



Fairfax Water owns the Occoquan Reservoir for public water supply purposes. Fairfax Water also owns a **Shoreline Easement which serves as a buffer** around the perimeter of the Occoquan Reservoir.

This easement buffer varies in height above the normal water surface elevation for each shoreline property as set forth in the recorded easement for a particular property.

As a rule of thumb, Fairfax Water's easement extends about 8 to 10 feet above the normal pool. Shoreline property owners have the right to pass across the adjoining buffer between the easement and the water for the purposes of fishing and boating, and for the construction and maintenance of piers and floats subject to the requirements set forth in the [Occoquan Reservoir Shoreline Easement Policy](#).

In addition, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance requires that a 100-foot buffer, which is called the **Resource Protection Area (RPA)**, be maintained in a manner "that retards runoff, prevents erosion, and filters nonpoint source pollution from runoff."

The County establishes and enforces this buffer which (partially or wholly) overlaps with Fairfax Water's easement along the Occoquan Reservoir.

Activities and uses that are permitted and not permitted in Fairfax Water's Easement include, but are not limited to, the following:



PERMITTED *

* Only if approved by Fairfax Water

- Installing docks/floats. (Total facility or combination of facilities shall be no larger than 250 square feet).
- Maintaining existing permitted structures.
- Establishing stairs and pathways (no more than 4-6' wide).
- Removing dead or dying vegetation (with prior permission).

NOTE: Specific requirements relating to these activities are set forth in the Shoreline Easement Policy. The County also establishes conditions where tree trimming is permissible within the RPA. Consult Fairfax Water and the County before conducting any of the above activities within the Shoreline Easement area.

NOT PERMITTED



- New development
- Additions to existing structures
- Parking lots
- Secondary structures, such as sheds, gazebos, and any kind of closed storage
- Concrete pads
- Sea walls/retaining walls
- Permanent fire pits
- Clear-cutting trees
- Filling and grading activities
- Establishing grass lawns

Enforcement: Fairfax Water has the legal authority to compel the removal of any structure not in compliance with the Shoreline Easement Policy. The County has ordinances for enforcement of RPA violations which include mitigation and possible fines up to \$5,000 for each day of violation.



Looks good!

Before you alter the shoreline or vegetation on your property, or build any structures, get familiar with the applicable rules and regulations from Fairfax Water and the County to get advice on how to proceed.

- ✓ **Do get Fairfax Water's permission** before cutting, building, or changing anything within the Fairfax Water Easement. Explain your plan and we can advise on the rules and regulations.
- ✓ **Do research your site.** Find out where Fairfax Water's Easement is located and where the Resource Protection Area (RPA) extends (100' from water's edge) on your property. Plan your project to comply with all rules and regulations.
- ✓ **Do less work.** Leave the existing vegetation and minimize lawn mowing areas. That strip of native plants, shrubs, and trees with their extensive root systems form a "green wall" of protection for shoreline properties against erosion.
- ✓ **Do exercise good judgment** concerning view management and prune trees properly. Call a certified arborist and get permission from both the County and Fairfax Water before any tree removal.
- ✓ **Do try to identify causes of erosion.** If your shoreline property has signs of erosion, a combination of adopting better management practices, structural drainage measures and vegetation enhancement may help to improve conditions.
- ✓ **Do recreate a living shore.** Plantings of native species along the shoreline of at least 15-30 feet in width and reducing the extent of lawns are two of the simplest ways to protect your property.



Needs correction!

- ✗ **Don't change things without getting permission.** If a structure was built and damaged or removed, a new application must be submitted to Fairfax Water before a new structure can be built.
- ✗ **Don't harden your shoreline.** Bulkheads, retaining walls or sea walls are prohibited. They harden the shoreline and can accelerate erosion to the adjacent shoreline.
- ✗ **Don't add to the water's nutrient load by using excessive fertilizer.** Keep a no-mow zone along the shoreline. Allow the grass to get a little taller and native seeds to take root.
- ✗ **Don't sacrifice your trees for sightlines.** Trees provide stabilization and leaf litter that is a natural control for erosion.
- ✗ **Don't clear cut vegetation.** It's against the law. Vegetation buffers the forces coming from the reservoir, such as waves and boat wakes, and prevents runoff from carrying nutrients and sediments into the water.
- ✗ **Don't think because you see it on the shoreline, that it is allowed to be there.**