



What are forest practices?

A “forest practice” is defined by the State Forest Practices Rules¹ as “any activity conducted on or directly pertaining to forest land and relating to growing, harvesting, or processing timber.” This definition includes logging. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources regulates traditional logging associated with long-term forestry. Pierce County regulates logging associated with the development of land.

Do I need a forest practices permit?

Do you need to clear your property of trees and stumps to begin or expand existing agricultural activities? If so, you may need to obtain an approved **Class IV-General Forest Practices permit** application from Pierce County. An approved Class IV-General Forest Practices permit application is required for the harvest of more than 5,000 board feet of merchantable timber associated with the proposed clearing when the activity takes place on:

- A parcel two acres or more in size outside an Urban Growth Area (UGA); or
- A parcel, or parcels, where the same landowner has ownership of adjoining parcels that together are more than 2 acres in size and are outside an UGA;² or
- A parcel of any size, within an UGA.³

How do I get my forest practices permit?

Class IV-General Forest Practices permit applications are typically filed in association with a site development permit application that addresses stump removal and potential storm drainage impacts. You need to file the appropriate paperwork and application fees at the Pierce County Development Center or [online](#). A Class IV-General Forest Practices permit application must also include a separate application for environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act unless the project has previously undergone environmental review.

¹ [Section 222-16-010](#) – General Definitions; Washington Administrative Code

² [Section 222-16-050](#) – Classes of Forest Practices; Washington Administrative Code

³ [Section 18H.20.040 B.](#) – Forest Practices; Pierce County Code Title 18H



How do critical areas affect my proposed forest practice activities?

Most development permit applications, such as a site development permit or building permit, undergo Critical Area review, often times resulting in the requirement to preserve a Critical Area and an associated buffer. An approved Class IV-General Forest Practices permit must comply with all Critical Area conditions of approval imposed on the associated development permit application.

For help or more information:

- Submit an online question at [Ask the Development Center](#)
- Ask a question using [Live Chat](#)
- Call Adonais Clark, Senior Planner, at (253) 798-7165
- 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 zoning 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>