

# Department of Environment and Climate Change

## Role in Housing Developments



The Department of Environment and Climate Change does not regulate or approve housing developments. However, certain activities that take place during development must follow the Environment Act and regulations, guidelines, and standards to help protect and minimize the impact on the environment.

### Activities that may require an approval from the Department:

- ✓ Work that alters the bed or bank of a watercourse, such as installing a culvert or a bridge. Installations must be overseen by a certified individual.  
<https://novascotia.ca/nse/watercourse-alteration/>
- ✓ Impacts to a wetland, such as infilling or excavating. An assessment by an experienced wetland evaluator is required, unless it meets exemption conditions:  
[https://www.novascotia.ca/nse/wetland/docs/Short\\_Guide\\_Wetland\\_Alteration\\_Application\\_Approval\\_Process\\_1.0.pdf](https://www.novascotia.ca/nse/wetland/docs/Short_Guide_Wetland_Alteration_Application_Approval_Process_1.0.pdf).
- ✓ Changes to existing municipal services, such as stormwater infrastructure and wastewater. The Department reviews and approves designs after the municipality has determined its systems can handle the change.
- ✓ On-site sewage disposal systems to treat wastewater. This work requires the services of a qualified person or engineer, and a certified installer.  
<https://www.novascotia.ca/nse/wastewater/on.site.sewage.disposal.asp>

### Activities that do not require an approval, but must adhere to the Environment Act and regulations:

- ✓ Well construction must follow the regulations and be constructed by a certified well driller/digger.
- ✓ Erosion and sedimentation at development locations must be managed so that watercourses and wetlands are protected from siltation.
- ✓ If a site is contaminated, the owner must follow the Department's rules to clean it up: <https://novascotia.ca/nse/contaminatedsites/protocols.asp>

Environmental Assessments are only required for housing developments if it impacts more than two hectares of wetland.

<https://novascotia.ca/nse/dept/docs/EA-Timelines-FULL-Presentation.pdf>



For information or questions on the nine special planning areas in Halifax Regional Municipality visit: [Special Planning Areas | Halifax](#)

Any questions?

Visit <https://www.novascotia.ca/nse/resources/>  
or contact us at 1-800-936-8476 (1-800-9ENVIRO)