

Creek Hazard DPA – Frequently Asked Questions

Environment Department – Phone: 604.990.2480 or Email: environment@dnv.org

1) Why is the Creek Hazard Development Permit Area (DPA) important?

The Creek Hazard DPA was established to minimize the risk to people and property from creek hazard. This includes flooding, debris flow, or debris flooding.

2) Which creeks are subject to flooding?

Any watercourse can be subject to flooding and/or debris flow at any time. The District of North Vancouver (District) has commissioned several creek hazard reports that include flood and debris flow risk. The reports can be accessed via the District's Property View App at <http://geoweb.dnv.org/> under the Property Information box.

3) Where can I see a map of all of the Creek Hazard DPAs in the District?

All DPA mapping can be found in the District of North Vancouver's (District) Property Viewer App at <http://geoweb.dnv.org/>.

Disclaimer: The Creek Hazard DPA also applies to areas of identified flood risk that may not yet be on the Creek Hazard DPA map, including waterfront properties that are subject to sea level rise.

Contact staff at environment@dnv.org if you have a question regarding a specific property.

4) Which properties are included in the Creek Hazard DPA?

The Creek Hazard DPA includes properties next to watercourses that have been identified with a potential risk due to debris flow, debris flood, flood, and sea level rise. The DPA applies to all properties within the identified risk area and those intersecting the 10m reference line from the small creek flood areas.

5) When would I need a Creek Hazard DPA permit?

If your property is in the Creek Hazard DPA, and you are planning to build or alter the land, a Development Permit (DP) may be required. Your property may be in other DPAs; if so, the DP will need to address all applicable DPAs. Certain exemptions may apply (see #6).

6) What are some common exemptions?

It is important to note that any work occurring within the Creek Hazard DPA will require review from the Environment Department. Either a DP will be issued or a formal exemption will be granted. Drawings and an *Environmental Development Permit Area Application* form are required to be submitted to the Environment Department for a formal exemption. The following are common exemptions, where a DP is not required:

- Development that takes place outside the Creek Hazard DPA, provided that it does not transfer risk to neighbouring properties or impact the creek or waterfront in any way;
- Repairs or renovations to a permanent structure, provided that there is no expansion of the building footprint, including no cantilevered or projecting portions of the permanent structure; and
- Replacement or repair of an existing deck providing that the location and dimensions of the deck do not change.

7) I am just doing an interior renovation – do I still need to go through this process?

Interior renovations are exempt from requiring a Creek Hazard DP, however a formal exemption will still need to be granted. Drawings and an *Environmental Development Permit Area Application* form are required to be submitted to the Environment Department for a formal exemption.

8) What do I need to apply for a Creek Hazard DP?

The following documents are required for a Creek Hazard DP application:

- Complete *Environmental Development Permit Area Application* form;
- Complex legal topographical survey – see [Master Requirement BLD 105](#) for more details;
- Site plan; and
- Flood hazard assessment report from a Qualified Professional Engineer or Geoscientist (with expertise in creek hazards) that:
 - Identifies potential risk from creek hazard(s);
 - Proposes risk reduction measures if required (including flood construction levels, if appropriate);
 - Confirms that the new proposed development is safe for the use intended; and
 - Includes a signed and sealed *Flood Assurance Statement*.

Additional information may be required after review of the submitted documents.

9) My existing house is in the Creek Hazard DPA. Do I need to do anything?

The DPA guidelines recognize that on several properties in the District, the house, yard, and existing landscaping already encroach into the Creek Hazard DPA. Any existing and lawfully constructed buildings, existing landscaping, and other pre-existing land uses are considered to be ‘grandparented’, that is, they can remain in place as they are. A DP review is required if any changes are proposed to the existing structures in the Creek Hazard DPA.

10) I want to tear down a house in the Creek Hazard DPA and build a new home. Can the original footprint of the home be 'grandparented'?

In most cases, a historical foundation cannot be 'grandparented'. Contact staff at environment@dnv.org if you would like to discuss a specific property.

11) How will the Creek Hazard DPA affect my property for future development?

A Qualified Professional Engineer or Geoscientist may be required to assess the proposed development and provide recommendations for risk reduction measures. The proposed development will be required to adhere to the guidelines set out in the Creek Hazard DPA guidelines.

12) Will the Creek Hazard DPA affect how large of a home I can build?

Protection from Creek Hazard is one of a number of legislated requirements of the District. Applying this and other requirements may in certain situations decrease the potential gross buildable floor area of a home. It is up to the architect to design a home that meets all of the legislated requirements of the District.

13) I want to build a basement in a house within the Creek Hazard DPA. What do I have to do?

Any new habitable space developed within the Creek Hazard DPA requires a DP. See #8 for the requirements for applying for a Creek Hazard DP.

14) The owner of the property next door/across the street built a new home. Can I build my new home like theirs?

Every lot is unique and not all lots are in the Creek Hazard DPA. Additionally, some lots are in other Development Permit Areas (e.g. Streamside Protection, Wildfire Hazard, etc.). Therefore, it is not possible to compare lots to each other.

15) There is an existing storm connection that goes directly to a creek on my property. What happens when I redevelop the lot?

District staff will determine if a new or alternative storm connection or location will be required during redevelopment. A DP for Creek Hazard and Streamside Protection may be required if alterations are proposed. Under the Provincial *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA), you may be required to submit a Notification or apply for a Change Approval for [changes in and about a stream](#). A Qualified Environmental Professional can advise you on WSA requirements for your project.

16) How long does the Creek Hazard DP process take?

Process time varies depending on whether or not there are:

- Any other DPs required;
- The completeness and accuracy of the reports and information received;
- The overall complexity of the project; and
- Whether additional information is required to process the application.

17) How much does a Creek Hazard DP cost?

The fees are set out in the [Fees and Charges Bylaw](#) and changes from year to year.

18) Who do I hire to complete a creek hazard assessment report?

Qualified Professional (QP) means a professional with appropriate education, training, experience, is fully insured, and in good standing with their relevant professional association. For the purpose of the creek hazard assessment, a specialist Professional Engineer or Professional Geoscientist may write the report. The QP must have experience in geotechnical and geohazard assessments, river hydraulics and hydrology, debris flow processes, and/or structural engineering expertise in connection with mitigation works.

Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia is the licensing and regulatory body responsible for BC's professional engineers and geoscientists. The association is charged with protecting public safety in BC by setting and maintaining high standards of professional practice and ethical conduct for its members and licensees. For a list of QPs, see: <https://www.egbc.ca/Registrant-Directory>.

19) When can I apply for my building permit?

Once a DPA package has been reviewed and accepted, staff will inform the applicant that a building permit may be applied for.

20) Will my creek flood my home? How can I find out if it will flood or not?

The District has limited information on flood hazards relating to individual properties. Severe weather events, and other factors that lead to flooding, are extremely difficult to predict. If you are concerned, please hire a Qualified Professional Engineer or Geoscientist with the appropriate experience in assessing flood risk.

21) Does my insurance cover flooding damage to my home?

Insurance coverage regarding flooding damage is between the homeowner and their insurance provider. Please reach out to your insurance provider for more information.

22) When did Council adopt legislation requiring a Creek Hazard DPA?

The requirement for a Creek Hazard DP is set out in Schedule B of the Official Community Plan adopted in July 2012.

23) What do I submit if the property falls into multiple DPAs?

If your property falls into multiple DPAs, please review all relevant information for each DPA prior to any type of design work. If clarification is still needed, you can contact the Environment Department for further information. A coordinating professional may be required to coordinate all DP requirements.

24) What do I do if the property is also within a DPA for “Form & Character for Commercial, Industrial, or Multi-Family Development” and/or “Energy & Water Conservation & Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions”?

If your property also falls within one of these DPAs, please review any relevant information located on the District website prior to any type of design work. If clarification is still needed, you can contact Development Planning by phone at 604.990.2480 or by email at planning@dnv.org.