

SECTION .2300 - GENERAL PERMIT FOR REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING BRIDGES AND CULVERTS IN ESTUARINE WATERS, ESTUARINE AND PUBLIC TRUST SHORELINES, PUBLIC TRUST AREAS, AND COASTAL WETLANDS

15A NCAC 07H .2301 PURPOSE

A person wishing to replace existing bridges and culverts in estuarine waters, estuarine and public trust shorelines, public trust areas, and coastal wetlands AECs, shall apply for a General Permit pursuant to the rules in this Section.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107; 113A-118.1; 113A-124;
Eff. June 1, 1996;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

15A NCAC 07H .2302 APPROVAL PROCEDURES

(a) An applicant for a General Permit under this Subchapter shall contact the Division of Coastal Management at the Regional Office indicated on the map located at <https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1a5881ec85ca40679988982e02665b51> and request approval for development as defined in G.S. 113A-130(5).

(b) The applicant shall provide:

- (1) the site location, dimensions of the project area, and his or her name and address; and
- (2) confirmation that a written statement has been obtained, signed by the adjacent riparian property owners, indicating that they have no objections to the proposed work; or
- (3) confirmation that the adjacent riparian property owners have been notified by certified mail of the proposed work. The notice shall instruct adjacent property owners to provide any comments on the proposed development in writing to the Division of Coastal Management within 10 days of receipt of the notice and indicate that no response by the adjacent property owners will be interpreted as the adjacent property owners having no objection. Division staff shall review all comments and determine, based on their relevance to the potential impacts of the proposed project, if the proposed project can be approved by a General Permit. If Division staff finds that the comments are worthy of more in-depth review, the Division shall notify the applicant that he or she must submit an application for a major development permit.

(c) No work shall begin until an onsite meeting is held with the applicant and a Division of Coastal Management representative to review the proposed development. A permit to proceed with the proposed development shall be issued if the Division representative finds that the application meets all the requirements of this Subchapter. Construction permitted under this Section shall be completed within 120 days of permit issuance or such permit shall expire. If the applicant seeks a new permit under this Section, the Division of Coastal Management shall re-examine the proposed development to determine if the General Permit may be reissued. Pursuant to G.S. 136-44.7B, permits issued to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for projects identified in the Transportation Improvement Program shall not expire.

(d) Any modification or addition to the permitted project shall require approval from the Division of Coastal Management.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107; 113A-118.1; 113A-124;
Eff. June 1, 1996;
Amended Eff. May 1, 2010;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

15A NCAC 07H .2303 PERMIT FEE

The applicant shall pay a permit fee of four hundred dollars (\$400.00). This fee shall be paid by inter-departmental fund transfer, check, or money order made payable to the Department of Environmental Quality.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107; 113A-118.1; 113A-119; 113A-119.1; 113A-124;
Eff. June 1, 1996;
Amended Eff. May 1, 2010; September 1, 2006; August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

15A NCAC 07H .2304 GENERAL CONDITIONS

(a) Projects authorized by this permit shall be demolition, removal, and replacement of existing bridges and culverts along the existing alignment and conforming to the standards in this Rule. This permit shall be applicable only to single bridge and culvert projects and shall not authorize temporary fill causeways or temporary bridges that may be associated with bridge replacement projects.

- (b) The permittee shall allow authorized representatives of the Department of Environmental Quality to make inspections at any time in order to ensure that the activity being performed under authority of this General Permit is in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed herein.
- (c) The permit set forth in this Section shall not be applicable to proposed construction where the Department determined based on an initial review of the application that notice and review pursuant to G.S. 113A-119 is required because there are unresolved questions concerning the proposed activity's impact on Areas of Environmental Concern.
- (d) Review of individual project requests shall be coordinated with the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC). This may result in a construction moratorium during periods of significant biological productivity or critical life stages as determined by the WRC and DMF.
- (e) Development under this permit shall be carried out within Department of Transportation (DOT) right-of-ways or on lands under the ownership of the applicant in the case of a non-DOT project.
- (f) Bridge and culvert replacements shall be designed to minimize any adverse impacts to potential navigation or use of the waters by the public.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107; 113A-118.1; 113A-124;
 Eff. June 1, 1996;
 Amended Eff. May 1, 2010;
 Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

15A NCAC 07H .2305 SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

- (a) This general permit is applicable to bridge replacement projects spanning no more than 400 feet of estuarine water, public trust area, and coastal wetland AECs.
- (b) Existing roadway deck width shall not be expanded to create additional lanes, with the exception that an existing one lane bridge may be expanded to two lanes where the Department of Environment and Natural Resources determines that authorization is warranted and the proposed project does not significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment or unnecessarily endangers adjoining properties.
- (c) Replacement of existing bridges with new bridges shall not reduce vertical or horizontal navigational clearances.
- (d) All demolition debris shall be disposed of landward of all wetlands and the normal water level (NWL) or normal high water (NHW) level (as defined in 15A NCAC 07H .0106), and shall employ soil stabilization measures to prevent entry of sediments in the adjacent water bodies or wetlands.
- (e) Bridges and culverts shall be designed to allow passage of anticipated high water flows.
- (f) Measures sufficient to restrain sedimentation and erosion shall be implemented at each site.
- (g) Bridge or culvert replacement activities involving excavation or fill in wetlands, public trust areas, and estuarine waters shall meet the following conditions:
 - (1) Replacing bridges with culverts shall not be allowed in primary nursery areas as defined by the Marine Fisheries or Wildlife Resources Commissions.
 - (2) The total area of public trust area, estuarine waters, and wetlands to be excavated or filled shall not exceed 2,500 square feet except that the coastal wetland component shall not exceed 750 square feet.
 - (3) Culverts shall not be used to replace bridges with open water spans greater than 50 feet.
 - (4) There shall be no temporary placement or double handling of excavated or fill materials within waters or vegetated wetlands.
 - (5) No excavated or fill material shall be placed in any wetlands or surrounding waters outside of the alignment of the fill area indicated on the work plat(s).
 - (6) All excavated materials shall be confined above NWL or NHW and landward of any wetlands behind dikes or other retaining structures to prevent spill-over of solids into any wetlands or surrounding waters.
 - (7) No bridges with a clearance of four feet or greater above the NWL or NHW shall be allowed to be replaced with culvert(s) unless the culvert design maintains the existing water depth, vertical clearance and horizontal clearance.
 - (8) If a bridge is being replaced by a culvert(s) then the width of the waterbody shall not be decreased by more than 40 percent.
 - (9) All pipe and culvert inverts placed within the Public Trust or the Estuarine Waters AECs shall be buried at least one foot below normal bed elevation to allow for passage of water and aquatic life. Culverts placed in wetlands are not subject to this requirement.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107; 113A-118.1; 113A-124;
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