

2022

FLOOD HAZARD MANAGEMENT BYLAWS

COWICHAN IS AN AMAZING PLACE TO LIVE.

However, areas of our region are prone to flood hazards. This guide provides an overview of the CVRD's flood management bylaws and how they affect construction in areas that are subject to these bylaws.



THE COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT HAS THREE NEW BYLAWS TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FROM FLOOD DAMAGE TO PROPERTIES ALONG THE SHAWNIGAN LAKE, RIVERBOTTOM ROAD AND LOWER COWICHAN / KOKSILAH RIVER AREAS.

The CVRD Board has adopted flood management bylaws for Shawnigan Lake, the Cowichan River – Riverbottom Road area, and the Cowichan / Koksilah floodplain. These bylaws specify a minimum flood construction level (FCL) for buildings. FCLs were calculated and mapped by professional engineers, taking into account new flood patterns expected to result from climate change, including more severe precipitation events and sea level rise.

The bylaws will help to achieve the Board's land use management objectives by keeping development away from environmentally sensitive and erosion-prone areas.

In preparing the bylaws, the CVRD Board was required to take into account provincial flood hazard management guidelines mandating the protection of new buildings from flooding that is expected to occur once every 200 years, by situating habitable areas of buildings above the water level expected in flood conditions. Existing buildings below the designated FCL may remain in place within the floodplain but building additions at that elevation will be limited. Minimum FCLs specified in the bylaws are measured from a standard vertical datum point established by Natural Resources Canada that approximates coastal mean sea level and that can easily be referenced by any BC Land Surveyor preparing a site plan for a new building.



SHAWNIGAN LAKE FLOOD MANAGEMENT BYLAW NO. 4348

Includes a mapped floodplain surrounding Shawnigan Lake and designates 120 m as the FCL for the entire floodplain.

COWICHAN RIVER - RIVERBOTTOM ROAD AREA FLOOD MANAGEMENT BYLAW 4358

Maps a floodplain along a portion of the Cowichan River. The designated FCLs for this floodplain range from 82.0 m at the upper end of the mapped reach of the river to 44.0 m at the lower end, designated in 0.5 m intervals.

COWICHAN/KOKSILAH RIVERS FLOOD MANAGEMENT BYLAW 4381

The FCLs range from 17.5 m at the Allenby Road Bridge on the Cowichan River to 6.5 m above Cowichan Station Bridge on the Koksilah River, and from 9.4 m at Somenos Lake to 4.0 m at the estuary.

PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE DESIGNATED FLOODPLAINS SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Existing buildings and uninhabitable outbuildings aren't affected by these bylaws.
- The bylaws will be administered by building officials dealing with new building permit applications. Applicants will be required to indicate on building plans the levels of all floors supporting habitable building areas, as established by a BC Land Surveyor.
- Owners may achieve the required FCL by siting their new building on higher portions of the parcel or by using fill or structural support for the habitable floor areas.
- Owners may apply to the regional board for an exemption from the minimum FCL if a professional engineer certifies that the land can be safely built on and used at a lower elevation.
- Owners may choose to construct new buildings at a higher elevation than the bylaw requires, to achieve a greater level of safety from flooding.
- Siting of buildings in particular areas may also be subject to zoning bylaw setback regulations and/or development permit conditions.
- Constructing a building in contravention of the new FCL regulations could disqualify an owner from receiving disaster financial assistance from the provincial government in the event of a flood causing damage to the building.

Contact **CVRD Building Inspection** for more information. 250-746-2610