Permitting

Before submitting permits for any shoreline development, you should contact WDFW. **It is then recommended that you submit a Site Pre-Inspection (SPI) Application through us.** This allows a Planner with a Habitat Biologist from DFW to visit the site to evaluate existing conditions and inform you of the requirements for proposed development.

Projects that need Permits:

- Repairs and Normal Maintenance
- Emergency Repairs
- Replacement
- New Bulkheads
- Bluff Stabilization

A complete permit application may require:

- State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist
- Shoreline Exemption (JARPA)
- Building Permit
- Mason Environmental Permit w/ Habitat Management Plan
- Shoreline Substantial Development Permit (public notice process required (SMP7.50.400.c))

Non-Conforming Proposals:

A Shoreline Variance application shall be submitted to apply to construct or modify a bulkhead that does not meet the Shoreline Master Program's bulk, dimensional, or performance standards.

A Shoreline Conditional Use application shall be submitted to apply to construct or modify a bulkhead that does not meet the Shoreline Master Program's use requirements.

State and Federal Permits

In addition to submitting permit applications to Mason County, you should submit a completed JARPA form to the agencies below:

Section 10 or Section 404 Permit
US Army Corps of Engineers
Seattle District Regulatory Branch
PO Box 3755
Seattle WA 98124-3755
(206) 764-3495

Hydraulic Project Approval
WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
1111 Washington St SE
PO Box 43200
Olympia WA 98501-1091
(360) 902-2534

401 Water Quality Certification
WA Dept. of Ecology – Headquarters
Federal Permit Unit
PO Box 47600
Olympia WA 98584-7600
(360) 407-6000

The Army Corps of Engineers' review process could take several months.

References:

- Shoreline Exemptions - Washington Administrative Code 173-27-040
- SEPA Categorical Exemptions - Washington Administrative Code 197-11-800
- Mason County Shoreline Master Program - Policy & Use Regulations MCC 17.50
- Mason County Resource Ordinance - Geologically Hazardous Areas MCC 8.52.140
- Mason County Resource Ordinance - Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas MCC 8.52.170

MASON COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

Building, Planning, Environmental Health, Community Health

BULKHEADS:
Permitting Guide

www.co.mason.wa.us

Phone: 360-427-9670 x 352

BASICS

Bulkheads are retaining wall-like structures whose primary purpose is to hold or prevent the sliding of soil caused by wave erosion.

Mason County issues bulkhead permits in areas where serious wave erosion threatens an established use or existing buildings on upland property.

In many areas, wave erosion is not a serious threat, and a bulkhead is not truly needed. Often times, property owners spend considerable time and money on constructing bulkheads where they are not necessary.

The Shoreline Master Program states, "Residential development along shorelines should be designed and sited to make shore protection measures unnecessary." In other words, the most long-term, preventative means of shoreline property protection is a construction setback in which the residence is built a safe distance (setback) from the shoreline. An adequate setback will prevent the residence from being threatened by storms and erosion. Setbacks prevent the interruption of the natural erosion processes that support marine and riparian habitats.

Soft vs Hard Armoring

Section 17.50.340 of the Mason County Shoreline Master Program dictates that "hard" methods (such as concrete and rock) of bulkheading are only permitted when applicants have adequately shown that "softer" methods are infeasible.

Soft Armoring Methods:

- ***Vegetation Enhancement***
- ***Upland Drainage Control***
- ***Biotechnical Measures***
- ***Beach Enhancement***
- ***Anchor Trees and/or Roots***
- ***Gravel Placement***

Concrete and rock bulkheads may only be installed or replaced when applicants have adequately shown in a report or letter prepared by an engineer with expertise in shoreline hydraulics explaining why "softer" methods of shoreline stabilization are not feasible.

You can learn more about what options are available to you by visiting the Mason County Conservation District website at **www.masoncd.org/shore-friendly-mason.html**

Emergency Repair

An "emergency" is an unanticipated and imminent threat to public health, safety, or the environment, which requires immediate action within a time too short to allow full compliance with permitting requirements. As a general matter, flooding or other seasonal events that can be anticipated and may occur but that are not imminent are not an emergency. All emergency construction shall be consistent with the policies of chapter 90.58 RCW and the local master program. Upon abatement of the emergency situation, the new structure shall be removed or any permit which would have been required, absent an emergency shall be obtained.

Contact Department of Fish and Wildlife before doing any emergency repairs!
Emergency Hotline: (360)902-2534

TIMELINE

Permits requiring SEPA review and a Mason County Building Permit may take up to 90 days

Permits requiring a Substantial Development Permit take approximately three to four months*

Permits requiring a Conditional Use and/or Variance Permit take approximately five months .*

** State and Federal Approvals may take longer.*

Construction work on a bulkhead project under this section may be subject to the timing restrictions in WAC 220-660-050

★★★ The information in this brochure is provided only as a general guideline. You should not rely on the brochure to identify the specific requirements for your project. To identify these requirements, apply for a Site Pre-Inspection ($300) or contact the Planning Department. ★★★