

DO YOU NEED A WETLANDS PERMIT?

What actions require an Inland Wetlands Permit?

Any operation within or use of a **wetland** or **watercourse** that involves:

- removal or deposition of material
- obstruction of a wetland or watercourse
- construction in a wetland or watercourse
- alteration of a wetland or watercourse
- pollution of such wetlands or watercourse
- Indirect impacts, such as sediment runoff from an upland area into a wetland or watercourse

Actions in wetlands and watercourses that require a permit are called “regulated activities”.

What is a wetland or watercourse?

“Wetlands” are identified by **soil type** and consist of poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and floodplain soils. “Watercourses” are rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs and all other bodies of water and includes both natural and artificial water features. Land defined as a wetland or watercourse is called a “regulated area”.

How do I know if there are wetlands or watercourses on my property?

The City’s Official Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map provides a general indication of potential wetland and watercourse locations, but a definitive determination of the presence of wetlands soils or a regulated watercourse is made by inspection of actual on-site conditions. Wetlands soils mapping may require the services of a certified soils scientist.

What will happen if I do not get a permit?

Conducting regulated activities without a valid permit may result in an enforcement action being taken. Enforcement actions will typically involve a cease and desist order and require you to defend your actions at a show cause hearing. More serious violations may result in court injunctions and legal actions resulting in fines of up to \$1,000 per day, for each day the violation persists.

<p><i>How do I apply for a permit?</i></p>	<p>Applications for inland wetland permits, map changes and wetland determinations are available from the City Planning office of the Department of Economic Development (Room 208). Completed applications are submitted to that office, along with the applicable plans, project descriptions, mapping and application fee. In most situations, the applicant will be required to provide accurate delineation of the wetlands limits, based on soils mapping done by a qualified professional.</p>
<p><i>What sort of things am I allowed to do without a permit?</i></p>	<p>Property owners are allowed unrestricted use of the non-wetland portions of their land, provided such use does not adversely affect the wetland portions. Wetland portions of residential properties may be mowed, maintained and landscaped, provided such activities do not involve removal or deposition of substantial amounts of materials or alter a watercourse. Most farming and agricultural activities are exempted from wetland regulation, and wetlands may be used for a variety of active and passive recreational uses, such hiking, bird watching, fishing and picnicking.</p>
<p><i>What about other permits?</i></p>	<p>Depending on the type of activity being undertaken, other permits may be required, such as a floodplain management permit, dam and diversion permits from the state Department of Environmental Protection or Section 401 permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The applicant is responsible for seeing that all necessary permits are obtained prior to the start of the activity.</p>
<p><i>Why does the City regulate wetland activities?</i></p>	<p>State law mandates that activities affecting wetlands and watercourses be regulated. Additionally, these areas have a number of attributes which benefit the community. In addition to providing open space and habitat for songbirds and wildlife, wetland areas serve important functions in controlling flooding and in protecting the water quality of our streams and rivers.</p>
<p>For further information, please call the City Planning office at (860) 826-3430. Our office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.</p>	