



# Planning & Economic Development

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## SHORELINE LETTER OF EXEMPTION INSTRUCTIONS

Poulsbo's shoreline regulations are mandated by the State Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971, as amended in Chapter 90.58 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This state law requires local governments to establish a program consistent with rules adopted by the State Department of Ecology (Ecology). Accordingly, Poulsbo has adopted regulations for its shorelines, in [Chapter 16.08](#) of the Poulsbo Municipal Code (PMC).

### SHORELINE JURISDICTION

Under the PMC, shorelines of the city include Liberty Bay, Dogfish Creek, and their associated [shorelands](#) extending 200 feet landward, as measured on a horizontal plane from ordinary high water. As allowed by RCW [90.58.030\(2\)\(f\)\(ii\)](#) and WAC [173-26-221\(2\)\(a\)](#), the city has chosen to not expand its shoreline jurisdiction to include critical area buffers that are located outside of the shoreline jurisdiction. These areas are regulated by Chapter [16.20](#), Critical Areas.

Any proposal within the Shoreline District that involves the construction or exterior alteration of structures, dredging, drilling, dumping, filling, removal of any sand, gravel or minerals, bulkheading, pile driving, placing of obstructions, or any project of a permanent or temporary nature that interferes with the normal public use of the water is subject to the regulation of the SMA and PMC and will require a Shoreline Permit.

### EXEMPTIONS

A development, activity or use that meets the exemption criteria of WAC [173-27-040\(2\)](#), RCW [98.58.030\(3\)\(e\)](#), [90.58.140\(9\)](#), [90.58.147](#), [90.58.355](#) or [90.58.515](#), and is a allowed development, activity or use in the relevant shoreline environment, shall be exempt from the requirement to obtain a Shoreline Substantial Development, Permit, following issuance of a Shoreline Letter of Exemption from the Planning and Economic Development (PED) Department pursuant to PMC [16.09.060](#).

An exempted development or use shall comply with all other requirements of the Shoreline Master Program, the zoning code, and other relevant provisions of the city code, as well as federal and state law.

### FILING AN EXEMPTION APPLICATION

If your project qualifies for a shoreline exemption, you must obtain written approval from the PED Department before a

building permit can be issued or the project can be implemented. The burden of proof that a development or use is exempt from the permit process is on the applicant.

You can submit your application and request your exemption online, by mail, or in person. Online via the [Poulsbo Public Portal](#). By mail, send [Shoreline Letter of Exemption Request](#), materials, and required fee to:

City of Poulsbo - Planning and Economic Development  
200 Moe Street NE  
Poulsbo, WA 98370

In person at the Poulsbo City Hall, on the 2nd Floor at 200 NE Moe Street. An intake appointment is necessary. Cash, checks or credit cards are accepted for payment. Checks should be payable to the City of Poulsbo.

If applying by mail or in person, please submit one copy of the application materials, plus an electronic copy (via email, thumb drive, or CD).

### SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Please see the [Shoreline Letter of Exemption Request Form](#) for submittal requirements. Suggested size of the plans is a minimum of 8.5x11 to a maximum of 11x17.

### REVIEW PROCESS

After an application is submitted, it will be reviewed for compliance with the state and City regulations. Staff may require the applicant to furnish additional information to assist in the evaluation of the application. The PED director's decision on the request is **final**.

If the PED director determines that the development is not exempt from the permit requirements, the applicant shall be required to submit an application for a shoreline substantial development permit, shoreline conditional use permit, or shoreline variance application, as well as any other permit applications deemed necessary by the PED director. A change in permit type may trigger a requirement for a [pre-application conference](#).

### FEE INFORMATION

Application fees can be found here: <https://cityofpoulsbo.com/planning-forms-fees-brochures/>.

Disclaimer: this handout should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant/property owner is responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described here. Please see the City of Poulsbo Municipal Code for complete text and requirements.

