



DEER LAKE

FOCUS

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Clay White

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Code enforcement on land use violations – this is not a topic that brings a smile to either staff members or the people involved in the situation. There is frequently anger, suspicion or confusion expressed by the property owners involved. Also, because many of the complaints that bring violations to our attention are submitted by neighbors, there are often underlying conflicts.

Many times violations occur when a property owner begins construction without being aware they need a permit. Perhaps they have talked to a neighbor or friend, and were informed that “permits are not required if you live in Stevens County”. Under current county regulations, ALL development in the county requires, at a minimum, Site Analysis review. This review will identify if a project needs any other permits or if the work is exempt. If it is exempt, no further permit applications are necessary.

We now have a reliable means of tracking violations. In 2005 a database was established that follows a violation from the date it is submitted to resolution. Currently there are nearly 200 complaints in the database; 38 of them have not been resolved. We have had fairly good success with resolving violations, but they often take a massive amount of staff time to address.

The process usually starts when a written “Request for Investigation” form is submitted to the office. These forms are available on the Land Services website or at the office. The complaint is logged into the database and staff does some initial work to verify ownership and property description, and checks to see if there are any pending permits for the work. Then, a staff member generally does a drive by inspection to see if we can confirm if a violation may exist. After the inspection, we begin a series of Notice of Violation letters to the property owner, requesting they contact the Land Services office. Any contacts or actions regarding the violation are noted in the database record.

Although the message in the letters is that we want to work with people to gain voluntary compliance, it also lets them know that a violation is considered a misdemeanor under the Stevens County Code Title 3, Chapter 3.40. All letters are copied to the Board of County Commissioners, NE Tri-County Health District, and Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. (The Health District and Labor and Industries have been following up on their ends and checking for valid permits.) If the violation is not resolved, a third and final letter lets them know that if they do not contact us, the matter will be referred to the Prosecutor’s Office.

There is a misconception in Stevens County that construction and other land use activities are allowed without permits. This is not the case in most situations. Remember - if you have a project on the radar, simply complete the Site Analysis application and ask us about the permits that are necessary for your project before you begin. We are here to assist and answer any questions you might have. If you build first and ask questions later, there are penalty fees and time delays that will certainly occur.

INSPECTOR GADGET: BUILDING CODE CONNECTIONS



PROVIDING CODE INFORMATION AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM THE CONSTRUCTION FIELD.

QUESTION: I am building a new home with a crawlspace and a concrete foundation. Do the outside walls of the crawlspace have to be dampproofed?

ANSWER: Yes. R406.1 IRC 2006 Concrete and masonry foundation dampproofing.

Except where required by Section R406.2 to be waterproofed, foundation walls that retain earth and enclose interior spaces and floors below grade shall be dampproofed from the top of the footing to the finished grade. Masonry walls shall have not less than 3/8 inch (9.5 mm) portland cement parging applied to the exterior of the wall. The parging shall be dampproofed in accordance with one of the following:

1. Bituminous coating.
2. 3 pounds per square yard (1.63 kg/m²) of acrylic modified cement.
3. 1/8-inch (3.2 mm) coat of surface-bonding cement complying with ASTM C 887.
4. Any material permitted for waterproofing in Section R406.2.
5. Other approved methods or materials.

Exception: Parging of unit masonry walls is not required where a material is approved for direct application to the masonry. Concrete walls shall be dampproofed by applying any

one of the above listed dampproofing materials or any one of the waterproofing materials listed in Section R406.2 to the exterior of the wall.

QUESTION: My new daylight basement home site has a gravel-sand mix type soil. Will this type of soil require Installation of a foundation drainage system?

ANSWER: No. R405.1 Concrete or masonry foundations. Drains shall be provided around all concrete or masonry foundations that retain earth and enclose habitable or usable spaces located below grade. Drainage tiles, gravel or crushed stone drains, perforated pipe or other approved systems or materials shall be installed at or below the area to be protected and shall discharge by gravity or mechanical means into an approved drainage system. Gravel or crushed stone drains shall extend at least 1 foot (305 mm) beyond the outside edge of the footing and 6 inches (152 mm) above the top of the footing and be covered with an approved filter membrane material.

The top of open joints of drain tiles shall be protected with strips of building paper, and the drainage tiles or perforated pipe shall be placed on a minimum of 2 inches (51 mm) of washed gravel or crushed rock at least one sieve size larger than the tile joint opening or perforation and covered with not less than 6 inches (152 mm) of the same material.

Exception: A drainage system is not required when the foundation is installed on well-drained ground or sand-gravel mixture soils according to the Unified Soil Classification System, Group I Soils, as detailed in Table R405.1.

QUESTION: While constructing my home the contractor neglected to remove the footing forms in the crawlspace. Do these forms have to be removed?

ANSWER: Yes. R408.5 Removal of debris. The under-floor grade shall be cleaned of all vegetation and organic material. All wood forms used for placing concrete shall be removed before a building is occupied or used for any purpose. All construction materials shall be removed before a building is occupied or used for any purpose.

**FIELD NOTES: PAPERWORK—
IT COMES FIRST!**

Summer building season is upon us, so *let's talk about FALL!* Every year when the weather starts to turn colder people realize they better get started on the garage, storage shed, addition, new house, etc. before the snow flies.

We know that Fall means freezing weather is imminent and time is of the essence. The Land Services' staff wants to help get your project off to a good start. But we need *your help* to do this.

Complete applications are the key to a speedy turnaround on your permit process. All projects in the county require a Site Analysis BEFORE other permits can be issued. These are processed by the Planning Division, and can be accomplished prior to submittal for building permit application. Does your project add bedrooms to your septic system? Northeast Tri-County Health District can review your project and give you an approval or identify requirements to bring your system into code compliance. If you are developing a new residence, potable water testing is required.

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Getting these items “out of the way” before submitting a building application will shorten the time from permit application to permit issuance.

Is your project a small one? The new “Fast Track” permit process may be a way to get your permit issued with only one visit to the Land Services office.

- The Planning Division can Fast Track site analysis applications every Thursday. You need to schedule your appointment ahead of time by calling 684-2401.
- The Building Division can Fast Track building permit applications for decks, garages, pole buildings, or small additions. You need to schedule an appointment with the plans examiner by calling 684-8325 and bring in completed applications, plans, and other things determined needed for your project.

You should be able to leave the Land Services office with a permit in hand. Again the Fast Track process will only be fast if you have brought in the required paperwork filled out completely and correctly.

In the past, the Building Division has authorized “early pours” for concrete footings and foundations before actually issuing the permit. However, most of the items necessary to issue a building permit must be completed prior to pouring concrete.

- The site analysis must be completed to verify compliance with any land use or zoning restrictions and that appropriate buffers and setbacks are met.
- If the project is a new residence, the well needs to be drilled (and tested).
- The lot may need to be approved for a septic system prior to locating the footings.

So, in reality, the early pour can only be used if the construction plans are not yet reviewed. The Building Division needs to review the plans prior to pouring the footings, in case adjustments need to be made. We attempt to keep the turnaround time for plan review to 7-10 days, but sometimes it may take longer. We feel the best policy is to avoid an “early pour” situation. Staff does their part by identifying what is needed for a complete application and providing prompt, courteous and timely service to our customers. If the applicant does their part, plans ahead and provides necessary and complete information, then staff should be able to issue the permit without having to consider an early pour.

Check out the Land Services website or call us to ask about the approvals your project may need. We would like to help reduce the stress of getting your project started, but the obligation is on you to do your homework and provide the information required.

WRIA 59 Colville River Watershed Project Update: From Planning to “On The Ground” Projects

The Colville River Watershed, Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 59, depends on sufficient quantities of clean surface and ground water to support growing communities, economic development, and to help protect the water resources within the watershed. A series of prioritized water resource projects were developed in the *WRIA 59 Colville River Watershed Plan, Version 2.0 (2007)* to help provide for current and future water needs, while working to address long-term protective stewardship of the watershed.

The WRIA 59 Water Resource Management Board, a group of dedicated local volunteers and local, state and federal government representatives are working to complete the five prioritized water resource projects that were funded through local and State grants in 2008. Those projects include: (1) installation of new stream gauges, (2) installation of stream identification signs, (3) holding water rights educational workshops, (4) working forward on the WRIA 59 Instream Flow Negotiations Project, and (5) multiple water storage feasibility studies and construction projects within the watershed.

Funding proposals for 2009-2011 water projects within the watershed have been developed and forwarded to the State for consideration. Additional project proposals can be submitted this winter and throughout



STEVENS COUNTY LAND SERVICES

LAND SERVICES STAFF MEMBERS

CLAY WHITE, DIRECTOR

Planning Division

Barbara Li'l-Jon, Administrative Assistant
 Sarah Steiner, Administrative Assistant
 Jenni Anderson, Planner
 Melissa Crouch, Planner
 Erik Johansen, Planner
 Paulette Yochum, Planner
 Linda Kiefer, WRIA Coordinator

Building Division

Butch Bovan, Administrative Assistant
 Ken Alexander, Building Inspector
 Julie Brown, Plans Examiner
 Mike Clash, Building Inspector
 Katie Hoverter, Permit Coordinator

Mailing Address: 215 South Oak Street
 Street Address: 260 South Oak Street
 Colville, WA 99114

PLANNING DIVISION
 Phone: 509 684-2401
 FAX: 509 684-7525
 E-mail: scplanning@co.stevens.wa.us
 BUILDING DIVISION
 Phone: 509 684-8325
 FAX: 509 685-0674
 E-mail: scbuilding@co.stevens.wa.us

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the coming years. Local residents, communities, schools, businesses and local governments are encouraged to submit future water resource project ideas for consideration by the local board.

For more information about the watershed project and upcoming meeting dates, contact the Stevens County Watershed Planning Office at (509) 685-2832. Project updates are also posted on the Stevens County Website: www.co.stevens.wa.us/WRIA59

PLANNING NOTES: Plat Restrictions vs. Build Permit Exemptions

The Stevens County Building Code, Ordinance 02-1984 contains Section, 1.4.2(b), that defines certain types of work that do not require a building permit (exempt work). The exemption can apply to: structures costing less than \$2000.00, private use outbuildings that are not occupied and meet certain setback requirements, and an owner/builder residence (please contact the Stevens County Building Department for exact requirements).

Often times it is assumed that if one of the exemptions applies to the work you are doing, you do not need any type of review from the county. This is NOT the case. It is important to understand that, at a minimum, review is required from Stevens County Planning Division, and perhaps other agencies, regardless of a development's exempt status from the building permit process. Before you begin development of your land, stop by or call the Stevens County Land Services Planning Division (509-684-2401). This will ensure that your development plans go smoothly and are consistent with relevant County regulations.

An important issue to keep in mind is that there may be plat restrictions on your lot that supersede the exemptions listed in the Stevens County Building Ordinance. Many of the platted lots within the county were created with a condition that requires a permit be secured from the Stevens County Building Department prior to any development of any structures. The question of whether your lot is subject to such a restriction will be answered by the Land Services Planning Division during the site analysis review that is required for all development within the County. When in doubt, please call the Stevens County Land Services offices and we will help you understand the process and get you going on your project.