



ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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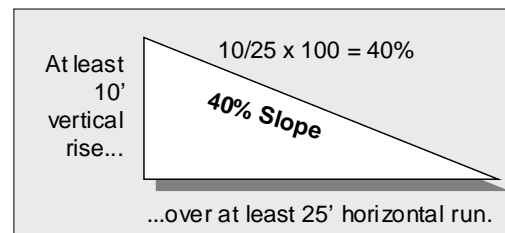
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DEVELOPMENT ON STEEP SLOPES

- What is a steep slope?
- How can I find out if I have a steep slope on my property?
- What are the regulations?
- What permits do I need?
- What information must be submitted with the permit application?

WHAT IS A STEEP SLOPE?

Steep slopes are those areas in Island County on slopes forty percent (40% or 22°) or steeper with a vertical elevation change of at least ten (10) feet. The steepness of a slope is measured by establishing its toe and top and averaging the inclination over at least ten (10) feet of vertical relief.



HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF I HAVE A STEEP SLOPE ON MY PROPERTY?

Information on steep slopes in Island County can be found on the County's critical areas maps, the Island County Soil Survey and the USGS topographic maps. However, many do not appear on any maps. **If an area meets the criteria for a steep slope, it is regulated whether or not it is shown on County maps.** It is the property owner's responsibility to know what regulated features exist on a given property.

WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS?

The Clearing and Grading Requirements (ICC 11.02) regulate activities on steep slopes. A grading permit or grading review must be obtained prior to commencement of the work for any land-disturbing activities, including clearing, filling or excavation in any quantities, and timber harvests, on steep slopes. These activities may include, but are not limited to drainfield and septic tank installation and site preparation for house, deck, garage, shed, driveway and lawn. If the grading involves more than 500 cubic yards of material, you will also be required to comply with State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements (see DIB #517). If the grading is within 200 feet of the shoreline of a marine water or lake, you may also be required to obtain a shoreline permit (see DIB #513).

WHAT PERMITS DO I NEED?

A review for compliance with the Clearing and Grading Requirements, ICC 11.02, is required prior to doing any ground-disturbing activities on steep slopes. Approval of the clearing and grading will be issued when it is determined that all requirements of ICC 11.02 have been met. In some cases, a separate clearing and grading *permit* may not be needed if there are other permits required, such as building permits, site plan reviews, and subdivisions. Any permit conditions related to clearing and grading are attached to the underlying permit.

WHAT INFORMATION MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PERMIT APPLICATION?

When clearing or grading on steep slopes is proposed, application processing will be considerably smoother if complete, detailed, and accurate plans and descriptions of the proposed work are submitted. If you are filling out a Building Permit application, be sure to accurately complete the Clearing and Grading, Critical Areas, and Map Checklist that accompanies the application form.

Significant risk is incurred when developing on steep slopes. Development can also be technically very complex. The level of review and the application requirements depend on the scale of the project, the intensity of the proposed land use, and the risk of safety hazards or environmental impacts of the proposed work. The following information must be submitted with any application for clearing and grading on steep slopes:

1. **General Clearing and Grading Permit Application Requirements.** See DIB #501.
2. **A drainage narrative or plan and an erosion and sediment control plan** as required by ICC 11.03.
3. **A Soils Engineering Report.** The soils engineering report shall include data regarding the nature, distribution, and strength of existing soils; conclusions and recommendations for grading procedures; and design criteria for corrective measures, including structural fills, when necessary, and an opinion on adequacy for the intended use of sites to be developed by the proposed grading as affected by soils engineering factors, including the stability of slopes.

Waiver of Engineering Report Requirements

In very limited circumstances, some or all engineering report requirements may be waived by the Public Works Director or County Engineer. Generally this may only occur when the proposal is very minor in nature and evidence exists indicating that no impacts or hazards are likely to result from the proposal. An example may be a situation in which a small extension of an existing deck or an addition to the landward side of an existing home is proposed; grading quantities are less than 10 cubic yards and proposed to be carried out by hand; the bluff and existing residence were evaluated by a professional engineer at the time of original construction; and the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the existing geotechnical or engineering report and with the conditions of any previously-issued permit. A clearing and grading permit or review is still required. In geological hazardous areas, execution and recording of a Covenant and Disclosure statement is required if not carried out under previous County review.

Construction of a new home in a geological hazardous area or on a steep slope is *not* eligible for a waiver and may also require a Geotech Report.

To apply for a waiver, submit the following along with an otherwise complete application:

- A letter requesting the waiver, specifying which report requirements that the applicant wishes to have waived;
- Any previous engineering reports or studies done for the property;
- An explanation of how the grading work will be done and why it is considered minor in nature;
- A discussion of how existing and proposed drainage is or will be controlled;
- Copies of any previous grading permits issued for the property; and,
- An explanation of why no hazards or impacts will result from the proposal.

IMPORTANT NOTE - "Development Information Bulletins" (DIBs) are intended to assist the general public in understanding the effect of codes and regulations. DIBs are not complete statements of the laws and rules and should not be used as a substitute for them. If conflicts and questions arise, the code and regulations are the final authority. Because these regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult Island County staff to be sure you understand all current requirements before beginning any work. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the project meets requirements of all current codes and regulations.

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