

Soil Permits – Frequently Asked Questions

Environment Department – Phone: 604.990.2480 or Email: environment@dnv.org

1) Why do I need a Soil Permit?

Construction and other types of development, such as landscaping work, can involve both excavation/removal of soil as well as importing/deposition of soil. The movement of soil onto or away from a site under construction or development can have negative environmental effects if not controlled properly. Sediment and erosion control methods must be applied to eliminate or reduce the damaging effects caused by uncontrolled release of sediment into the environment.

A Soil Permit is also used to require the application of specific technology and methods to eliminate or reduce the effects associated with the excavation and transport of contaminated soil.

2) How does uncontrolled sediment release affect the environment?

Fine sediments can smother benthic (bottom dwelling) organisms, preventing them from feeding or getting oxygen, cloud the water so fish (trout and salmon) cannot see their food, damage the gills and eyes and scales of fish, absorb energy from the sun thereby raising the temperature of water in our creeks, and carry toxic pollutants into our waterways

3) When would I need a Soil Permit?

A Soil Permit is required when more than 18 cubic metres (approximately two truckloads) of soil, gravel, sand, drain rock, or other loose material (such as broken concrete or rock) are either removed or deposited from a single parcel of land in one calendar year. The Soil Permit Application can be found on the District's Soil Permit website at <https://www.dnv.org/business-development/soil-permit>.

4) What are some common Exemptions (where no Soil Permit is required)?

A Soil Permit is not required if you will be removing or depositing less than 18 cubic metres (approximately two truckloads) of soil, gravel, sand, drain rock, or other loose material (such as broken concrete or rock).

5) I am building a new house. Are the Soil Permit requirements different?

No, the requirements are the same. However, you can apply for a Soil Permit concurrently with your Demolition and/or Building Permit.

6) What is a Development Permit Area (DPA)? How do I find out if my property is in a DPA? If it is, does this affect the requirements?

The District of North Vancouver (District) has identified five environmental Development Permit Areas (DPAs)* that include specific properties or parts of properties. These properties require additional preliminary screening prior to development or construction. There are three Natural Hazard DPAs (Wildfire Hazard, Slope Hazard, and Creek Hazard) and two Environmental Protection DPAs (Natural Environment and Streamside Protection). All of the DPA maps are available for viewing on the District's Property Viewer App at <http://geoweb.dnv.org/>.

If your property is either entirely or partially in one or more DPAs, you may be required to submit a preliminary environmental or engineering report prior to receiving the applicable Environmental Permits (e.g. Soil Permit or Tree Permit). Please review all the DPA material (exemptions and guidelines) on the DNV website at <https://www.dnv.org/business-development/development-permit-areas-dpa>.

*There are other DPAs that may apply, such as Form & Character and Energy efficiency. Please contact DNV Planning staff to inquire about all potentially applicable DPA's on any particular parcel.

7) What information do I need to apply for a Soil Permit?

The Environmental Soil Permit Application is available on the District's website at <https://www.dnv.org/business-development/soil-permit>. In general a Soil Permit application needs to include basic information such as a Site Plan and written description of work. All non single-family zoned parcels that require a Soil Permit also require a sediment and erosion control plan prepared by a suitably qualified professional.

DNV staff will inform applicants of any specific requirements such as specialized consultant reports dealing with soil quality and / or contamination.

8) Are there additional requirements for work close to trees?

If your Soil permit project involves removal or deposit of soil within the root zone of any tree that is either on your own property or on an adjacent property (including DNV roads or boulevards), you may require additional submission requirements with the Soil permit application. The root zone is defined as 10 times the diameter of the tree. DNV staff will inform applicants of any specific additional requirements. Additional requirements may include a Tree Location Sketch Plan and an Arborist Report. If the proposed work for the Soil Permit may impact a protected tree (as defined in the *Tree Protection Bylaw 7671* or a tree inside a Streamside Protection or Natural Environment DPA) the DNV may require that revisions to the proposed work are made to avoid impacts to protected tree(s).

9) What is a Sediment and Erosion Control Plan?

A Sediment and Erosion Control Plan is a drawing that details the sediment and erosion control measures designed to minimize the negative impacts associated with the movement of soil and the process of excavation. These measures may include the following: covering exposed soil with plastic, installing a site access pad, utilizing a sediment trap / sump, installing a sediment filtration system. The District requires the installation of design specific catch basin inlet protection on all catch basins near a project or parcel with a Soil Permit.

More information on Sediment and Erosion Control for residential construction can be found on the District's website at <https://docs.dnv.org/documents/erosion-sediment-control.pdf>.

10) How long does the Soil Permit process take?

Process time varies depending on the completeness and accuracy of the reports and information received with the application and the overall complexity of the project. A stand-alone soil permit can be issued in 1 – 2 weeks. A complex soil permit project that involves building and / or tree permits and DPA's will take longer and can also depend on additional submission requirements identified during the soil permit review.

11) How much does a Soil Permit cost?

The fees for a Soil Permit and related inspection fees are set out in the *Fees and Charges Bylaw*. Fees for soil permits on single family zoned lands are approximately half the cost of soil permits on industrial or commercial zoned lands.

12) How many inspections are needed?

One scheduled inspection will occur during development. However, Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control and compliance with the *Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw 6515* (Section 8 Suspended Solids) are expected to be followed at all times. The link to the *Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw 6515* (Section 8) can be found at <https://docs.dnv.org/documents/Bylaw%206515.pdf>.

13) What is the security deposit for and how is the amount determined?

If you require a Soil Permit, you will be required to provide a refundable Security Deposit which is in addition to the fee for the Permit. The Security Deposit depends on the cost of construction and the amount will be as follows:

Project Capital Cost	Required Security Deposit
0 - \$100,000	\$2,500
\$100,001 - \$200,000	\$5,000
>\$200,000	\$10,000

14) How do I get my security deposit back?

Once all the work has been completed, Environment staff will conduct a site inspection to determine if the work has been completed satisfactorily. The permit holder must call the DNV to request a final inspection.

15) Do I need a Soil Permit to proceed with my Building Permit application?

Smaller projects (e.g. interior renovations and small additions) not requiring a Soil Permit can apply directly for a Building Permit.

16) When did Council adopt legislation requiring a Soil Permit?

Part C of the *Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw 6515* sets out regulations relating to soil removal and deposition. This Bylaw was first adopted in 1993, and subsequently amended several times. The Consolidated Bylaw is available at <https://docs.dnv.org/documents/Bylaw%206515.pdf>.

17) What is a Site Profile? Will I need to provide one?

A Site Profile is a disclosure form designed by the Province of BC to create an inventory of contaminated and potentially contaminated sites. Site Profiles are a requirement under BC's Environmental Management Act. The Site Profile form requires property owners to disclose whether certain types of land use activities that may contribute to soil or groundwater contamination have occurred on the parcel. The District has opted to participate in the collection and referral of Site Profiles to the province.

Complete information on the Site Profile process can be found at the Province of BC website here <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/site-remediation/identifying-and-disclosing-sites-that-may-be-contaminated>

18) Are there currently, or have there been in the past, underground storage or residential underground storage tanks (RUST) on the site?

If you do not know, check with the District at 604-990-2311. You may be required to hire a suitably qualified contractor / consultant to remove an underground storage tank that is no longer in use and provide documentation of the removal to the DNV. You can find further information on the District's website at <https://www.dnv.org/business-development/remove-residential-underground-storage-tank>.

19) What should I do if the soil is contaminated? What should I do if the soil contains invasive species?

You are required under Section 19 of the *Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw 6515* to manage contaminated soils appropriately as outlined in the *Waste Management Act – Contaminated Site Regulation, Section 4*. Soils potentially containing invasive plants or insects should not be disposed of or moved without first referring to the current recommended removal methods for the species in question.