



Floodway Construction

#09

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[SKAGITCOUNTYWA.GOV](https://www.skagitcountywa.gov)

Skagit County

Planning and
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This information only applies to property within unincorporated Skagit County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Washington State RCW 86.16 require local governments to regulate construction in the floodway as part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Skagit County also participates in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. Flood insurance policy holders in Skagit County receive a discount on their rates because of Skagit County's favorable rating. FEMA and Washington State conduct periodic field visits to assess how well Skagit County is following adopted codes and policies. Violations can affect Skagit County's rating and can result in increased insurance premiums for every flood insurance policyholder in the county.

How can I tell if my property is in the floodway?

You may contact Skagit County to evaluate the property location as related to the floodplain or floodway. You may search online at FEMA Map Center <https://msc.fema.gov>.

What is the difference between the floodplain and the floodway?

The floodplain is an area that has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year. Construction is generally allowed and must be flood-resistant and/or elevated one foot above base flood.

The floodway is a high-risk area that is subject to more frequent flooding with high water depths, velocity, including potential debris and is therefore subject to more restrictive regulations.

Can I construct a new residence in the floodway?

No. Residences may not be constructed in the floodway.

Can I construct a non-residential building in the floodway?

A structure consisting of posts and a roof may be built, if all other codes are complied with. Agricultural structures or enclosed non-residential buildings that are not elevated on posts or columns require a "No-Rise Study,". All structures placed in floodway need to be able to meet hydrodynamic forces such as impact, scouring and drag, including suction force. SCC14.34.190(1).

Can I clear or grade land in the floodway?

Since the floodway is an extremely hazardous area with high erosion potential, grading or fill is not permitted, unless a “No-Rise Study” is provided SCC14.34.190(1).

Are recreational vehicles allowed in the floodway?

Limited use is allowed, especially during November through April SCC14.34.190(4).
See Recreational Vehicles #10 for more details.

What permits are required to build or place a building/structure in the floodway?

Any building or structure to be constructed or placed in a floodway requires a Flood and Building permit, no exceptions are applied even for buildings/structures under 200 sq ft.
SCC15.04.030(1)1(D).

Do temporary buildings, shipping containers, or sheds on skids require permits?

Yes. There is no exemption for such structures in the floodway.

Can I build a shed in the floodway if it has wheels?

Only if constructed on a currently licensed, road-ready, standard-size trailer. Such trailers are required to be moved off site during November-April. SCC14.34.190(4).

How do I apply for a permit?

Apply using the online portal: [Civic Access Portal](#)

Who should I contact if I have questions?

You may contact us if you have any questions via:
Online: [Ask a Permit Tech](#)

Remember, asking questions first can save lots of headaches, heartaches, and money!