



NEW HANOVER COUNTY

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Memorandum

January 1, 2018

To: Engineers, Surveyors, Developers, Builders and Grading Contractors

From: James P. Iannucci, PE, CFM, County Engineer

Subject: Changes to Local Sediment and Erosion Control Program

New Hanover County has been in contact with local engineers, developers and builders that do work within the unincorporated county and the City of Wilmington to address the Local Sediment and Erosion Control Program. After listening to and addressing both concerns and suggestions, there have been numerous changes and revisions to the New Hanover County Local Sediment and Erosion Control Program. New Hanover County has embraced this new approach to permitting and inspecting land disturbing activities to provide more efficient service to anyone using the program. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a brief overview to assist in submitting plans and maintaining sediment and erosion control measures on sites located within New Hanover County. The three main areas we focused on improving are:

- Fees
- Plan Review Process
- Inspections

Fees

Plan Review Fees

The review fees have been adjusted to simplify the process and make it easier to submit revisions. There will be a onetime review fee of \$200.00 for Sediment and Erosion Control plans. There will no longer be a re-review fee or a revision fee for plan review. An overuse fee of \$200.00 can be assessed in the event that there are excessive plan resubmissions. No plan review fees will be assessed to individual builders that disturb over an acre within a previously permitted project. No plan review fees will be assessed to builders working under a developer's permit or if a Land Entry Agreement is in place.

Land Disturbance Fees

Land disturbance fees for commercial development are \$400 per acre disturbed and are collected at the time a Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion is issued. Land disturbance fees for residential development are \$150 per lot and are collected at the time of plat recordation. These fees are under review and may be adjusted during the budget review process for fiscal year 2018-2019.

Plan Review Process

Plan Review Process

The plan review process is being revised to expedite reviews and to reduce the amount of time required to begin land disturbing activities. A preliminary plan review for Stormwater and/or Sediment and Erosion Control with staff from both or either discipline is being offered to ensure consistency in the plans and to provide feedback that will assist in complying with New Hanover County ordinances. Preconstruction Meetings are no longer required but a voluntary meeting in the office or onsite will be offered. These preconstruction meetings are intended to be beneficial to everyone involved but are no longer mandatory to receive a permit and begin land disturbing activities.

Combined Plan Review

Combined Plan Review is now being offered. This is not required and individual Sediment and Erosion Control Plans or Stormwater Plans can still be submitted per current procedures. However, combined plan review of Stormwater and Sediment and Erosion Control would only require one set of plans and one complete set of calculations. Electronic plan set submittal is preferred. Tim Lowe, PE will review stormwater and temporary stormwater control measures and Beth Wetherill, CPESC will review the sediment and erosion control measures. County Engineer Jim Iannucci, PE will handle all appeals as per the current ordinance. Regardless of how plans are submitted, separate permits will be issued for the Land Disturbing Permit and Stormwater Permit to expedite the process and keep the project on schedule. For example, a Land Disturbing Permit could be issued even if the Stormwater Permit is still under review.

Standardized Plan Sheets

New Hanover County is in the process of using a consultant to design a plan set package and plan review checklist. The checklist will include those items that need to be on the plans to comply with the ordinance. The plan package will include details on electronic submittal of plans and specifications. The plan set will also include a details sheet with all approved sediment and erosion control measures included.

Plan Review Comments

Review comments will now be sent out in the Request for Additional Information format. Comments regarding compliance with the Sediment and Erosion Control Ordinance will be listed in the first paragraph. These comments will be limited to those things required by ordinance and within scope. Any plan suggestions will be included in the second paragraph, but it is completely voluntary to follow suggestions to modify or improve the project plans, and staff will make regular note that suggestions are voluntary and have no bearing on the approval of project plans in terms of content or time.

Requests for Additional Information

Our objective is to minimize requests for additional information and to reduce the amount of time needed to issue Land Disturbing Permits. The overall goal is to reduce the initial review period from 30 to 20 calendar days and reduce the re-review from 15 to 10 calendar days.

Inspections

Inspection Process

The inspection process has been modified to gain efficiency and to prevent sediment from leaving a construction site. After a permit has been issued a contractor may immediately begin installing the sediment and erosion control measures. Once the measures have been installed, the contractor will contact New Hanover County to perform an initial inspection to ensure the site is in compliance. After the initial inspection, inspections will be either (1) complaint driven or (2) periodic (approx. 90 days).

Field Inspection Report

Field Inspection Report will be revised to include corrective actions needed to bring into compliance. The report will be divided into two sections. The first section will include actions requiring immediate attention to bring the site into compliance. Items listed in this section will be inspected in 7-10 calendar days. The second section will include actions required to bring the site into compliance but will not require immediate attention. Items listed in this section will be inspected at the next periodic inspection. Suggestions for improvement or alternative measures will not be included on the Field Inspection Report.

Notice of Violations

Notice of Violations will only be issued for violations that cannot be corrected or the responsible party refuses to correct them, and sediment is allowed to travel off-site. Immediate corrective action is necessary or the NOV could lead to civil penalties being assessed. The goal is to remedy all issues when possible with corrective action to bring the site back into compliance. Therefore, fines may not be immediately assessed, but immediate action must be taken to define a schedule of work and/or revise the plans to bring the site into compliance.

Feedback

New Hanover County will be assessing the effectiveness of these changes over the next six months.

Please provide feedback on the effectiveness of the changes or feel free to make other recommendations that would help the program serve you better. Contact Jim Iannucci, PE at (910) 798-7142 or jiannucci@nhcgov.com.