

Bureau of Engineering

Special Order

October 19, 2005

Special Order No. 003-1005

To All: Deputy City Engineers
Senior Managers
Group Managers

Subject: **REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A WATERCOURSE PERMIT IN SPECIAL FLOOD RISK AREAS (Supersedes Special Order SO004-0302 dated March 5, 2002)**

General

A watercourse is any natural or man-made depression with a bed and well-defined banks below the surrounding land serving to give direction to a current of water, or pattern of runoff from a drainage area of any size (Per U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Document EP 1165-2-314 Section 301.30). This Special Order applies only to watercourses in areas designated by the City Engineer as Special Flood Risk Areas.

The purpose of this special order is to provide a uniform approach for issuing watercourse permits that are within the Special Flood Risk Areas. The Bureau of Engineering will be identifying areas within the City that pose a special flood risk. Until a complete list of flood risk areas is available, this Special Order will apply to the only currently designated Special Flood Risk Area, which is Mandeville Canyon. The Mandeville Canyon Special Flood Risk Area includes Mandeville Canyon Creek and all of the water courses tributary to Mandeville Canyon Creek north of Sunset Boulevard and south of Mulholland Drive.

Effective immediately, all Engineering staff is directed to enforce the following requirements and take into account mudflow hazards when reviewing watercourse permit applications in Special Flood Risk Areas.

Requirements

1. Identify whether the watercourse is within a Special Flood Risk Area. As new Special Flood Risk Areas are identified this will be accomplished by contacting the Stormwater Group and having them check to see if the watercourse is within a Special Flood Risk Area. If the watercourse is not in a Special Flood Risk Area, proceed with issuing the watercourse permit in accordance with the "Permit and Procedure Manual For Work in the Public Right-of-Way" and Special Order SO41-1273.
2. A field investigation by the review engineer will be conducted prior to issuance of a watercourse permit.
3. Applicants shall provide hydrology (Q_{burned} and Q_{bulked} calculated per Los Angeles County Sedimentation Manual) for the 50-year storm and hydraulics calculations prepared and signed by a Civil Engineer licensed in the state of California. The private engineer's analysis shall include the calculation of the water surface elevation in the natural watercourse based on the calculated Q_{burned} and Q_{bulked} flow. This water surface elevation should be a minimum of two feet below the lowest member of any structure allowed within the watercourse. If this criterion cannot be met then a watercourse permit shall not be issued.

4. No structures, drainage devices, or any part thereof shall be constructed below the lowest bank of the watercourse or in the watercourse area defined by the bed and banks of the watercourse below a level of two feet above the calculated water surface elevation based on the Q_{burned} and Q_{bulked} flow. This includes piles, caissons, footings, etc.
5. In order to provide access for earth moving machinery and the unrestricted flow of debris, except as provided in No. 6 below, no structure shall overhang the watercourse area more than 1/3 of the narrowest reach of the watercourse area width. Overhanging structures shall not extend from both sides of the watercourse area within a single section.
6. Bridges necessary for general legal or emergency access to residences may be constructed over watercourses subject to the following additional conditions. No bridge shall be constructed without sufficient vertical and horizontal clearance for earth moving machinery to pass beneath it, unless unrestricted access to the watercourse is provided both upstream and downstream of the bridge. Width of bridge shall be limited to the minimum necessary for access, but in no case shall the width exceed 18 feet.
7. The permit engineer shall contact the Environmental Group for requirements in the preparation of any special environmental document.
8. Applicants will be required to submit a site/topography plan signed by a surveyor licensed in the state of California that shows the alignment, elevations, contours, toes and tops of slope of the watercourse and any adjacent watercourses, sumps, or local depressions. Footprints of any existing and proposed structures adjacent to the watercourse (i.e. cantilever decks or pedestrian/driveway bridges) shall be clearly identified on the site plan.
9. Applicants shall provide the City of Los Angeles with a recorded waiver of damages, a covenant and agreement for maintenance of the watercourse, and vehicular access to the watercourse and any pertinent municipal facility (i.e., revetments, retention basins, debris basins, etc.) when required.
10. The permit engineer shall contact the Department of Building and Safety prior to issuance of a watercourse permit. When required, the permittee shall obtain the necessary permits from the Department of Building and Safety, The Los Angeles County Flood Control District, or the Corps of Engineers.
11. The applicant shall provide written notice to all residents of properties within a 500-foot radius from the subject property of the proposed construction.

(MDP WHH CWR)

WLA/MDP/gva SO No. 003-1005	Approved by:  Gary Lee Moore, P.E., City Engineer
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