



## SHORELAND ALTERATION INFORMATION SHEET

### Permits Required

- A shoreland alteration permit is required for any activity within the building setback area including, but not limited to: vegetation removal, access paths, retaining walls, ice ridge alterations, sand blankets, patios and gazebos.
- Additional permits and approvals may be required depending upon the scope of the project. The applicant is advised to consult with the Planning Department and appropriate state and federal agencies to determine whether additional permits, approvals, and reviews are required. Any activity below the OHW of a DNR Protected Water may require a permit from the DNR.

### Terms & Definitions

- **Bluff** - A topographic feature such as a hill, cliff or embankment having the following characteristics:
  1. Part or all of the feature is located in the shoreland area;
  2. The slope rises at least 25 feet or more above the Ordinary High Water (OHW);
  3. The grade of the slope from the toe of the bluff to a point 25 feet or more above the OHW averages 30 percent or greater; and
  4. The slope must drain toward the waterbody.
- **Bluff Impact Zone** - A bluff and land located within 20 feet from the top of the bluff.
- **Conditional Use Permit** - A conditional use permit is issued for a use or activity that may be allowed only upon showing that such use or activity can or will comply with all criteria and standards as outlined in the Ordinance following a public hearing.
- **OHW** - Ordinary High Water Mark: Commonly the point where the natural vegetation changes from predominately aquatic to terrestrial.
- **SIZ** - Shore Impact Zone: Land located between the OHW and 50% of the structure setback.
- **Shoreland** - Land located within 1,000 feet of a lake.
- **Steep Slope** - Lands having average slopes of 12% - 30% as measured over 50 or more feet.

### Bluffs

- Structures and accessory facilities, except stairways and landings, shall not be placed within the *bluff impact zone*.
- Intensive vegetation clearing within *shore and bluff impact zones* is not allowed.
- No grading is allowed in *bluff impact zone*.
- Limited clearing of trees and shrubs and cutting, pruning, and trimming or trees is allowed to provide a view to the water from the principal dwelling site and to accommodate the placement of stairways and landings provided that:
  1. The screening of structures, vehicles, or other facilities, as viewed from the water during leaf-on conditions, is not substantially altered.
- Fill or excavated material may not be placed in *bluff impact zones*.
- Roads, driveways, and parking areas must not be placed within *bluff impact zones*, when other reasonable and feasible placement alternatives exist.

### Vegetation Alterations

- Intensive vegetation clearing within the *shore and bluff impact zones and on steep slopes* is not allowed.
- In *shore and bluff impact zones and on steep slopes*, limited clearing of trees and shrubs and cutting, pruning, and trimming of trees is allowed to provide a view to the water from the principal dwelling site and to accommodate the placement of stairways and landings, picnic areas, access paths, beach and watercraft access areas, and permitted water-oriented accessory structures, provided that the screening of structures, vehicles, or other facilities as viewed from the water, assuming summer, leaf-on conditions, is not substantially reduced.
- The removal of trees, limbs, or branches that are dead, diseased, or pose safety hazards is allowed with a permit. Additionally, removal of invasive species, such as buckthorn, as defined by the DNR is allowed provided the area is re-vegetated with a native non-invasive species.

### Topographic Alterations-Grading and Filling

- A *conditional use permit* is required for the following:

*\*This is only a partial summary of the Shoreland Section of the City of Alexandria Land Use Regulations (Zoning). A copy of the entire ordinance is available at City Hall or on our website at [ci.alexandria.mn.us](http://ci.alexandria.mn.us).*

1. Movement of more than ten (10) cubic yards of material on *steep slopes* or within *shore or bluff impact zones*.
  2. Movement of more than 50 cubic yards of material outside of *steep slopes* and *shore and bluff impact zones*.
- The following considerations and conditions must be adhered to:
    1. No grading is allowed in *bluff impact zones*.
    2. Grading or filling in any type 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 wetland must be evaluated to determine how extensively the proposed activity would affect the functional qualities of the wetland and done in accordance with the rules of the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act, Law of Minnesota 1991, Chapter 354 as amended.
    3. Alterations must be designed and conducted in a manner that ensure only the smallest amount of bare ground is exposed for the shortest time possible.
    4. Mulches or similar materials must be used, where necessary, for temporary bare soil coverage, and a permanent vegetation cover must be established as soon as possible
    5. Methods to minimize soil erosion and to trap sediments before they reach any surface water features must be used.
    6. Altered areas must be stabilized to acceptable erosion control standards consistent with Best Management Practices as identified by the City Engineer.
    7. Fill or excavated material must not be placed in a manner that creates an unstable slope.
    8. Plans to place fill or excavated material on *steep slopes* must be reviewed by a certified engineer for continued slope stability and must not create finished slopes of 30 percent or greater.
    9. Fill or excavated material must not be placed in *bluff impact zones*.
    10. Alterations below the OHW are subject to a Protected Waters permit from the DNR.
  - The Planning Department may require review of grading and filling plans by the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or other qualified technical expert prior to the issuance of a permit. Such review by the SWCD or other qualified technical expert shall be at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator and at the applicant's expense, if necessary.

### **Placement of Natural Rock Riprap**

- Placement of natural rock riprap, including associated grading of the shoreline and placement of a filter blanket, is permitted if the following conditions are met:
  1. The finished slope does not exceed three (3) feet horizontal to one (1) foot vertical.
  2. The landward extent of the riprap is within ten (10) feet of the OHW.

3. The height of the riprap above the OHW does not exceed three (3) feet.

### **Retaining Walls**

- Retaining walls may be allowed in the setback area provided the Planning Department determines that there is no other alternative to control erosion. No tier of a retaining wall shall exceed four (4) feet in height without a plan signed by a registered professional engineer and approved building permit. The plan shall show at minimum: elevations, storm water drainage patterns, soil erode-ability and critical area seeding recommendations.

### **Sand Blanket Beaches**

- New beaches shall not extend more than ten (10) feet waterward of the OHW, exceed 50 feet in width or ½ the width of the lot, whichever is less and may be up to six (6) inches thick.
- A one time addition of up to ten (10) cubic yards of sand may be placed on existing sand beaches on residential lots with a shoreland alteration permit.
- Application of beaches shall include an approved DNR aquatic vegetation removal permit, where required.
- Plant barriers or liners underneath the beach sand are not allowed.

### **Public and Private Watercraft Access Ramps, Approach Roads, and Related Parking**

- Public and private roads and parking areas must be designed to take advantage of natural vegetation and topography to achieve maximum screening from view from public waters.
- Must be designed to control erosion into public waters.
- Roads, driveways, and parking areas must meet structure setbacks and must not be placed within *bluff and shore impact zones*, when other reasonable and feasible alternatives exist.

### **Stormwater Management**

- When possible, existing natural drainage ways, wetlands, and vegetated soil surfaces must be used to convey, store, filter, and retain storm water runoff before discharge to public waters.
- Disturbed areas must be stabilized and protected as soon as possible and facilities or methods used to retain sediment on the site.
- When natural features and vegetation cannot be used, various types of constructed facilities such as diversions, settling basins, skimming devices, dikes, waterways and ponds may be used.
- Developments with a total disturbed surface of ½ acre or greater must have a storm water control plan as required by MPCA rules.