

Bulletin: Lot Grading

Bulletin # 24-0012

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Purpose

To inform building contractors, designers, landscape contractors/architects and homeowners about Lot Grading Restrictions within the City of Kelowna as required within Zoning Bylaw No. 12375, the Subdivision, Development & Servicing Bylaw and the Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaw.

What is Lot Grading?

Lot grading means any work, operation, or activity that results in a disturbance of the earth, which has the effect of changing the surface elevation or slope of the lot. Lot Grading is considered an essential aspect of construction. The primary purpose of lot grading is to ensure better drainage and thereby preventing property damage from water.

Zoning Bylaw - Grading Restrictions

The following are grading restrictions under the City's Zoning Bylaw:

- Finished grades shall retain the natural contour of the land (natural grade), minimize the necessity to use retaining walls and ensure positive drainage away from abutting properties.
- Finished grades shall not deviate more than 1.0 meter from the rough grading elevation as identified on a lot grading plan, where such a plan has been approved by the City at the time of subdivision when the lot was created.
- Finished slopes shall not exceed 50%.

What Requires Lot Grading Approval by the City?

Please contact the City of Kelowna Development Planning Department in City Hall, Ph: 250-469-8626 or planninginfo@kelowna.ca to request a grading review and/or approvals in the following circumstances:

- Grades that deviate by more than 1.0 meter from existing grade.
- Grading proposed on steep slopes (greater than 20%) (grading within the vicinity of these features is prohibited unless approved with a Hazardous condition Development Permit).
- Grading that creates slopes steeper than 50%.
- Retaining walls proposed over 1.2 meters high.
- Grading that could undercut or fill into neighbouring lots.
- Grading that could impact City Right of Ways/Boulevards/Easements.

This bulletin is for informational purposes only. Please be sure to consult relevant Provincial Legislation and City of Kelowna Bylaws

- Grading next to streams, Okanagan Lake or wetlands (grading within the vicinity of these features is prohibited unless approved with a Natural Environment Development Permit).

Lot Grading Requirements under the BC Building Code and Subdivision, Development & Servicing Bylaw:

- Swales and site drainage must be constructed to prevent ponding within lots, with runoff routed, where possible, to storm services in public streets or other appropriate stormwater management system for the site.
- Grade lots to drain to an approved City drainage system or roadway. Use 1% minimum grade. Grading directly to a natural drainage path must include adequate erosion control and water quality improvement measures.
- Avoid drainage across adjacent lots. Where cross-lot drainage is unavoidable, provide adequate measures such as channeling, swales, inlets or piped connections to direct flow appropriately. A statutory right of way in favour of the City or private easement is required for unobstructed access.
- Positive drainage is required for buildings and foundations.

Retaining Walls

No individual retaining wall shall exceed a height of 1.2 meters measured from grade on the lower side. For more information on Retaining Wall regulations, please visit [bulletin - retaining walls.pdf](#).

Soil Deposit Permits

Soil Deposit Permits are required from the City of Kelowna Development Planning Department if bringing in or removing 50 cubic meters of soil per parcel of land per calendar year. Raising land by more than 1.0 meter and creating grades greater than 50% is prohibited. Permit applications are submitted through the City of Kelowna Development Planning Department in City Hall. For more information on the Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaw, please visit [Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaw | City of Kelowna](#).

Driveways, Parking Spaces and Drive Aisles

The maximum grade for a drive aisle or parking space is 8% and the maximum grade for a driveway is 15%.

Conclusion

This is to emphasize the above restrictions to lot grading within the City of Kelowna. Failure to comply with lot grading requirements may result in an immediate Stop Work Order. If you have any questions regarding lot grading, please contact the City of Kelowna Development Planning Department in City Hall, Ph: 250-469-8626 or planninginfo@kelowna.ca.