



What is site development?

Site development includes improvements to a site that are necessary or required to support the primary activity on the site. Site development may include provisions for:

- Access roads
- Drainage facilities
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Open space
- Parking
- Placing buildings on a site

Do I need a site development permit?

Agricultural and development activities that cause significant soil disturbance may require a site development permit.

Normal actions associated with agricultural activities may be exempt from this requirement.

Normal actions are defined as any of the following:

- The production of crops such as plowing, cultivating, minor drainage, and harvesting.
- The raising or keeping of livestock, including operation and maintenance of farm and stock ponds, drainage ditches, irrigation systems, and normal operation, maintenance, and repair of existing serviceable agricultural structures, facilities, or improved areas.¹

You need Pierce County to review your activities to determine if you need a permit—please email, call, or visit the [Development Center](#) for more information.

¹ [Section 18.25.030](#) – Definitions; Pierce County Code Title 18



How do I get my site development permit?

Because every property and situation is different, please contact the [Development Center](#). The Development Center is Pierce County's main source for information and permit applications.

Will other permits or approvals be required?

Depending on the type, size, and location of your primary activity, other requirements for land use, State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), building, and approval may apply. Please email, call, or visit the [Development Center](#) for more information.

How do [critical areas](#) affect my agricultural activities?

1. Your project may require a critical area review, ***even if your activity doesn't need any other county permit or approval***. Several agricultural activities are regulated within fish and wildlife habitat and wetland areas. You can find the full list of regulated activities in Pierce County Code [Title 18E](#), Critical Areas Regulations or by contacting a Pierce County Biologist at (253) 7987005.

2. ***New agricultural activities*** conducted in a critical area may need approval from Pierce County. You are encouraged to contact a Pierce County Biologist at (253) 798-7005.

New agricultural activities are defined as any of the following:

- Any agricultural activity that began after February 2, 1992.
- Use of land for agricultural activities after a previously used wetland, critical fish or wildlife habitat area, or its associated buffer, has remained idle for more than five years, unless the idle land is registered in a federal or state soils conservation program.
- Any actions that will expand the existing agricultural activity beyond the original geographic limits or cause greater impacts to the functions or values of a wetlands, critical fish or wildlife habitat area, or its associated buffer.²

3. ***Critter pads*** (livestock flood sanctuaries) are allowed in flood fringe areas when in compliance with Pierce County Code [Title 18E](#), Floodplain Management.³

² [Section 18.25.030](#) – Definitions; Pierce County Code Title 18

³ [Section 18E.70.040 C.8](#) – Flood Hazard Area Standards; Pierce County Code Title 18E



For help or more information:

- Submit an online form at [Ask the Development Center](#)
- Ask a question using [Live Chat](#)
- Call the Development Center at (253) 798-3739
- Visit the Development Center, Monday – Friday between 9 am and 2 pm, at 2401 South 35th Street, Tacoma, WA 98409

Please have the parcel number or site address on hand. You can find your parcel number and additional site information by visiting [About My Property](#).⁴

This is a reference tool only, and is not a substitute for codes and critical area regulations. You must ensure that your project meets the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations.

⁴ <https://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/#/AboutMyProperty>