

Wildfire Development Permits

A guide to Wildfire Development Permit Requirements

(Accompanies the Guide “Development Permits: A Guide to the Development Permit Process”)

This Guide accompanies a full Brochure

This guide is intended to help in preparing an application for a Wildfire Development Permit (DP). It does not answer general questions about DP's or processing the application. This Guide is a supplement to the Development & Environmental Services Department Brochure, “**Development Permits: A Guide to the Development Permit Process**”. It is important to use the following information in conjunction with that brochure (available from Planning Staff or the Regional District website).



What is a Wildfire DP area?

The Okanagan has a naturally dry climate and a community interface with large forested areas. Wildfire will be an ever-present threat. The accumulation of small choices such as roof and siding material, building material, screening of soffits, screening the tops of chimneys, using non-combustible landscape mulch, and the types of landscape plants, can add up to either saving or losing a home to wildfire.

The development permit area is established in the immediate vicinity of the provincial forest and large forested parks. The development permit guidelines deal with modifying how individual new homes are constructed with the goal of creating a more fire-safe structures and yards.

What are the guidelines for development in a Wildfire DP area?

Wildfire DP areas are defined in the text and maps of the applicable Official Community Plans (OCPs), or in the case of Joe Rich in the Joe Rich Rural Land Use (RLUB) Bylaw. Each type of DP area is defined in the section of the OCP entitled “Development Permits” and has a corresponding set of Guidelines in the Appendix of the document.

Planning or Inspections Staff can determine whether or not a property lies within a Wildfire Interface Development Permit area.

There is a flow chart showing how to determine development permit application requirements in this guide.

Is a Wildfire DP always required for new home construction in the DP area?

There are some circumstances where a Wildfire DP may not be required such as for small additions. It is also possible that there may already be a DP or a covenant on the title of the property that deals with the issue of wildfire.

If it appears that a DP is required, there is a **streamlined option** for property owners that agree to comply with the recommendations contained in the DP guidelines. It is possible to place a covenant on the title of the property that will require property owners to comply with the DP guidelines. Subsequent building permit applications must comply with the guideline requirements. Putting a covenant on the title essentially bypasses official DP application processes and fees, professional reports, and minimizes time delays.

Inspection Staff can provide more detailed information about the streamlined option.



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Are professional reports required for Wildfire DP applications?

Typically the only reason a property owner would not choose the streamlined option discussed previously is if they did not want to abide by the guidelines, or wish to use alternatives.

In that case those alternatives would need to be reviewed by either a professional forester or a professional engineer experienced in fire safety in order to ensure that the proposed changes still meet or exceed the level of fire safety represented by the DP guidelines. The type of professional review required would depend upon the changes being proposed and would be determined by Development & Environmental Services Staff.

What happens if other DP's are required in addition to the Wildfire DP?

It is possible that a property may have several development permits required for one proposal. For example, an industrial development may be in both a DP area that ensures the good design of buildings and landscaping, as well as a DP area for wildfire.

It is important that the design of the proposal respond to all the different guidelines for each DP type.

The guidelines for different DP's are intended to be used for a variety of different proposals and different sites. Some resolution between overlapping guidelines for different types of DP's may be necessary. For example, the decorative landscaping required around a new building may need to exclude certain types of flammable plants in order to reduce the possibility of the spread of wildfire to a structure.

Typically the professionals involved, in consultation with Planning Staff and the applicant, merge the various guidelines into one design for the site. This one design, along with the professional reports required by the guidelines for any of the DP types, will form the basis of the application.

Determining DP Application Requirements

Determine if the proposal requires a Wildfire DP

Inspections Staff can help in interpreting the requirements. Staff can also provide advice about a **streamlined option**. In the streamlined process, provided a covenant is registered on the title of the property and building permit applications comply with the guidelines, a DP will not be required.

Review the Guidelines

The Wildfire DP Guidelines, along with the guidelines for any other required DP's, will form the foundation for evaluating the application.

Obtain Professional Reports

Staff can help determine if a professional report is required as part of the DP application. The professional report must consider the DP guidelines and indicate that any proposed alternatives meet or exceed the level of safety represented by the guidelines.

Review completed application with Development & Environmental Services Department staff and submit for formal consideration