

Coastal

Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Major Permit

*Express Option**

What Activities Require This Permit? You must obtain a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) major permit for your project if it meets all the following conditions:

- it is in one of the 20 counties covered by CAMA;
- it is considered "development" under CAMA;
- it is in, or it affects, an [Area of Environmental Concern \(AEC\)](#) established by the [Coastal Resources Commission \(CRC\)](#);
- it doesn't qualify for an exemption;
- the project requires any other state or federal permit(s).
- any projects that involve dredging or filling in or about estuarine waters or state-owned lakes will also require a North Carolina Dredge and Fill Permit that is usually processed concurrently with the CAMA Major Permit.

What Is the Purpose of This Permit? Major permits are used if your project involves development in an Area of Environmental Concern and any of the following:

- other state or federal permit, license or authorization, such as for dredging and filling, wetlands fill, stormwater management, sedimentation control, wastewater discharge or mining;
- excavation or drilling for natural resources on land or under water;
- construction of one or more buildings that cover more than 60,000 square feet on a single parcel of land;
- alteration of more than 20 acres of land or water;
- its purpose is to protect, manage and promote the environment, public trust rights and the economy of the North Carolina coast.

Who Issues This Permit? Contact the [Division of Coastal Management \(DCM\) district office](#) that serves your area. A field representative will visit your project site, discuss the proposed project with you and give you a copy of the permit application. Before you submit the application, ask the field representative to meet you on site and suggest any changes or alternatives to help you meet the CRC's guidelines. You should also ask how your local land use plan and local ordinances might affect your project. Applications for major permits are reviewed by 10 state and four federal agencies before a decision is made.

How Much Will This Permit Cost? FEE INCREASES: In accordance with General Statute 143B-279.19, beginning July 1, 2025, and every four years thereafter, permit fees will be adjusted in accordance with the Consumer Price Index computed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics during the prior two bienniums. See updated fees on the [DCM Permit Fees page](#).

What Are My Payment Options for Permit Application Fees? The application fee may be paid by check or money order.

If Paying by Check, who do I Make the Check Payable to and Where Do I Send the Check? Checks should be made out to the Department of Environmental Quality, or DEQ, and included with the application.

Where Can I Get the Application for This Permit? Contact the [DCM district office](#) where your project is located. You can also download forms and instructions to apply for a CAMA major permit [here](#).

How Long Will It Take to Review My Application? The Coastal Area Management Act allows the Division of Coastal Management 75 days from the date the field representative accepts the application as complete to take action on a major development permit. This period can be extended for an additional 75 days if more time is needed to review the proposed project.

Where Do I Submit My Application? Submit the complete application to the [DCM district office](#) that serves your area.

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How Long Is My Permit or License or Certificate Valid? New CAMA major permits shall expire on Dec. 31 of the third year following the year of permit issuance. A request to extend the development period for an additional two years may be granted if certain criteria can be met.

Notes/Comments: *Express Option**- The express permitting option is available for this permit type. This option offers quicker review times than the standard traditional review process. [Learn more](#) about express permitting and contact your regional [environmental assistance coordinator](#) or a [division staff representative](#).

The Coastal Area Management Act defines development as: "any activity in a duly designated area of environmental concern ... involving, requiring or consisting of the construction or enlargement of a structure; excavation; dredging; filling; dumping; removal of clay, silt, sand, gravel or minerals; bulkheading; driving of pilings; clearing or alteration of land as an adjunct of construction; alteration or removal of sand dunes; alteration of the shore, bank or bottom of the Atlantic Ocean or any sound, bay, river, creek, stream, lake or canal" {NCGS 113A-103(5)(a)}. The 20 coastal counties are: Beaufort, Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Tyrrell and Washington.

Legal Authority/Statute Reference: North Carolina General Statutes §113A-118, §113-229 and 15A NCAC 07J .0201.

Link: <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-permits/major-permit-applications>

Statewide Contact Information:

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