

Department of Environment and Local Government Source and Surface Water Management

Watercourse and Wetland Permitting Guidelines

Activities that Require a Permit

The *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Regulation* under the *Clean Water Act* requires that anyone carrying out an alteration in or within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, must first obtain a permit from the Department of Environment and Local Government. An “alteration” means a temporary or permanent change to vegetation, structures or gradient including changes that affect the flow of water within watercourses or wetlands.

Alterations requiring a Watercourse and Wetlands Alteration (WAWA) Permit may include, but are not limited to: tree and vegetation removal; soil disturbance including grubbing, excavation, land preparation, grading, infilling, general landscaping; construction of structures such as homes, camps, garages, patios or boardwalks; infrastructure installation; septic tank and field installation; road construction, including installation of a culvert or the construction of a bridge, and driveway construction.

Types of Permits:

The department can issue the following types of WAWA Permits depending on the extent of the alteration(s) and the significance of the potential impacts, or environmental risk, to watercourses or wetlands.

Standard Permits apply to projects with a medium to high environmental risk and are issued for a single alteration at a single location. Standard permit applications are reviewed by the Department of Environment and Local Government and in some cases, the Department of Energy and Resource Development, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Examples of projects requiring a standard permit include bridges, culverts, dams, and most work within a stream channel or within a wetland. The timing for receiving standard permits depends on the scope of the proposed activities and their potential to affect the environment. External review may be required by other government departments and can take up to two months or more to review.

Provisional Permits apply to alterations that typically have little or no potential to cause detrimental impact to a watercourse or wetland. A provisional permit can be issued in such cases provided that: a) the proposed activities meet the applicability clauses

specific to the alteration type; and b) activities are not within an area protected by the *Wellfield Protected Area Designation Order* or the *Watershed Protected Area Designation Order* (i.e. protected municipal drinking water under the *Clean Water Act*). Provisional permits will be processed within 10 business days of receiving the application, provided that all required information and the application fee have been submitted.

Multiple Permits can be issued for more than one alteration at a single site or for a number of similar alterations proposed at separate locations. The multiple permit eliminates the need for an applicant to fill out a separate application for each alteration or site. The timing for receiving multiple permits depends on the scope of the proposed activities, their potential to affect the environment and if external review is required.

Frequent applicants, such as Municipalities and the forestry industry, or those that may own multiple properties have the option to apply for a multiple permit. Conditions specific to the activity they are applying for must be adhered to.

Certification Permits are a type of multiple permit issued to applicants that have successfully participated in a training course and examination. Currently, the only WAWA Certification Program available is aimed at the forestry sector and is offered as a course through Maritime College of Forest Technology and Eastern Roadway Consulting & Training Inc. The course consists of a week-long class ending with an examination administered by the department on the final day. Participants must successfully complete the examination in order to become certified.

Activities or alterations permitted under the WAWA Certification Program (Forestry) include: Constructing a new single span bridge or replacing an existing one; installing a new circular culvert, pipe arch, or an open-bottom culvert or replacing an existing one; carrying out maintenance work on bridges, culverts, roads, and run-off control structures; decommissioning and removing watercourse crossings; installing temporary bridges and removing or managing beaver dams.

Certification permits are typically issued within a few business days of receiving the application, provided that all required information and the application fee have been submitted.

Additional information about the certification program can be obtained by contacting the Source and Surface Water Management Branch at the Department of Environment and Local Government. Contact Details can be found at the end of this document.

An **Emergency Permit** may be issued in situations where there is a present or imminent event that is affecting or could affect the health, safety or welfare of people or is likely to cause damage to buildings, infrastructure or property. The department determines whether or not the situation is deemed an emergency.

A **Permit Renewal or Revision** may be issued when an alteration was not completed within the time period specified on the permit or in the event that the scope of the

project has been modified since the time when the permit was issued. A renewal may be requested within two years of the original issue date. After this time period, a new permit application must be submitted. Permits may be renewed a maximum of twice in five years.

Permit Fees

WAWA permit application fees are as follows:

- Standard Permit: \$25.00 per alteration
- Multiple (. certification) Permit: \$20.00 for each alteration to a maximum of \$200.00
- Provisional Permit: \$10.00 per alteration
- Emergency Permit: \$50.00

Renewal/Revision: \$10.00 per request

Enforcement and Penalties

The department carries out all compliance and enforcement actions in accordance with its [Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#) which is available by visiting www.gnb.ca and following the links to Departments > Environment and Local Government > Publications.

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