



## LOGGING IN PIERCE COUNTY

Logging in Pierce County is regulated by the State Forest Practices Act (RCW 76.09), Rules (WAC 222) and Title 18H, Pierce County Development Regulations – Forest Practices and Tree Conservation. This handout provides general information regarding logging rules and procedures in unincorporated Pierce County.

**Class II and Class III Forest Practices Permits** – Issued by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for both commercial logging and thinning. No public notice. A 6-Year Development Moratorium is required for all Class II and Class III forest practices permits, unless an approved Conversion Option Harvest Plan (COHP) has first been obtained from Pierce County.

**6-Year Development Moratorium** – A 6-Year Development Moratorium prohibits Pierce County from accepting applications for the development of land, such as a building permit, site development permit, short plat, and preliminary plat, on land subject to the moratorium. The 6-Year Development Moratorium applies only to the area indicated to be harvested in the forest practices permit. The 6-Year Development Moratorium extends to the entire parcel when it has been determined that logging activities meeting the definition of a Class II, III, or IV forest practice have occurred on a parcel without an approved Class II, III, or IV forest practices permit. (Subsection 18H.30.030.C.3 of Title 18H)

**Notice of Moratorium on Non Forestry Use of Land** - This form must be completed when a landowner is applying for a Class II or Class III forest practices permit, without an approved COHP. The form must first be brought to the Pierce County Planning and Land Services Department to verify that the landowner(s) name on the Notice is consistent with the landowner(s) names(s) indicated in the Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer's records. The Notice will be stamped by a Pierce County administrative aide when verified. The form is then to be returned to the DNR office by the applicant. Call 253-798-7037 with questions concerning process.

**Lifting a 6-Year Development Moratorium** - Title 18H provides two ways to request relief from a 6-year development moratorium:

- 1. Single Family Dwelling Exception** - Used to allow development of a single-family residence, accessory structures/uses, driveway, and septic system on an undivided area up to 2 acres in size. You must wait at least one year from completion of harvest before submitting application for SFDE when harvest permitted through an FPA. You must wait at least two years from date moratorium imposed when harvest unpermitted. All impacts to Critical Areas must be mitigated and reforestation either bonded or completed (if required by the forest practices permit) to obtain approval. No public notice or hearing.
- 2. Request for Removal of Development Moratorium** - Used to lift development moratorium from entire parcel. All impacts to Critical Areas must be mitigated. Parcel must also contain at least 40 tree units per acre (See Subsection 18H.40.050.F of Title 18H for additional info). Public notice, hearing and Hearing Examiner approval required. No waiting period for submittal.

**Class IV-General Forest Practices Permits** – Required when logging, which would otherwise be classified as a Class II or Class III forest practice, occurs under any one of the following instances:

1. On land in an Urban Growth Area (UGA)
2. On land platted after January 1, 1960 (formal subdivision and short plat, not large lot division) Contact the Pierce County Assessor/Treasurer's Office at 253-798-6111 for information on platting.
3. On land where an application for agricultural, residential, commercial, and/or industrial development has been submitted. Examples include, but are not limited to, Building permit, Conditional Use permit, Preliminary Plat, Short Plat, and Site Development permit for clearing.

A Class IV-General forest practices permit is issued by the DNR. However, before an application may be submitted to the DNR for a Class IV-General two actions must first take place: 1) the proposed forest practices activities must undergo an environmental review by Pierce County, in accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and: 2) either a Site Development permit addressing clearing must be issued, or written documentation must be received from Pierce County that a Site Development permit is not required. Information on required application materials for Pierce County's environmental review of a proposed Class IV-General, including a copy of the Pierce County Forest Practices Submittal Standard, is available on the Pierce County website at [www.piercecountywa.org/pals](http://www.piercecountywa.org/pals), under Permits

### **Conversion Option Harvest Plans (COHP)**

A Conversion Option Harvest Plan (COHP) is approved by Pierce County in conjunction with a Class II or III forest practices operation that is designed to preserve the forest landowners' option to convert (develop) that forestland to a non-commercial forest use, as well as exempt the forest landowner from the 6-year development moratorium associated with Class II and III forest practices. A COHP application must comply with all applicable Pierce County Codes, including, but not limited to Title 18E, Development Regulations – Critical Areas (Wetland, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas, Landslide Hazard Areas, and Erosion Hazard Areas). The COHP must first be approved by Pierce County before submitting an application to the DNR for a Class II or Class III forest practices permit.

**“Danger/Hazard” Tree Removal** – The removal of “Danger Trees” under the DNR “tree length and-a-half” policy must comply with Pierce County Code, Title 18E, Critical Areas, when the activity occurs in an area regulated by Title 18E, Critical Areas. These areas include Wetlands, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas, Landslide Hazard Areas, and Erosion Hazard Areas. A Habitat Assessment and/or a Hazard Tree Removal Report may be required by Title 18E for the proposed activity. Please contact 253-798-7005 for information. The removal of “Danger Trees” within “Open Space Areas” or “Natural Buffer Areas” in residential or commercial developments is subject to the conditions of approval established for that development. (See Pierce County Code, Subsection 18H.20.040 of Title 18H.)

- Contact the Forest Practices Section of the DNR in Enumclaw at 360-825-1631 for information on the State Forest Practices Rules, or visit their website at [www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices)

- Contact Diane Marcus-Jones, Associate Planner, at 253-798-2616 or Adonais Clark, Senior Planner, at 253-798-7165 with the Pierce County Planning and Land Services Department for information on Title 18H.

- Contact Dave Weiss, Revenue Forester with the Washington State Department of Revenue at 253-597-4354 for information on the Forest Tax Program and Timber Excise tax.