



Division of Coastal Management
Braxton Davis, Director



Department of Environmental Quality
Michael S. Regan, Secretary



State of North Carolina
Roy Cooper, Governor



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Protecting North Carolina's Coastal Resources Through the CAMA Minor Permit Program

The Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) was passed in 1974 to ensure the balanced use of North Carolina's coastal resources. The Coastal Resources Commission and the Division of Coastal Management administer the coastal management program.

An important part of the program is managing development in the coastal area by requiring permits for development in areas of environmental concern (AECs). Development is any type of construction, associated land clearing or land alteration.

Minor permits may be needed for projects that do not require another form of state or federal authorization. For example, construction of a single-family home along the oceanfront or the sound shoreline may need a minor permit.

Minor permits are issued by a county or municipal representative, known as the CAMA local permit officer or LPO. LPOs are trained by the Division of Coastal Management to administer minor permits for their locality.

AECs are coastal areas that contain natural hazards or important environmental, economic or cultural resources. There are four categories of AECs: the estuarine system, the ocean hazard system, public water supplies, and unique natural and cultural resource areas.

Your project is probably in an AEC if it is:

- in or on the waters of the state; on a marsh or wetland area;
- within 75 feet of the normal high water line along estuarine shoreline;
- within 30 feet of the normal water level of areas designated as inland fishing waters by the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission;
- within 575 feet of the mean high water line along the shoreline of an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) as designated by the Environmental Management Commission;
- within about 300 feet of the ocean beach;
- within about 1,000 feet of an inlet; or

- near one of the public water supplies designated as an AEC.

The Minor Permit Process

If you're planning a construction project in or near water or wetlands, contact the local permit officer for the community where the project is located. The LPO is a local government employee, usually the building inspector, zoning administrator or planner.

The local permit officer will discuss the proposed project and give you an Application for a CAMA Minor Development Permit. The LPO can help you fill out the application and suggest ways to carry out the project to meet the CRC's guidelines for development in areas of environmental concern.

The permit application folder asks for basic information about the project and the property involved, such as:

- the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the landowners and authorized agents;
- the location, size and nature of the project;
- a statement of property ownership;
- a list of adjacent riparian (waterfront) property owners and their addresses;
- a signed statement allowing the local permit officer to enter the property; and
- a \$100 processing fee.

The information needed for the Statement of Ownership can be found on the deed to the property. The names of adjacent waterfront property owners are available from the local tax office.

The adjacent property owners must be notified of your project either in person or by mail. Failing to do this is grounds for revoking the permit.

An AEC Hazard Notice must be completed if your project is located in an Ocean Hazard AEC (a designated ocean erodible area, inlet hazard area or high hazard flood area). This notice states that you recognize the natural hazards associated with

building on the site, that the CRC does not guarantee the safety of your project, and that the CRC assumes no liability for future damage to the project.

It also contains a condition that the permit applicant will relocate or dismantle the structure if it becomes threatened by erosion and the shoreline does not recover within two years (either naturally or through nourishment).

A site drawing that shows the dimensions and characteristics of the property and the location and nature of the project must accompany the application. The permit application form lists specific information that must appear on the site drawing. The local permit officer can give suggestions on how to prepare the drawing and where to get the necessary information.

To make the application easy to understand and review, the site drawing should be clear and simple. Significant dimensions should be indicated. It does not have to be prepared by an engineer or architect, but it must provide clear and complete information.

Minor Permit Fee

A fee of \$100 is required to cover the costs of processing the application. Checks should be made payable to the local government.

The application review begins after the local permit officer has received all of the application materials. The LPO will visit the project site, determine if the project meets the CRC's standards for development, and see if the project complies with the local land-use plan and local development ordinances.

The file is a public record; thus, anyone may examine it to see if the project complies with the CRC's development standards, the local land-use plan and local development ordinances.

Site Visits

The local permit officer will visit the project site to make sure that the site drawing is accurate. The LPO will look for conditions, such as a marsh or an



eroding shoreline, that could affect the construction or placement of the project. The permit officer will also post a notice that an application has been filed for a minor development permit (in some cases the applicant may be asked to post the notice).

In conjunction with the site visit, the local permit officer will also check to make sure that the proposed project complies with the CRC's standards for development. The LPO can explain the standards and how they affect a particular project.

The local permit officer will check to make sure the project complies with the local land-use plan. The land-use plan is prepared by the local government to describe the community's policies for growth and development. It identifies different classifications of land where certain types of development may or may not be permitted. When you first talk to the LPO, you should ask how the land-use plan and local development ordinances might affect your project. If the local permit officer needs additional information to review the application, you will be notified by certified or registered mail.

CAMA requires the permit decision to be made within 25 days; however, the local permit officer may send you a notice extending the review time for an

additional 25 days (the notice is sent by registered or certified mail).

Permit Decisions

The permit will be issued if the project complies with the CRC's development standards, the local land-use plan and local development ordinances. The applicant is responsible for meeting all requirements or conditions of the permit. Any conditions will be listed on the permit.

The permit will be denied if the proposed project is not consistent with the CRC's standards for development in areas of environmental concern, the local land-use plan or a local development regulation.

After the LPO makes the decision, you will be sent an official CAMA permit decision by registered or certified mail. If you are issued a permit, you must sign the form and return it to the LPO within 20 days. Typically, minor permits expire on Dec. 31 of the third year following the year of permit issuance.

If the project is on the oceanfront, work cannot begin until the LPO establishes the oceanfront setback. This setback determination replaces the one done at the time the permit was processed and issued. Construction must begin within 60 days. A major shoreline change during this period will require the LPO to establish a new setback.

How to Apply

To apply for a minor development permit, contact:

Onslow County Planning and Development
234 Northwest Corridor Boulevard
Jacksonville, NC 28540
(910) 455-3661

For more information about the N.C. Coastal Management Program, go online to www.nccoastalmanagement.net or contact the Division of Coastal Management office nearest you.

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