
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. In the event of a flood emergency, who can I call?

In the event of a flood emergency, landowners should first contact their local government. The [Provincial Flood Emergency Plan \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/preparedness/flood-emergency-plan) states, "...local authorities hold primary responsibility for flood response and the protection of properties within their jurisdiction." The plan assumes that local governments will initiate actions, will undertake primary assessments (with the assistance of contractors if necessary), will implement local emergency plans, and will assume site command for response activities within their jurisdictions.

2. When is an application for Changes in and about a stream under the Water Sustainability Act required?

All works by a private individual in and about a stream or lake require authorization under the Water Sustainability Act. **More information on authorizations required for working in and about a stream can be found here:**

[Apply for a Change Approval or Submit Notification of Instream Work - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/preparedness/flood-emergency-plan)

3. I have been directed to submit an application for Changes in and about a stream under the Water Sustainability Act (WSA), what do I need to do?

Applications to make changes in and about a stream are submitted online through FrontCounterBC. Your application will need to include: the name and contact information of the applicant and co-applicant, as well as the applicant's agent (if applicable); the name of the stream; location description; start/end date for the works; detailed of the activities and works; a map, photographs and drawing that clearly shows the location of the proposed works and the legal boundaries of the land where the changes will occur. If your works will be completed on land that is owned by anyone other than the applicant, written consent for use of the land and construction of the works is required from all landowners.

Application guidance can be found here: <https://portal.nrs.gov.bc.ca/web/client/-/change-approval-for-work-in-and-about-a-stream>

4. How much does the WSA application cost?

To do work around the stream, you will need to apply for either a *Change Approval* or a *Notification of Authorized Changes*.

- A **change approval** is written authorization to make complex changes in and about a stream.
- A **notification** is used for specified low risk changes in and about a stream that have minimal impact on the environment or third parties.

There is **no fee** for Notification applications; Change Approval applications are associated with a **\$250** application fee.

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5. Are there any other laws and regulations that apply?

Yes. It is recommended that you check with your local government or municipality to determine if there are local bylaws regarding your works. You may also require a Project Review by Fisheries and Ocean's Canada <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html>.

Works conducted on or adjacent to a regulated dike require approval under the *Dike Maintenance Act*. For more information please visit [Dike Maintenance Act Approvals - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/evacuee-guidance/dike-maintenance-act).

Archaeological sites are protected by the *Heritage Conservation Act*. These sites are protected for their historical, cultural, scientific, and educational value to the general public, local communities, and First Nations. If you think you have uncovered an archaeological site during works, do not disturb the site further and call B.C.'s Archaeology Branch immediately at (250) 953-3334. For more information, please read the [Property Owner Brochure_A \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/evacuee-guidance/property-owner-brochure)

6. How do I determine where my property boundary is located or the extent of my private land?

Find evidence of property survey pins or contact a legal land surveyor.

7. I need to make a map, how can I do this?

There are a number of free web-based mapping programs available to the public. A list of the resources can be found here: <https://portal.nrs.gov.bc.ca/web/client/-/mapping-tools>

The BC Agriculture Water Calculator is an easy to use tool that allows you to search by address or property ID (PID) and create a map. <https://bcwatercalculator.ca/agriculture/welcome>

Hand drawn sketches are acceptable provided they meet the Drawing Standards outlined in the application guidance page.

8. Who is responsible for paying for the works?

Private landowners are responsible for protecting their own properties, however, funding may be available through **Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA)**. Please see the below linked webpage to determine if you are eligible, as well as how compensation is calculated:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/evacuee-guidance/disaster-financial-assistance>

Contact Disaster Financial Assistance team if you have any questions. DFA@gov.bc.ca or 1-888-257-4777 (toll free)

9. My Neighbour(s) and I want to submit an application together, can we do that?

Yes, so long as all parties are listed as applicant/co-applicant(s) OR you have written consent from all landowners, multiple parties can apply under one application. Liability and Cost for joint works and joint applications should be considered by all parties

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10. What does the ministry consider in reviewing applications?

The Ministry considers safety, environmental, social and economic components to prioritize during the application review process. The Ministry considers potential adverse impacts to the aquatic ecosystem and public infrastructure, the hydraulic integrity of the stream channel, and the rights of water users and other riparian landowners. A high quality fulsome application will ensure efficiencies in review.

11. Given the number of properties impacted by the flooding, what steps is the Ministry taking to expedite approvals of stream restoration, works, improvements?

Provincial government staff are developing streamlined processes to assist in the quick response and permitting of flood recovery works. Processes and conditions will vary depending on the scope and location of the proposed works in relation to the stream channel. FrontCounter BC staff can assist you with any questions you may have and will ensure your works follow these streamlined processes.

12. Will unauthorized works (fills, groynes, dikes) be allowed to be rebuilt?

Unauthorized structures (e.g., riprap, retaining walls, groynes, fences) located on Crown land below the present natural boundary are illegal and will not be allowed to be constructed or re-established on Crown land without a review process.

13. I still have questions about what I need to do, who can I call?

Contact your Local FrontCounterBC office for assistance.

<https://portal.nrs.gov.bc.ca/web/client/locations>