St. Mary's County
Department of Land use and Growth Management

Customer Assistance Guide

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What Is an Environmental Permit?

An Environmental Permit is required for all land development and disturbance in the Critical Area, except those activities listed below. The Critical Area is defined as all land within 1,000 feet of the mean high water line of the Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries, and tidal wetlands.

The environmental review and permitting process was designed to utilize the County's existing development review and permitting procedures to implement the Critical Areas program.

Review of these five important elements: the Critical Area Buffer, lot coverage, steep slopes, forest cover and wetlands, is essential in the environmental permitting process. The process ensures that proposed projects are reviewed for compliance with local, state and federal regulations and that any adverse impacts on water quality will be mitigated.

Environmental Permits protect a valuable and fragile resource - the Chesapeake Bay.

WHEN AN ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT IS REQUIRED:

Building a House
Clearing Brush
Cutting one or more trees
Filling or Grading
Building a Deck or Gazebo
Building/Placement of Outbuildings
Building a Walkway or Driveway
Building a Pool; Above or In Ground
Commercial Aquaculture Operations
Installing Septic System or Drainfields

NO ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT REQUIRED:

Applying Driveway Sealant
Planting Trees and Shrubs
Installing New Siding
Interior Renovation
Mowing Existing Lawns
Building Fences (No Masonry Work)
Painting; Interior or Exterior
Installing New Shingles

If you live in the Critical Area and are unsure whether Permit is required, please call the Department of Land Use and Growth Management before starting work. You may contact the Environmental Planner or the Permits Coordinator at 301 475-4200, Ext.*1500.