

# St. Louis County (Unincorporated Area) GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING LAND DISTURBANCES

## Land Disturbance Code

St. Louis County's Land Disturbance Code (Ordinance 21578 as amended by Ordinances 22468 and 24084) regulates land disturbances. Official copies may be obtained from the County Clerk. Unofficial "User-Friendly" copies may be viewed on the Department of Public Works web site (address below) or obtained for a small fee from Public Works (314-615-5184).

## Land Disturbance Terminology Simplified

**Land Disturbance** – Any activity which affects the ground surface and/or vegetation (i.e.: clearing, grubbing, cut/fill, grading, excavating for foundations, etc.). Land disturbances are categorized as either Major or Ordinary depending on the size of the land disturbance.

**Major Land Disturbance** – A land disturbance involving one acre (43,560 square feet) or more of land. This includes contiguous parcels/lots for a proposed development that ultimately will disturb one acre or more. Example: Advance grading of 0.90 acres for the construction of a cul-de-sac and infa-structure improvements for a new 6 lot subdivision, together with the eventual foundation excavation and construction of 6 houses/driveways is a Major Land Disturbance since ultimately more than one acre will be disturbed for the entire development.

**Ordinary Land Disturbance** – A land disturbance involving 2,000 square feet or more and less than one acre (43,560 square feet) of land. Small land disturbances involving less than 2,000 square feet and cuts/fills less than 30 cubic yards are generally exempt from being regulated and needing a permit provided the disturbance doesn't create problems/damage to adjoining property (i.e. changing elevation at property line, affecting existing swale drainage, etc). Example: A foundation excavation for a 5,000 square foot building addition where the excavated dirt is distributed over 10,000 square feet of site area during finish grading is a land disturbance affecting 15,000 square feet of land.

## Permits for Major Land Disturbances

Applications for Major Land Disturbance Permits are filed with the Department of Public Works through the Permit Application Center (PAC). The Department of Planning must approve the site plan and the detailed plan review of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Civil Construction Documents are conducted by the Department of Transportation Civil Plan Review. Inspections are conducted by the Owner's Special Inspector and the Department of Public Works (commercial projects) or the Department of Transportation (residential projects).

## Permits for Ordinary Land Disturbances

Permits for Ordinary Land Disturbances are handled by the Department of Public Works. Generally the permit for ordinary land disturbance work will automatically be integrated with the building permit authorizing construction with inspections for both conducted by the Department of Public Works. When it is desired to do land disturbance work in advance of the issuance of the building permit, an application for an Ordinary Land Disturbance Permit must be filed with and a separate permit obtained for the land disturbance from the Department of Public Works before work commences. Inspections on individual Ordinary Land Disturbance permits are conducted by the Department of Transportation.

Visit our Departmental Web Sites on a regular basis for more information on the Land Disturbance Code and other areas of interest related to construction permits:

[Department of Transportation & Public Works](#)  
[Department of Planning](#)