approval of road and drainage plans.
- When creating a new, or paving a previously unsurfaced parking lot.
- Grading, excavation or placement of fill exceeding 50 cubic yards on construction sites prior to issuance of a building permit.
- Cut, fill or grading of any depth on any lot that obstructs a drainage course.
- Fill more than 1 foot in depth placed on slopes greater than 1 vertical to 5 horizontal units that exceeds 50 cubic yards on any one lot (20% slope) when not part of a valid building permit.
- Fill more than 3 feet in depth, that exceeds 50 cubic yards on any one lot, intended to support structures when not in conjunction with a valid building permit.
- Excavations more than 2 feet in depth when not part of a valid building permit.
- Excavations where a cut slope is created that is greater than 5 feet in height and steeper than 1 vertical to 1.5 horizontal units (66.7% slope).
- It is noted that in the above instances, when "grading in an isolated, self contained area and there is no danger to private or public property" the requirement for a grading permit may be waived by the Department of Building and Planning.

Top soil removal or mining is not grading. Separate permits and approvals are required for these activities.

What information is required to obtain a permit?

For parking lots and other grading activities, stormwater and drainage plans prepared by a licensed civil engineer will be necessary when required by the Spokane County Code.

Plans for parking lots need to include details for accessible parking spaces, typical parking space dimensions, travel-ways, road approaches and landscaping as well as stormwater retention areas. The use of existing buildings on the site is also necessary to calculate parking requirements.

Any fill or excavation of more than 500 cubic yards requires environmental review, with an environmental checklist submitted as required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA (Brochure BP-49)). Additionally, any parking lot providing a cumulative number of spaces over 40, or construction of a private road serving more than 8 lots, also requires compliance with SEPA.

The environmental checklist is circulated to a number of local and state agencies for review. This process can take from 14 to 30 days and possibly longer depending on the impacts of the project.

Projects involving less than 5,000 cubic yards of grading require the following:

- General vicinity of the site.
- Topography and/or elevations before and after.
- Location of buildings or structures.
- Location of drainage courses/easements.
- Erosion and sediment control measures (see ESC Ordinance and Brochure #BP-19).

- Drainage plans (when impacting drainage courses).
- Soils/geotechnical reports (steep slopes and/or erodible soils).
- Critical areas delineation when grading adjacent to a critical area such as a wetland, steep slope or riparian area or shoreline of a lake or stream.
- Identification of where any soil removed from the site is going to be located.

Projects involving more than 5,000 cubic yards of grading require the following:

- Generally, the same information as above and in addition, these projects require plans prepared by a licensed civil engineer. See requirements for engineered grading in Spokane County Code chapter 3.10.
- Erosion and sediment control measures (see ESC Ordinance and Brochure #BP-19).
- Identification of where any soil removed from the site is going to be located.

What is the cost?

Fees are charged based on the rate specified in the Department Fee Schedule.

What other departments are involved?

- Division of Engineering & Roads - Roads and Drainage
- Division of Engineering & Roads - Flood Control
- Division of Engineering & Roads - Stormwater Section

The following agencies may also be involved if there is an impact to a shoreline or a critical area such as a wetland or riparian area, or the work is located within 250' of such, or impact to a state highway.

- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Transportation

Are inspections required?

Inspections of the grading, drainage, parking lot

configuration and landscaping prior to paving are required. Some aspects of the grading and drainage systems may require inspections by a civil engineer or special inspection agency. In all cases final inspection by the Department of Building and Planning is required upon completion.

Miscellaneous

Please note that exceptions from grading permit requirements do not relieve the property owner from compliance with other regulations.

Also note that fill and grading activities within 250' of any body of water, including rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, flood plains, etc. is highly regulated and often not allowed or very restricted. Before performing any such activity, regardless of whether the extent of the work would require a grading permit, check with the department staff to see if the contemplated activity is allowable and if under what conditions. Permits other than grading such as a floodplain permit or shoreline substantial development permit may be required.

Other Brochures that may be helpful

- BP-19 Erosion and Sedimentation Control
- BP-19a Erosion and Sedimentation Control Techniques
- BP-19b Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan Requirements
- BP-33 Commercial Site Plans
- BP-46a Typical Grading Permits

For more information or an appointment contact:

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