

CAMA Permits

All properties located within 420' of an ocean dune or 75' from inlet waters are considered to be in an Area of Environmental Concern (AEC) and are subject to regulation. Before undertaking development in the AEC zone a property Owner (or builder) must secure a CAMA permit from the Local Permit Officer (LPO). Development activities subject to these regulations are any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations. For CAMA permit information contact Mike Hoffer at (910) 458 7947.

Illegal floodplain development should be reported to the Town of Carolina Beach Planning and Inspections Department, (910) 458 7947.

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

The Coastal Management Act of 1974 (CAMA) was passed 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 (AEC's). **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 permit.

Minor permits are issued by a county or municipal representative, known as the **CAMA Local Permit Officer or LPO**. The LPO has been trained by the Division of Coastal Management to administer minor permits for his or her locality.

Areas of Environmental Concern (AEC's) are coastal areas that contain natural hazards or important environmental, economic or cultural resources. There are four categories of AEC's: 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 mean high water line along an estuarine shoreline;
- 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 420 feet of the ocean beach;
- within about 1000 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 local permit officer (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 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; statement of property ownership; and list of adjacent riparian (waterfront) property owners and their addresses.

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 this 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; however, it must provide clear and complete information.

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 standard for development, and see if the project complies with the local land use plan and local development ordinances.

The LPO will publish a **public notice** in the local newspaper after receiving the completed application. This notice lets other people in the community know that the project is being considered for a minor development permit. 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.

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 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 local permit officer can explain the standards and how they affect a particular project.

The local permit officer will check to make sure that 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.

The Coastal Area Management Act 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).

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 violates 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. The permit expires on December 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.

To apply for a minor development permit, contact: Mike Hoffer (910) 458 7947

For more information on the North Carolina coastal management program, contact:

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