



County of Santa Cruz

Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

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NOTICE TO GRADING PERMIT APPLICANTS REGARDING WINTER GRADING

The Santa Cruz County Code requires a special Winter Grading Approval for any grading activity occurring between October 15th and April 15th. The purpose of this restriction on grading during the rainy season is to minimize the erosion and slope stability hazards that often occur when a grading project remains active during the winter months. Winter Grading Approval is the exception, not the rule. It may or may not be approved, depending upon the following variables:

1. **Grading to repair, correct or prevent an emergency situation.** Some winter grading projects are necessary to correct a hazardous condition which, if left through the rainy season, could threaten life, safety or property.
2. **Magnitude of the project.** Most approved winter grading projects are relatively small (i.e. 400 cubic yards or less) and do not involve clearing or disturbing large areas. Additionally, suitable projects are generally of short duration, and are typically completed by mid-November.
3. **Proximity to a stream or drainage course.** Projects near a drainage course where erosion and sedimentation could damage the resource are generally not approved for winter grading operations.
4. **Slope of project site and surrounding areas.** In order to facilitate effective erosion control measures, winter grading on or adjacent to slopes steeper than 20 percent is generally not authorized.
5. **Special technical requirements.** Projects dependent upon a high level of compaction or projects that include significant cuts that will be left unsupported during inclement weather are generally not suitable for winter grading operations.

WINTER GRADING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the standard grading permit application requirements (see handout for details), your application must include a full erosion control and winterization plan for the site, including a contingency plan for inclement weather. If a soils engineer has completed a soils report for your project, you must provide a written recommendation from the engineer regarding the suitability of the project for winter grading operations. In addition to regular grading permit fees, a separate winter grading fee is required to cover the costs of additional reviews and inspections necessary for winter grading projects.

Please note: Once a Winter Grading application has been submitted, reviewed and either approved or denied, fees associated with the application will not be refunded.

If you have any questions about suitability of your proposal for Winter Grading Approval, please contact a Resource Planner in Environmental Planning, EnvironmentalPlanningInfo@santacruzcounty.us

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