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This handout is intended as an informational guide. For more information, refer to Clark County Code and International Building Code.

For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office
Voice: 564.397.2322
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Grading and Drainage Review

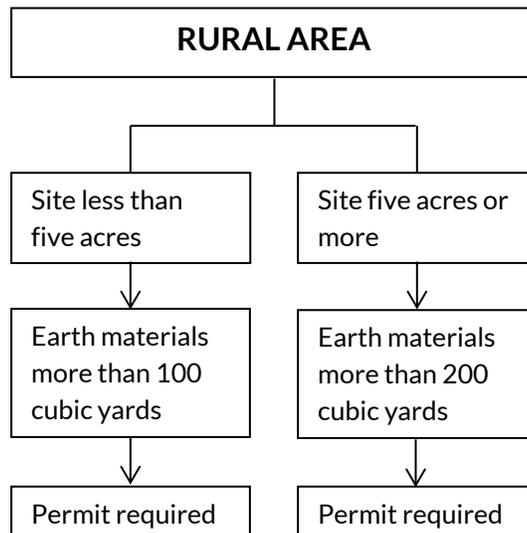
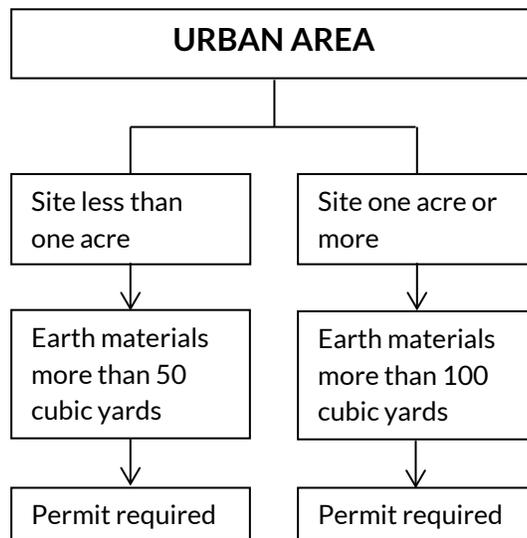
Excavation, fill and stockpile

The grading and drainage permit is a single, combined permit that reviews earthwork, erosion control, and drainage aspects of a proposed project. The county's plan review and construction inspection fees are based on both the volume of earthwork and the complexity of the erosion control and drainage review. This handout answers common questions about the permit.

When is a grading and drainage permit required?

The answer to the following three questions typically determines if a county grading and drainage permit is required:

- Is your property in urban or rural Clark County?
- What is the size of your property?
- How much earth material do you intend to move?



Important Notes:

- If a proposed project is below these volume thresholds, a grading and drainage permit may still be required due to erosion control and stormwater requirements. See ***Why is stormwater important for grading permits and If the grading volume is below permit thresholds, is a grading permit application still needed?*** in this handout for more information.
- If a proposed project does not require a grading and drainage permit, but has critical lands (such as wetlands, habitat, shoreline, floodplains, or hazardous geological areas), other county permits may be required. See ***Are there other permits or reviews that may be required?*** in this handout for more information.

How to determine if a site is considered in the urban or rural area

Properties within the county have a designated land use district zone. These land use zoning districts are broadly identified as rural or urban. The best place to search for the zoning designation for a specific property is the county's Website at www.clark.wa.gov in the Property Information Center under Geographical Information Systems.

- Typical urban zones include: R1, R-12, R-18, R-22, R-30, and R-43
- Typical rural zones include: R-5, R-10, R-20, RC-1, and RC-2.5

For other zoning designations, see Clark County Code Section 40.200.010 for a table that lists all of the zoning districts and whether it is urban or rural.

What materials are regulated?

Grading and drainage permits are needed when the project moves earth materials. Earth materials are naturally occurring substances, such as minerals, rocks, or soil. Earth materials can be a combination of these materials. Earth materials also include asphalt and concrete, such as placing crushed or recycled asphalt or concrete. For grading purposes, earth materials do not include 100% organic soil amendments, such as compost or bark, as long as there are no earth materials in the soil amendment mix.

What does land-disturbing earthwork activity mean?

Land-disturbing activity is any activity that results in movement of earth, a change in the existing soil cover, or a change in the existing soil topography. Land-disturbing activities include clearing, grading, filling, and excavation. This disturbance area is used in determining stormwater requirements and calculating inspection fees.

How is the earthwork volume calculated?

For permit and fee purposes, the permit volume equals the amount of on-site excavation (the cut volume) **plus** the amount of fill hauled to the site from an off-site source (the borrow volume).

Must a professional civil engineer or geologist prepare the grading and drainage plan?

Yes, if the grading volume is greater than 5,000 cubic yards.

Are there special requirements for stockpiles?

Possibly, depending on the purpose of the stockpile:

- For temporary stockpiles used during the on-site construction activity of an approved permit, no additional permits are needed. The temporary stockpile is included in the project's earthwork volume.
- For earth material stockpiles that temporarily store material from an off-site source and the material will not be used on the site, a grading permit is required. This type of project may also require land use permits such as temporary use and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) permits. These types of stockpiles are limited to 18 months.

What practices are exempt from grading and drainage permits?

Some agricultural practices are exempt, although they must not obstruct any drainage courses.

Here are some examples of exemptions per the Stormwater Manual Book 1, (see 1.2.1 for all) and CCC14.07.040 (2):

- Forest practices regulated under Title 222 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), except Class IV General Forest Practices that are conversions from timberland to other uses.
- Commercial agricultural practices involving working the land for production. However, the conversion from timberland to agriculture and the construction of impervious surfaces are not exempt.
- Construction of agricultural buildings or other hard surfaces for carrying out agricultural activities; provided, that no stormwater is released from the site directly or indirectly to the County's stormwater conveyance system.
- Normal landscape maintenance activities and gardening, except as defined as a land disturbing activity per the definition in Appendix 1-A.
- Agricultural practices, such as:
 - Importing hog fuel or wood chips for mud control and livestock bedding;
 - Maintenance or repair of existing commercial or noncommercial agricultural facilities when there is no expansion;
 - Planting, including ground cover or organic mulch, when done according to ordinary farming management practices as defined by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service;
 - Soil preparation that is typically recognized as ordinary farming practices, to include importing soil amendments and enhancing materials; and
 - Tilling when done according to ordinary farming practices

Is road and driveway maintenance exempt from grading and drainage permits?

Some road and driveway maintenance practices are exempt. Here are some examples:

- Pothole and square cut patching
- Overlaying existing asphalt or concrete pavement with asphalt or concrete without expanding the area of coverage
- Shoulder grading
- Reshaping and regrading of existing drainage systems without altering the drainage paths (for example, upstream drainage paths cannot be blocked and runoff to downstream properties cannot be increased or concentrated)
- Resurfacing with in-kind material (such as gravel) without expanding the road prism
- Vegetation maintenance

Why is stormwater important for grading permits?

The state regulates the county's stormwater program. The county is required to review and inspect all grading and drainage projects for potential stormwater impacts. Stormwater rules are complex. Generally, grading and drainage projects trigger one of the following three stormwater review categories:

- Basic grading and erosion control (Stormwater Manual Minimum Requirement #2)
- Basic grading, erosion control, and stormwater Minimum Requirements #1-5
- Basic grading, erosion control, and stormwater Minimum Requirements #1-9

Minimum requirements (MR) mean the requirements referenced in the Clark County Stormwater Manual, as follows:

- MR #1: Preparation of stormwater site plans
- MR #2: Construction stormwater pollution prevention
- MR #3: Source control of pollution
- MR #4: Preservation of natural drainage systems and outfalls
- MR #5: On-site stormwater management
- MR #6: Runoff treatment
- MR #7: Flow control
- MR #8: Wetlands protection
- MR #9: Operations and maintenance

The New Development Flowchart and Redevelopment Flowchart from the Clark County Stormwater Manual are included at the back of this handout.

Both land-disturbing activity areas and impervious areas are key factors used to determine which minimum requirements apply. Although a project may not propose any stormwater pipes or detention ponds, a higher level of stormwater review may still be required due to the size of these areas.

See Book 1 of the Clark County Stormwater Manual for more information on minimum requirements and which level review applies to your project. The Clark County Stormwater Manual is available at

www.clark.wa.gov/public-works/stormwater-code-and-manual

If the grading volume is below permit thresholds, is a Grading and Drainage Permit application still needed?

Sometimes. If a proposed project is under the earthwork thresholds that typically require a permit, but the proposed project triggers stormwater (drainage) code requirements, a Grading and Drainage permit is required.

Are there other permits or reviews that may be required?

Additional rules apply to projects involving special areas, such as wetlands, habitat areas, floodplains, shoreline, and hazardous geological areas. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) may also apply. Here are county contacts for the various special permits:

- Community Development: 564. 397.2375
Land use, shorelines, wetlands, habitat areas, SEPA

- Public Works: 564.397.4559
Floodplains, hazardous geological areas

What is the review process for a grading and drainage permit?

1. Submit a completed Development Engineering application form, the items shown on the submittal requirements checklist, and fees. Submit these materials to the county's Permit Center.
2. Development Engineering staff will contact you with questions or if additional information is needed.
3. Development Engineering staff will contact you by phone or email when your approved plans are ready.

After the grading and drainage permit is issued, what is next?

After approval of the grading permit, the county will inspect the construction.

1. For an inspection, submit a completed Development Engineering application form, the items shown on the submittal requirements checklist, and fees. Submit these materials to the county's Permit Center.
2. Contact Public Works to schedule a preconstruction conference:
Nikki Olsen, Senior Engineering Technician, 564.397.4982, nicole.olsen@clark.wa.gov
3. After the preconstruction conference, field work may begin.
4. Costs for inspection outside of normal working hours and for re-inspection are in addition to regular inspection services. These special inspections are charged on an hourly basis.

How long are grading and drainage permits valid?

- Grading work must start within one year of the approved grading plan. Extensions to the plan approval are available at a reduced fee.
- Once grading work starts, the fieldwork must be complete within one year from the preconstruction conference date. Extensions to the inspection process are available at a reduced fee.

What if I want to revise my approved grading and drainage permit?

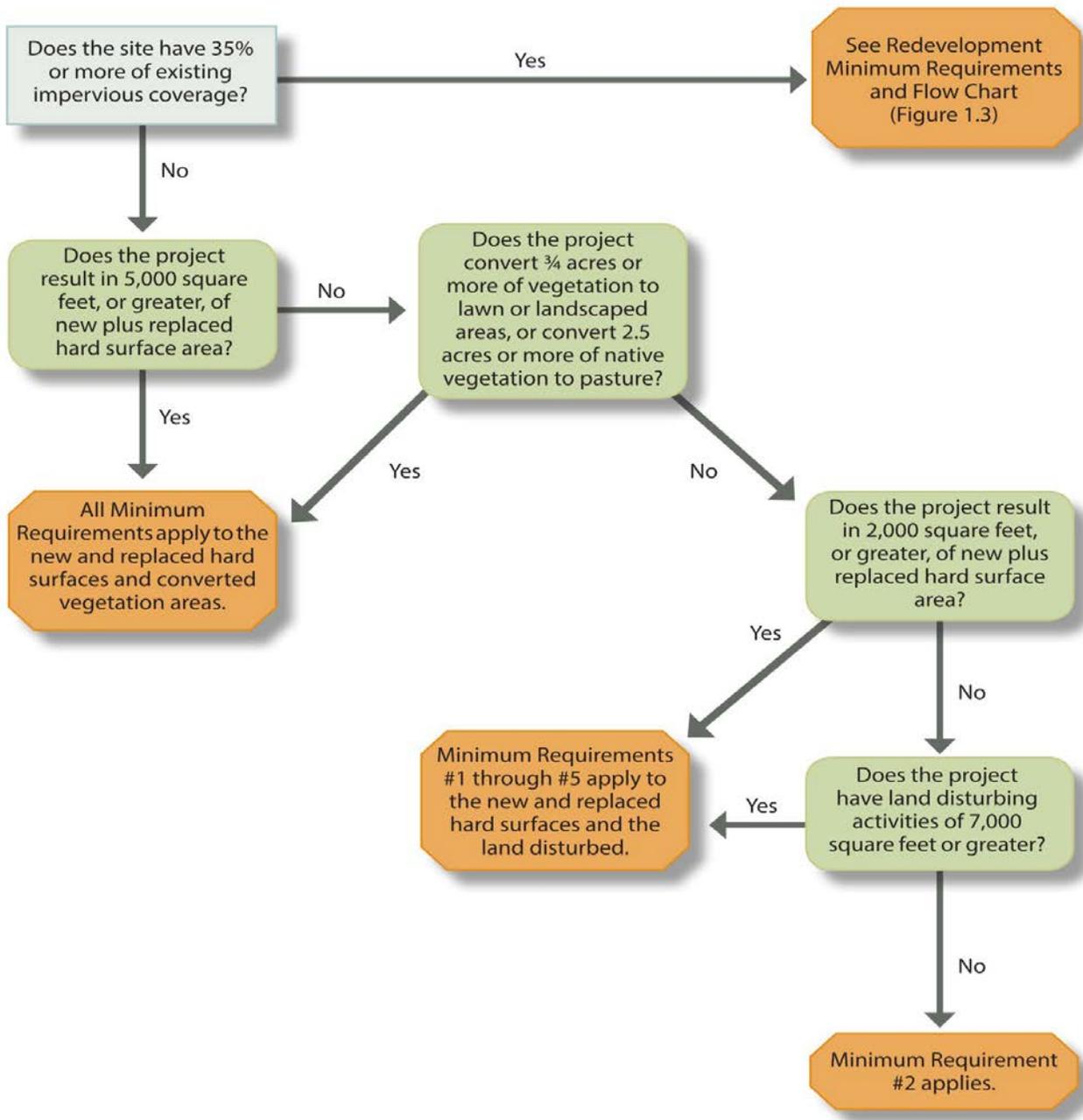
Revisions to the approved grading plans, other than minor field changes approved by the county inspector, must be submitted to Development Engineering for review and approval. Submit an application for a Post Plan Approval – Plan Revisions review. The fee for this review is based on actual staff review time multiplied by standard hourly billing rates. Any plan revisions must be approved and fees paid before fieldwork on the changes begins.

Any grading not shown on the approved grading plans is not approved and shall not commence without prior approval.

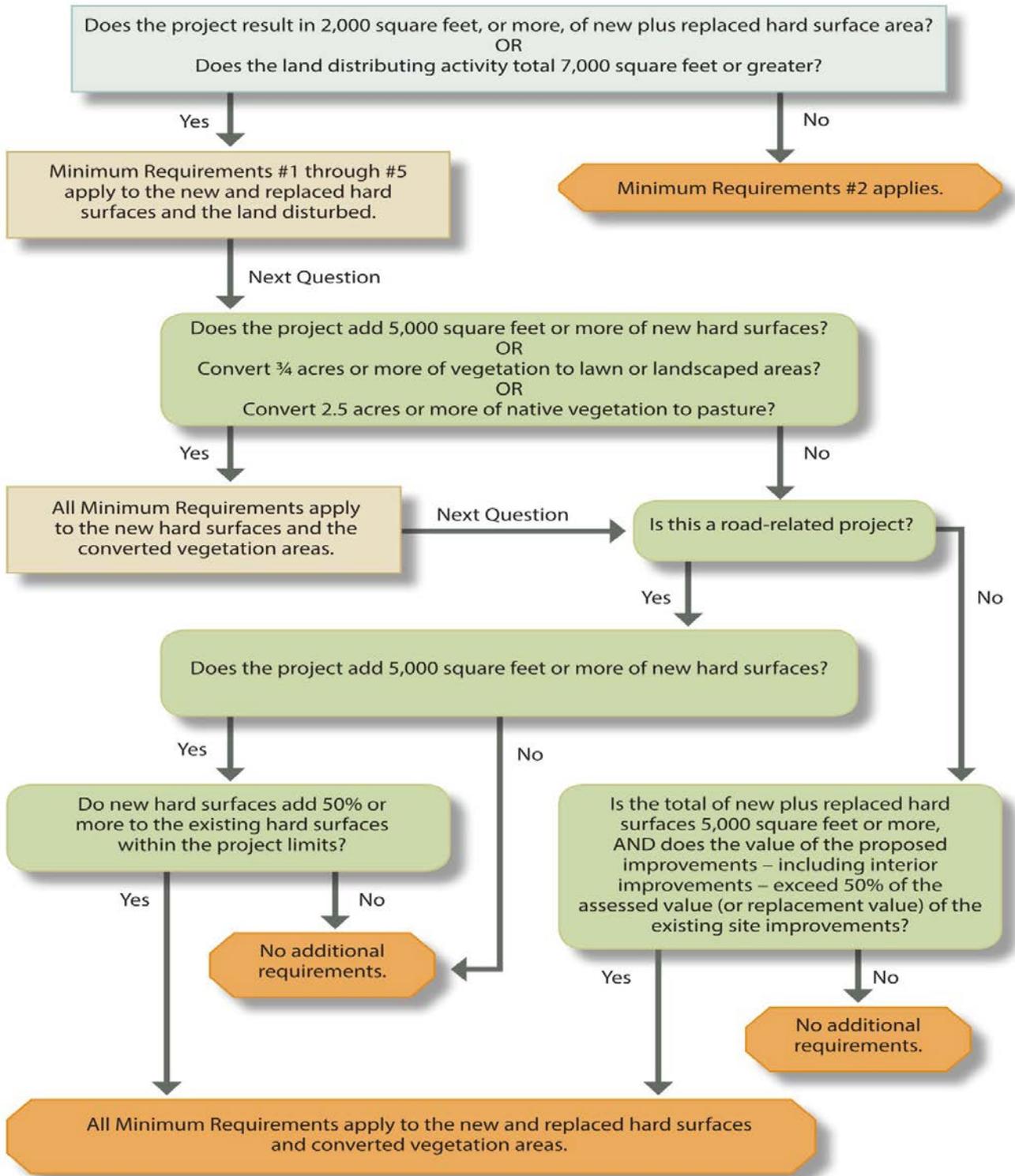
Where can I get more information?

The county code is the best source for detailed grading information, specifically Chapter 14.07 Grading, Excavation, Fill and Stockpile.

The county's stormwater and erosion control code is in Chapter 40.386. County codes are available on the county's Website at www.codepublishing.com/wa/clarkcounty.html



Clark County Stormwater Manual, Figure 1.2: New Development Flow Chart



Clark County Stormwater Manual, Figure 1.3: Redevelopment Flow Chart