Metro Vancouver is a port city and naturally beautiful region, and it’s important that we continue to enjoy the benefits of trade for generations while protecting the environment.

Through our Project and Environmental Review Process, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority assesses proposed activities or developments on federal port lands and waters to avoid or mitigate potential effects of port activities on the environment and surrounding communities.
The role of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority is the federal body responsible for the stewardship of lands and waters that make up the Port of Vancouver. We are accountable to the federal minister of transport and operate under the Canada Marine Act with a mandate to facilitate trade while protecting the environment and considering local communities.

Our Project and Environmental Review Process

We use our Project and Environmental Review Process to fulfill our federal responsibilities under the Canada Marine Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, carefully reviewing and considering potential effects from all proposed project development on federal lands and waters before determining if a project should proceed.

The scope of a port authority review

Our review is an assessment of studies and evidence to determine whether a project can go ahead without impacts to the environment and community that cannot be mitigated. It is not a review of the business case or product being traded. Depending on the project and scope of the review, our team of experts, including planners, environmental scientists, engineers, consultation professionals and if needed, independent consultants, will assess:

1. Effects on biophysical environment
2. Changes to traffic and transportation
3. Impacts of noise, lighting, views and other effects on communities
4. Effects on the rights and interests of Aboriginal groups

Public and stakeholder interests are considered through consultation opportunities and engagement, and Aboriginal consultation is required when the proposed project may adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights.

Some projects may also require additional regulatory approvals and permits from other authorities.

Who can submit a permit application?

Project permit applications can be filed by port tenants, the port authority, or consultants working on behalf of those parties.

Determining application requirements

We work with applicants before they submit a formal application to discuss the proposed project and ensure applications are thorough, complete and evidence-based. During this discussion period, an applicant may decide not to submit an application.

The specific requirements for each application depends on the nature of the proposed project. Applications are assigned to four categories: A, B, C, or D. Category A projects are smaller, more simple projects and category D is reserved for complex projects.

Designated projects

If a proposed project type is included in the list of designated projects identified in the federal government’s Regulations Designating Physical Activities, a federal environmental assessment is required, typically by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency or the National Energy Board.

To learn more about Regulations Designating Physical Activities or the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, visit www.canada.ca.

APPLICATION

PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Who can submit a permit application?

Project permit applications can be filed by port tenants, the port authority, or consultants working on behalf of those parties.

Determining application requirements

We work with applicants before they submit a formal application to discuss the proposed project and ensure applications are thorough, complete and evidence-based. During this discussion period, an applicant may decide not to submit an application.

The specific requirements for each application depends on the nature of the proposed project. Applications are assigned to four categories: A, B, C, or D. Category A projects are smaller, more simple projects and category D is reserved for complex projects.

Designated projects

If a proposed project type is included in the list of designated projects identified in the federal government’s Regulations Designating Physical Activities, a federal environmental assessment is required, typically by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency or the National Energy Board.

To learn more about Regulations Designating Physical Activities or the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, visit www.canada.ca.

Conditions and compliance

Once a review is complete, the port authority makes a decision on the application. We will not authorize or allow a proposed project to proceed if it is likely to result in significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be mitigated.

If a proposed project is approved, a project permit will be issued with conditions. Project permit conditions must be adhered to in order to ensure the project does not result in significant adverse environmental effects, including impacts to Aboriginal groups, surrounding communities and stakeholders.

We have a compliance monitoring and enforcement program and work with permit holders to resolve issues.

To learn more

To view a list of current permit applications and to learn more about our Project and Environmental Review Process, visit www.portvancouver.com/PER or send us an email at PER@portvancouver.com