



Protection of Natural Environment Development Permit Area – FAQ's

District of North Vancouver
Environment Department - 355 West Queens Rd, North Vancouver, BC V7N 4N5
Questions about this form: Phone: 604-990-2311 or Email: enviopermits@dnv.org

1) Why Protection of the Natural Environment?

The Protection of the Natural Environment Development Permit Area (DPA) has been adopted to protect the District's natural setting, ecological systems, biodiversity and wildlife corridors.

2) Where can I see a map of all of the Natural Environment Protection areas in the District?

The Natural Environment Protection areas are identified on Geoweb on the District's GIS website at <http://geoweb.dnv.org/> under applications, properties, layers, layer manager, DPA Natural Environment.

3) What areas are included in the Natural Environment DPA?

Habitat for species at risk;
Mature stands of trees;
Raptor nesting sites;
Wetlands; and
Wildlife corridors.

This includes features, sites and species whose presence enhances the biodiversity of the area.

4) When would I need a permit?

If your property is in the Natural Environment DPA, and you are planning to carry out "development" activity, as defined in the Official Community Plan (OCP), a Development Permit (DP) may be required. Certain exemptions apply (see Exemptions).

5) What are some common Exemptions (where no DP is required)?

Regular maintenance of existing buildings or landscaping, and any development that takes place outside the Natural Environment Protected Area do not require a Development Permit. Repair or minor renovation of a building on its existing foundation is also exempt.

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

No. Interior renovations are exempt from requiring a Protection of the Natural Environment Development Permit.

7) What information do I need to apply for a Natural Environment Development Permit?

A legal topographical survey and a site plan showing the proposed location of the works to be undertaken, and potentially a site survey and report from a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP). The report should identify impacts to the Natural Environment Protected Area, requirements to protect species at risk in accordance with the federal *Species At Risk Act* (SARA) and the provincial *Wildlife Act* and mitigation and/or compensation measures to be undertaken.

Environmentally valuable resources include such things as eagle nest trees, habitats for species at risk, year-round or seasonal streams and wetlands and travel corridors for small and large wildlife. Many of these are protected by federal or provincial legislation. The provincial Ministry of Environment has prepared *Develop with Care 2012: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia* which provides a comprehensive guide to maintaining environmental values. <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2012/DWC-Cover.pdf>

8) My house is already in the Protected Area, what should I do now?

The DPA guidelines recognize that on many properties in the District, the house, yard and existing landscaping already lie within the Natural Environment Protected Area. Any existing and lawfully constructed buildings, existing landscaping and other pre-existing land uses are considered to be “grandparented” – they can remain in place as they are. A Development Permit is required only if new development activity is proposed within the Natural Environment Protected Area or if a new home is being constructed.

9) What is “Habitat Compensation”?

Habitat means an area where any species of wildlife naturally occurs and depends on this area to carry out its life processes. When new development cannot take place outside the Natural Environment Protected Area, resulting habitat losses need to be offset by habitat gains. This reflects a basic principle of “no net loss” whereby unavoidable habitat losses are balanced by new habitat replacement. The amount and type of habitat compensation will be determined in consultation with District Environment staff in accordance with standard habitat enhancement techniques and may require input from QEP(s) and federal and provincial environmental staff.

Habitat compensation can take place as removing existing structures from within the Protected Area, treating and removing invasive plant species, stream restoration or new riparian planting, or a combination of all of these measures.

10) What is a habitat compensation plan?

Includes but is not limited to:

- A plan that describes how the proposed project will ensure “no net loss”
- A habitat compensation balance sheet showing areas/types of habitat lost and gained
- A planting plan written or otherwise of native plant species, listing each species (name), location(s) of plants and each plant’s size
- A tree planting plan based on a 3:1 ratio of replacement trees to trees removed
- Details of soil removal or importing work, grading and drainage
- Details of other proposed mitigation measures such as nesting boxes, wildlife trees/snags or habitat piles
- An invasive species removal, treatment and monitoring plan.

11) What is the security deposit for and how is the amount determined?

If habitat compensation is required as part of a Development Permit, a quote outlining all of the costs to implement the compensation measures needs to be submitted to staff. This includes design costs, materials costs and all labour costs. The security deposit is based on the value of the work and is set at 125% of the value of the work to be done.

12) How do I get my security deposit back?

Once the habitat compensation work has been completed, including any monitoring, Environment staff will conduct a site visit in order to determine if the habitat compensation work has been done according to the approved habitat compensation plan.

13) How will the Natural Environment DPA affect my property for future development?

Foundations of lawfully constructed structures are grandparented in their present locations until such time as voluntary and complete redevelopment takes place at which time current Natural Environment DP policies will apply.

14) I want to buy a house within the Natural Environment Development Permit Area and I want to tear it down and build a new home. Can the original footprint of the home be 'grandparented'?

No. When a new home is being built, existing foundations are not grandparented and you would be required to apply for a DP for the Protection of the Natural Environment. Existing footprints or locations of structures are only grandparented in special circumstances involving minor work.

15) Will the Natural Environment DP affect how large of a home I can build?

The Natural Environment DPA is one of a number of legislated requirements of the DNV. Applying this and other requirements may in certain situations decrease the potential gross buildable floor area of a home. It is very important that you review the information on the District's website <http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?a=5624&c=1166>

16) The owner of the property next door/across the street/at the end of my block built a new home, can I build mine like theirs?

Every lot is unique and not all lots are in the Natural Environment Development Permit Area. Additionally, some lots are in other Development Permit areas; therefore it is not possible to compare lots to each other.

17) How long does the Natural Environment 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 and the overall complexity of the project. There is often a pre-application stage to gather the environmental baseline information, and an application review stage which involves screening the information. Once all information is received, then processing generally takes 4 – 6 weeks. This may depend on whether additional information is required to process the application.

18) How much does a Natural Environment DP cost?

The current fees are set out in the Fees and Charges Bylaw.

19) Who do I hire for professional reports, surveys, etc.?

It is up to the homeowner or applicant to hire appropriately qualified professionals that can provide the type of information required by the DNV. However, if we require a report by a QEP they must have the appropriate qualifications.

A Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) is a person, acting alone or in conjunction with other QEP's, with expertise in the assessment and restoration of natural habitat and is also a registered member, in good standing, of the respective BC professional association constituted under an Act of BC law (Biology, Agrology, Forestry, Geoscience and Engineering). Typically for Natural Environment DPA assessments, the District recommends that a QEP should be a Registered Professional Biologist or accepted alternative with the appropriate training and experience.

20) When can I apply for my building permit?

Once staff has accepted a DPA package and no further design changes are expected, a Building Permit application will generally be accepted.

21) When did council adopt legislation requiring a Protection of the Natural Environment DPA?

The requirement for this DP is set out in Schedule B of the Official Community Plan adopted in July, 2012.

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

If your property falls into multiple DPAs for Protection of the Environment and/or Protection of Development from Hazardous Conditions, please review all relevant information on the District's website <http://www.dnv.org/> prior to any type of design work. If clarification is still needed, you may contact staff in the Environment Section.

You will need to designate a lead professional to coordinate all aspects of the required DPA reports and review the process with DNV staff.

23) 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 all relevant information on the District's website <http://www.dnv.org/> prior to any type of design work. The lead DNV staff contact will be a Development Planner. You can contact Development Planning by telephone at 604-990-2387 or by email at planning@dnv.org for an appointment,

24) Do District of North Vancouver (DNV) projects have to follow the DPA guidelines?

Yes all DNV projects are expected to follow the DPA guidelines. However, the DNV is responsible for maintaining and providing critical public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water and sanitary sewer pipes and for maintaining existing community service infrastructure.

Much of this infrastructure was installed many years ago when knowledge and requirements protecting riparian lands were not as prevalent. In many cases there were no regulations governing environmental protection at the time of design and construction. As a result much of this infrastructure is located in areas of sensitive environmental habitat that would be preferable to avoid all together. This is not always possible however the DNV strives to adhere to the most current environmental best management practices in all of our operations and capital projects.