

Slope Hazard DPA – Frequently Asked Questions

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

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

The Slope Hazard DPA was established to minimize the risk to people and property from slope hazards, such as landslides and rock fall.

2) Where can I see a map of all of the Slope 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/>.

3) Which properties are included in the Slope Hazard DPA?

The Slope Hazard DPA applies to those properties that are within 20 metres of the top or bottom of a steep slope. A steep slope is defined as a slope with an angle greater than 20 degrees (36%) and greater than 10 metres in height.

4) When would I need a Slope Hazard DPA permit?

If your property is in the Slope 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 #5).

5) What are some common exemptions?

It is important to note that any work occurring within the Slope 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 Slope Hazard DPA, provided that it does not impact the Slope Hazard area or transfer risk to neighbouring properties;
- Non-structural repairs or renovation to a permanent structure on its existing foundation, provided that there is no expansion of the building footprint, and provided that the repairs or renovations do not increase the gross floor area of the permanent structure; and
- Replacement or repair of an existing deck providing that the location and dimensions of the deck do not change.

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

Any interior renovations that include structural work will require a DP. Other interior renovations will be exempt from requiring a DP. Drawings and an *Environmental Development Permit Area Application* form are required to be submitted to the Environment Department for a formal exemption.

7) What do I need to apply for a Slope Hazard DP?

The following documents are required for a Slope 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
 - Slope hazard assessment report from a Qualified Professional Engineer or Geoscientist that:
 - Identifies any risk and mitigation measures to be undertaken;
 - Demonstrates that the proposed new development meets the District Risk Tolerance Criteria for Natural Hazards;
 - Confirms that the new proposed development is safe for the use intended; and
 - Includes signed and sealed Appendix D: Landslide Assurance Statement.
- * A detailed slope hazard assessment report may be required depending on the proposed work. Please contact the Environment Department for more information.*

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

8) My existing house is in the Slope 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 Slope 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 Slope Hazard DPA.

9) I want to tear down a house in the Slope Hazard DPA and build a new home. Can the original footprint of the home be ‘grandparented’?

Only under certain circumstances would a historical foundation be ‘grandparented’. Building on the existing footprint would only be considered if the historical foundation meets the other DPA requirements and can be demonstrated to be safe by a Qualified Professional. The foundation must also meet the requirements sent out by the District Building Department.

10) How will the Slope 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 Slope Hazard DPA guidelines.

11) Will the Slope Hazard DPA affect how large of a home I can build?

Protection from Slope 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.

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

Any new habitable space developed within the Slope Hazard DPA requires a DP. See #7 for the requirements for applying for a Slope Hazard DP.

13) 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 Slope 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.

14) Are there design restrictions for the Slope Hazard DP?

There are a number of guidelines that may impact design, including locating buildings and structures as far as reasonably possible from steep slopes. Examples include:

- Stepped and articulated building forms that integrate and reflect the natural site contours and slope conditions should be used, and large unbroken building masses that are unsuitable for sloped conditions should be avoided.
- The construction of structures, pathways/trails, utilities, drainage facilities, swimming pools, hot tubs, ponds, landscaping or other uses at or near the top or base of any steep slopes should be avoided.

** All design restrictions can be found in the Slope Hazard DPA details from Schedule B of the Official Community Plan.*

15) Can I build a pool in the 20 metre buffer zone?

The construction of structures, pathways/trails, utilities, drainage facilities, swimming pools, hot tubs, ponds, landscaping or other uses at or near the top or base of any steep slopes should be avoided. A minimum 20 metre buffer area from the top or base of any steep slope should be maintained free of development except as recommended by a qualified professional.

16) How long does the Slope 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 Slope 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 slope 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 slope hazard assessment, a specialist Professional Engineer or Professional Geoscientist may write the report. The QP must have experience in geotechnical and geohazard assessments 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) When did Council adopt legislation requiring a Slope Hazard DPA?

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

21) 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.

22) 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.