

**Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (Permitting)**

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# Surface Water Design Manual Variances or Adjustments

Permitting Customer  
Information Bulletin #**34B****• FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •**

*Visit the Permitting Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County Permitting has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

**Surface Water Design Manual Adjustments**

As part of the permit review, projects subject to stormwater review must meet the requirements of the County's Storm Water Design Manual (SWDM). If your project will not fully be designed or built in conformance with the SWDM an application for adjustment to the SWDM must be made. This Adjustment if approved by the County allows your project to depart from one or more SWDM requirements in the ways specified in the Adjustment.

**When to apply for an Adjustment.**

The application for Adjustment should be submitted after the preliminary project application is submitted. If the feasibility of the project depends on approval of the Adjustment, you will be allowed to submit earlier than the project application.

Adjustments must be approved before construction begins. Approval of the Adjustment application is not guaranteed. And, even when Adjustments are approved by the County, conditions are often attached to the Adjustment. You risk having to remove or reconstruct work that is not in accordance with the County's stormwater requirements.

**Why apply for an Adjustment.**

There are various reasons for applying for an Adjustment, they include the following:

1. The drainage improvements you are proposing are different than those prescribed in the SWDM.
2. Your site has unusual characteristics that make it unsuitable or unable to meet requirements in the SWDM.
3. Application of the requirements in the SWDM unreasonably affects use of your property.
4. You want to appeal the preliminary approval conditions relating to stormwater requirements.

## **How to apply for an Adjustment.**

Application forms are available at the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) in Snoqualmie, calling the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600 or via DPER's web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

To complete the application for Adjustment please include the following information with the application form:

1. The specific section of the SWDM you are requesting to be adjusted.
2. The reason you are requesting the Adjustment. Please note that the cost of meeting the standards is not by itself a sufficient reason for approving an Adjustment.
3. An explanation on how the proposed design will provide compensating or comparable performance as intended by the standards to be adjusted.
4. Other relevant information in support of your request such as an Assessor's map with the boundaries of the pertinent parcel highlighted, vicinity maps, preliminary approval conditions, engineering plans, sketches, photos, etc.
5. Payment of the fees.

Applications more likely to be granted by the County clearly show the Adjustment:

1. Produces a compensating or comparable result (to the standard being adjusted) that is in the public interest, AND
2. Meets the objectives of safety, function, appearance, environmental protection, maintainability AND
3. Is based on sound engineering judgment.

## **How Adjustment applications are reviewed.**

The County Adjustment committee reviews the application. This committee includes representatives from DPER and the County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks as well as subject matter experts when needed. The committee reviews the applications and makes a site visit if warranted. In some cases the committee may ask for additional studies or information.

## **Adjustment approval.**

Following committee review the Adjustment is either approved, approved with conditions, or denied. You may appeal denials of the Adjustment or conditions placed on the Adjustment to the Director of DPER.

## **More information.**

More information can be found in the SWDM at [www.kingcounty.gov/environment/water-and-land/stormwater/documents/surface-water-design-manual.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/water-and-land/stormwater/documents/surface-water-design-manual.aspx). The adjustment process is detailed in Section 1.4. Or you can call the Permitting Services Center at 206-296-6600.