



## Community Planning & Permitting

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### **General Floodplain Development Permit 2026–1**

**Permit Expiration: 4/21/2028**

For adoption and effective date information, see last page of this permit.

Boulder County has issued a General Floodplain Development Permit (FDP) to minimize undue hardship to property owners within Boulder County yet remain in compliance with minimum federal and state floodplain development regulations. The intent of this General FDP is to allow certain limited uses and activities in the Floodplain Overlay (FO) District without the need for Individual FDPs because the uses and activities are unlikely to increase Base Flood Elevations or have an adverse effect on neighboring properties, species, or ecosystems. The specific uses and activities allowed under this General FDP are listed in this document. Uses and activities not listed in this document require Individual FDPs.

Boulder County's FO District, defined in Article 4-403 of the Boulder County Land Use Code (the Code), is comprised of both Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Special Hazard Flood Areas and Boulder County Flood Risk Zones. This includes Floodway and Flood Fringe areas. The uses and activities allowed under this General FDP may occur anywhere within the FO District unless specific language in this document states otherwise.

Any use or activity allowed under this General FDP, either expressly or presumptively, shall meet the criteria outlined in Article 4-404.1.B of the Code. Any use or activity allowed under this General FDP must also comply with the definitions in Section I and the conditions in Section II of this document. Uses or activities that are deemed in conflict with these criteria, definitions, or conditions by the Floodplain Administrator, designated pursuant to Article 4-402.B of the Code, will require Individual FDPs.

#### **Required Notice to the Floodplain Administrator:**

Certain uses or activities listed in this General FDP require advanced notice to the Floodplain Administrator. When required, notice must be provided to the Floodplain Administrator a minimum of 21 days prior to commencing the activity, in accordance with Article 4-404.1.D.3.b of the Code. After receiving notice, the Floodplain Administrator will determine if the work is within the scope of this General FDP and respond to the proponent with approval to proceed. If additional information is necessary, or if the work requires issuance of an Individual FDP, the Floodplain Administrator will inform the proponent within 14 days following the receipt of notice, or through the Land Use Review referral process.

Notice may be provided by emailing, at a minimum, the following to FloodplainAdmin@bouldercounty.gov:

- Project description, including materials description and a discussion on the expected impact to the channel and floodplain;
- Location description (an accompanying location map is best); and
- Site plan, if necessary to further describe the work.

## I. DEFINITIONS

In addition to the definitions in Articles 4-414 and 18 of the Code, the following definitions shall apply for the purposes of this General FDP. Where the following definitions conflict with those in the Code, the definitions below take precedence:

1. Deconstruction: The dismantling of an existing building or portion thereof. Deconstruction includes the act of salvaging materials from the existing structure for recycling, resale, or reuse as an alternative to sending them to a landfill.
2. In-kind Replacement: Replacement of any feature, component, or material with the same feature, component, or material; or replacement of any feature, component, or material with a different feature, component, or material that serves the same purpose and conforms to the regulatory hydraulic model (including surface grade and channel line, grade, elevation, or hydraulic capacity). In-kind Replacement does not include expansion, enlargement, Substantial Modification, or Substantial Improvement (as defined in Article 18 of the Code) of a building or structure.
3. Maintenance: Any routine or regularly-scheduled activity undertaken to repair or prevent the deterioration, impairment, or failure of any feature, component, or material referenced in this General FDP, so long as the work substantially conforms to the most recent county-approved design or regulatory hydraulic model (including surface grade and channel line, grade, elevation, or hydraulic capacity), whichever is newer. Maintenance does not include expansion, enlargement, replacement, reconstruction, Substantial Modification, or Substantial Improvement (as defined in Article 18 of the Code) of a building or structure, including hydraulic structures.
4. Relocation: In the context of this General FDP, the removal of a structure or building located in the FO District to a location entirely outside of the FO District.

## II. CONDITIONS

The following conditions apply to all activities permitted under this General FDP.

1. It is the Permittee's responsibility to comply with the requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Sections 7 and 9 of the Endangered Species Act, and with any other applicable federal, state, or local laws, criteria, or regulations, which may include, but are

not limited to: the Boulder County Land Use Code, the Boulder County Storm Drainage Criteria Manual, and the Boulder County Multimodal Transportation Standards.

2. The Permittee shall obtain all required local, state, and federal permits prior to beginning work.
3. Construction equipment, material, and waste should be located outside the regulatory floodplain when not in use.
4. All work covered by this General FDP, when applicable (i.e., utility support structures, bridge abutments, other hardened structures), must be designed (and, if necessary, anchored) to withstand the forces associated with a 100-year flood event. Infrastructure must be designed and maintained to be adequately protected from flooding.
5. All work covered by this General FDP must be built with materials and utility equipment resistant to flood damage (in accordance with FEMA Technical Bulletin 2, Flood Damage-Resistant Materials Requirements) up to the Flood Protection Elevation, as defined in Article 4-405.A of the Code.
6. The Floodplain Administrator may impose additional requirements prior to Permittee's commencement of project activities as well as additional conditions applicable during the performance of proposed activities, as necessary to meet Article 4-404.1.B of the Code.
7. In the event of any change or modification to a use or activity permitted hereunder that is likely to be in conflict with the criteria established in Article 404.1.B of the Code, the Floodplain Administrator must be notified of the change and approve the modification prior to work continuing. Modifications may require an Individual FDP, as determined by the Floodplain Administrator.

### **III. ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THIS GENERAL FDP**

#### **1. General Property Management Activities**

The following activities are related to public and private property management or improvement.

##### **Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. Installation of new fences and gates. Fences and gates must comply with the [Boulder County Fence Requirements](#).
- b. Installation of new patios to match the existing grade.
- c. Raised beds for home gardening purposes.
- d. Installation of picnic benches, bike racks, and other similar structures that are properly anchored. Grouping of these elements cannot create any obstruction to the flow of floodwaters.

- e. Maintenance or of hardscaping features such as retaining walls, terraces, etc.
- f. Installation of new rooftop solar panels located above the Flood Protection Elevation. Costs of solar installations will be included in calculating Substantial Improvements (as defined in Article 18 of the Code) and any Substantial Improvements require an individual FDP. Ground-mounted solar requires an individual FDP.

### **Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- g. In-kind Replacement of fences in compliance with [Boulder County Fence Requirements](#).
- h. Installation, repair, or replacement of sign or mailbox posts, telephone poles, or similar post-like elements, not including deck supports or other structural supports for buildings. Grouping of these elements cannot create any obstruction to the flow of floodwaters.
- i. Gardening, landscaping, lawns, and lawn maintenance activities. Hardscaping such as retaining walls, terraces, etc. require Individual FDPs.
- j. Removal of flood-deposited sediment from the overbanks and floodplain areas (outside of a perennial stream channel), of an amount four inches or less in height (greater than four inches require Individual FDPs).
- k. Removal of debris limited to large, woody, unanchored or dead vegetation and rubbish as defined in Article 14 of the Code.
- l. Vegetation management required for wildfire mitigation.
- m. Activities necessary to correct existing violations of Boulder County health and safety codes or to ensure safe and healthy living conditions, such as:
  - i. Electrical repairs;
  - ii. Maintenance/Replacement of furnaces, water heaters, boilers, evaporative coolers, air conditioners, and roof components;
  - iii. Replacement of plug-in appliances such as washing machines, dryers, and stoves; and
  - iv. Replacement/installation of insulation, simple weatherization, energy-efficient upgrades.
  - v. Foundation stabilization and Maintenance that does not permanently alter topography or structure projection above topography.

### **2. Transportation-related Activities.**

These activities are typically associated with replacement or maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure, or installation of new transportation infrastructure.

### **Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. New construction of driveways, trails (including stairs), sidewalks, roads, and streets to match the existing grade.
- b. Road and trail widening to match the existing grade. Road and trail widening involving fill require Individual FDPs.
- c. Surface type changes and overlays:
  - In the Flood Fringe, resulting in changes to existing grade, elevation or hydraulic cross-section of less than four inches, measured vertically, or
  - In the Floodway, resulting in no change to existing grade, elevation, or hydraulic cross-section. Overlays, repaving, and resurfacing projects are only considered to match existing grade if an equivalent amount of material is milled or removed prior to overlay, resurfacing, and/or repaving.
- d. In-kind Replacement of culverts and other transportation infrastructure, excluding bridges.
- e. Replacement of guardrails that are no more than four inches taller than the previous existing or designed guardrails, and that do not decrease the available conveyance of floodwaters.

**Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- f. Maintenance, including, but not limited to, patching and sealing, of driveways, trails, sidewalks, roads, streets, bridges, and parking areas to match the existing grade.

**3. Stream Restoration and Stormwater Drainage System-related Activities.**

These activities are specific to rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, overbank areas, and stormwater collection, distribution, and transport features and mechanisms throughout the county.

**Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. In-kind Replacement of storm drainage infrastructure, culverts, check dams, bank stabilization/protection features, habitat features, and detention/retention facilities.
- b. Temporary in-stream diversions lasting 14 or fewer consecutive days. Diversions, coffer dams, and construction dewatering lasting more than 14 days (either consecutive or non-consecutive) require an Individual FDP.

**Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- c. Maintenance of storm drainage infrastructure, culverts, check-dams, bank stabilization/protection features, habitat features, and detention/retention facilities.
- d. Maintenance of previously-permitted stream restoration projects, including vegetation management or changes to backfill materials.

- e. Stormwater management activities during construction projects, as required by an approved Boulder County Stormwater Quality Permit or similar authorization.

#### **4. Ditch or Water Delivery-related Activities.**

These activities are directly related to maintaining the function, operation, and water delivery responsibilities of ditches, canals, and other water-delivery infrastructure for the purposes of commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and health and safety water uses throughout the county.

##### **Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. Installation of new surface and groundwater measuring devices and their housings greater than one square foot. Very large devices may require an individual FDP.
- b. New and replacement wells that result in no change to existing grade.
- c. In-kind Replacement of water delivery infrastructure, ditches, diversions, head gates, sand gates, flumes, siphons, wells, pumps, fish passage, and water measuring devices.
- d. Conversion of open ditch to buried pipeline to match the adjacent grade.
- e. New electrical equipment for water delivery infrastructure where electrical components are elevated to or above Flood Protection Elevation.

##### **Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- f. Installation of new surface and groundwater measuring devices and their housings where the size of the device and housing is one square foot or less.
- g. Maintenance of water delivery infrastructure, ditches, diversions, head gates, sand gates, flumes, siphons, wells, pumps, fish passage, water measuring devices, easements and rights-of-way.

#### **5. Oil and Gas-related Activities.**

These activities are performed by or for companies and organizations focused on the exploration, extraction, storage, and/or transportation of oil & gas products.

##### **Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. Maintenance and repair of oil and gas facilities, as defined in Article 12 of the Code, except for activities specifically listed in section b below.

##### **Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- b. Bradenhead testing, chemical treatments, and wellhead greasing. These activities may still require permits or permission from the county Community Planning & Permitting Department.

## **6. Utility-related Activities.**

These activities are performed by public and private organizations providing commodities such as electricity, water, heat, and communications. Companies and organizations operating ditches for transport of water should reference Section 4 above. Companies and organizations operating oil and gas facilities should reference Section 5 above.

The following condition applies to utility-related activities:

- i. Post-project topography must match (not exceed) pre-project topography.

### **Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. Installation of new overhead utilities and underground utilities that do not cross underneath a perennial stream channel. Utility components must be designed to minimize obstructions to flow.
- b. In-kind Replacement of overhead utilities, underground utilities, substations, and other utility infrastructure.

### **Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- c. Maintenance of overhead utilities, underground utilities, substations, easements and rights-of-way, and other utility infrastructure.

## **7. Agriculture activities.**

Activities covered by the General FDP for agricultural purposes include those that are necessary for the continued reasonable and safe operation of facilities involved in the grazing, keeping, and use of livestock, or the production, harvesting, and selling of agricultural or horticultural products.

### **Activities Requiring Notice**

- a. Installation of temporary shade structures and hoop houses exceeding 120 square feet in the Flood Fringe.
- b. Installation of center pivots or other irrigation infrastructure where electrical connections are elevated to or above the Flood Protection Elevation.

### **Activities Not Requiring Notice**

- c. Installation of temporary shade structures and hoop houses not exceeding 120 square feet in the Flood Fringe.
- d. Planting, seeding, sodding, re-vegetation, mulching, tilling, mowing, aerating, de-thatching, and similar activities.

## **8. Deconstruction and/or Relocation of Buildings and other Non-Hydraulic Structures.**

These activities are specific to deconstruction and relocation of buildings and other structures, not including bridges, levees, berms, and other hydraulic or flood-control structures.

The following conditions apply to Deconstruction and Relocation Activities:

- i. Removal of any portions of a building or other structure that requires fill to be placed following removal must result in topography that matches (not exceeds) existing adjacent grade.
- ii. Permanent placement or storage of deconstructed materials may not occur in the FO District without the issuance of an Individual FDP.
- iii. Rebuilding, reconstruction, or replacement of any building or structure that has been removed from a parcel under this General FDP shall not occur without first complying with the Land Use Review/Permitting process and also, if required, obtaining an Individual FDP.

**Activities Requiring Notice** (Notice is required irrespective of whether a Building Permit from the county Community Planning & Permitting Department is required)

- a. Deconstruction of existing buildings, either whole or partial, including but not limited to: awnings and breezeways; decks and patios, including railings and stairs; attached garages; sunrooms and porches; and rooms, wings, or enclosures. An Individual FDP is required for deconstruction of any building or other structure where the Floodplain Administrator has determined that such activity may impact expected flood heights, extents, and/or velocities.
- b. Deconstruction of other structures, either whole or partial, including but not limited to:
  - i. Fences, walls, and retaining walls;
  - ii. Sheds;
  - iii. Agricultural structures such as grain bins, corn cribs, hoop houses, pole barns, loafing sheds, greenhouses, etc.;
  - iv. Commercial, industrial, and communications equipment control structures such as radio tower bases, etc.;
  - v. Water and other storage tanks.
- c. Relocation of any existing building in its entirety to a location outside the Floodplain Overlay District.

#### IV. ADOPTION AND EFFECTIVE DATE

Per the authority granted in Article 4-404.1 of the Code, and having considered each of the review criteria listed in Article 4-404.1.B, the Floodplain Administrator hereby determines that the activities described above are appropriately regulated under this General FDP so long as they are conducted in conformance with the definitions and conditions stated herein.

**Date Posted:** March 31, 2026

**This General FDP is deemed in effect as of close of business on this date:** April 21, 2026

**Floodplain Administrator Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed name:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Webster

#### Notice and Comment Period

This General FDP shall be posted on the County Community Planning & Permitting Department website as of the “Date Posted” specified above. Notice to the public will also be provided in the manner described in Article 3-205 of the Code for comprehensive rezonings. The Floodplain Administrator will accept written public comment on this General FDP for 14 days after the date posted.

#### Final Determination on this General FDP

The Floodplain Administrator will check the applicable box below at the end of the 14-day comment period:

- The Floodplain Administrator received no written comments during the 14-day comment period. This General FDP is deemed in effect as of close of business on the date shown above.
- The Floodplain Administrator received one or more written comments during the 14-day comment period. No changes to the terms and conditions of this General FDP were made in response to these comments. This General FDP is deemed in effect as of close of business on the date shown above.
- The Floodplain Administrator received one or more written public comments during the 14-day comment period. Having determined their consistency with the review criteria in Article 4-401.1.B of the Code, the following changes were made in response to public comments: