

WATER STORAGE PERMITS

BUILDING PERMITS

Permits are required from the Humboldt County Building Inspection Division for all water storage in excess of 5,000 gallons regardless of the type of storage method. In general, grading permits are required for ponds and building permits are required for tanks. Property owners must sign a Notice of Acknowledgement of Land Use Limitations for conformance with zoning before a grading or building permit can be issued. A Notice of Acknowledgement is a document that describes which uses are allowed. On average, the permit process with the Building Inspection Division takes approximately four to six weeks.

PLANNING PERMITS

Permits may be required from the Humboldt County Current Planning Division for water storage under certain conditions. Considerations that may trigger a Conditional Use Permit include the water source, intended storage capacity, storage type, forbearance period and whether the storage is accessory to general agriculture or rural residential use. In general, water storage is considered accessory to general agriculture or rural residential use if it serves a purpose which does not change the character of the principal agriculture or residential use. In other words, the water storage must be incidental and subordinate and cannot be the primary or exclusive use.

The Conditional Use Permit process can take 4 to 6 months. The tables below describe the basic conditions that trigger a Conditional Use Permit. Other conditions may apply.

Water Storage Accessory to General Agriculture

This table shows the water sources and water storage capacities that are allowed without a permit for properties where general agriculture is the principal use. This means the water storage is for purposes such as irrigation or stock watering. It does not matter if the parcel has a developed residence or not. The minimum forbearance periods listed in the table are the minimum county standard. A different standard may be required by state agencies.

Water Source	Tank Storage Capacity (US Gallons)	Pond Storage Capacity (US Gallons)
Rainfall Catchment	100,000	No Limit
Well (not connected to surface water)	100,000	No Limit
Surface Water Diversion (stream, well or spring)	50,000 (Over 50,000 requires a permit which may include a forbearance period.)	1,000,000 or approx. 3 acre feet. (Over 1,000,000 requires a permit only if forbearance is less than 60 days)

Water Storage Accessory to Rural Residential Use

This table shows the water sources and water storage capacities that are allowed without a permit for properties where rural residential is the principal use. This means the water storage is for purposes such as domestic use or a small vegetable garden. The parcel must have a developed residence. The minimum forbearance periods listed in the table are the minimum county standard. A different standard may be required by state agencies.

Water Source	Tank Storage Capacity (US Gallons)	Pond Storage Capacity (US Gallons)
Surface Water Diversion (stream, well or spring)	50,000	1,000,000 or approx. 3 acre feet (Over 1,000,000 requires a permit)
	>50,000 to 100,000 (Permit required only if forbearance is less than 60 days)	
	>100,000 (Permit requirements vary, please contact the Planning & Building Department)	



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PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Other provisions of the Humboldt County Zoning Regulations may also apply. For example, if a water diversion for general agriculture was not in existence before April 24, 1995, the County's Streamside Management Ordinance may apply. Also, the total coverage of ponds or tanks may not exceed 25% of the lot area of the parcel without a Special Permit. Storage quantities in excess of base amounts may be permitted in individual cases. A surface water diversion forbearance agreement and/or a water budget will be requested to justify the additional storage amount.

PLANNING AND BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Permit applications must include a detailed site map known as a plot plan. Among other things, a plot plan must show the location of site characteristics such as property lines, roads, utilities, natural features as well as all existing and proposed structures. Plot plans must show distances between features and structures and it is preferred, but not required, that plots plans be drawn to scale. Plot plans can be prepared either by certified professionals or by applicants themselves.

As part of the planning or building permit application review, other agencies are notified and asked to respond with comments. These agencies can include Public Works, Environmental Health, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Additional submittals may be requested as part of the permit review process. Biological studies, soils reports or engineering calculations are common requirements.

Payment of fees is associated with permit applications and varies depending on storage size, the number of agencies providing review and the total number of permits. For more specific information about permit requirements, please contact the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department at (707) 445-7245.

OTHER PERMITS

Depending on the water source, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement may be needed from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. For additional information on obtaining a Streambed Alteration Agreement, contact the Department of Fish and Wildlife located at 619 2nd Street, Eureka, CA 9550, (707) 445-6493 or visit: <https://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/1600>

Approvals may also be required for the State Water Resources Control Board or the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire).

