

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT IN WHITFIELD COUNTY

The purpose of these guidelines is to explain the application, review and approval process for developing a subdivision in Whitfield County that requires the use of on-site sewage management (septic) systems. It is not a substitute for the *Georgia Manual for On-Site Sewage Management Systems*, but it should answer most questions concerning these types of developments. Not all of this information will apply to every development.

PRE-DEVELOPMENT MEETING(s)

The first step to developing any property is to contact the Environmental Health Office and discuss your plans. The property in question may be something we have received information on previously. It is also possible that we may at least be familiar with the general soil characteristics of the area and can point out some potential problems. You should set up an appointment with the Environmental Health Office and bring all of the information you have (plats, soil work – preliminary at least, but a level 3 is preferred, and contour maps if available). If possible, bring your surveyor to this meeting, also. We recommend that the pre-development meeting be conducted prior to purchasing the property whenever possible.

The next step in the process is to obtain a boundary plat and to contact a state certified soil classifier to get a level 3 soil survey (if one is not already available). Your surveyor must conduct a topographic study of the property with the contours shown on two-foot intervals. This topography along with soil mapping (with individual soil borings located and identified) should be shown on the boundary plat. The plat should also show and identify any roads, easements, rivers and water impoundments, wetlands, watershed and sewer disposal buffer zones, drinking water reservoirs, utility easements, rights of way & a 100-foot radius from any wells or springs

After all of this information is platted, we recommend that we meet with you and your surveyor prior to establishing lot lines. This will allow us to further address any areas of concern before the surveyor enters all of the lot information into the computer. After this meeting, the surveyor can enter the information and the plat can be presented to our office for preliminary review.

NOTE: We also recommend a pre-development meeting with the Whitfield County Building, Zoning & Development Office to ensure that the proposed development meets their requirements, as well.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW

The plat submitted for Preliminary Review should include (all on the same plat unless otherwise instructed):

- The boundary plat of the property with a vicinity map.
- The topography of the property on two-foot (2') contours – slopes exceeding 35% may be shown on five-foot (5') contours.
- A level 3 soil survey (at least 4 holes per acre) showing soil series boundaries with each boring located and identified.
- Lot lines shown with dimensions, the **total area of the lot** in square feet or acres and the total area of each lot (in square feet or acres) minus the following: roads (existing and proposed), easements, rivers and water impoundments, wetlands, watershed and sewer disposal buffer zones, drinking water reservoirs, utility easements, rights of way & a 100-foot radius from any wells or springs.

When the preliminary plat is received at the Environmental Health Office, a **Subdivision Application** must be completed and the **Subdivision Plan Review Fee** of \$20 per proposed lot must be paid (this fee will not be subject to a refund if the final number of lots is less than that proposed on the preliminary plat). We would also like a copy of the Sediment & Erosion Control Plan and a copy of the construction diagram of the proposed roads to determine whether or not these will affect the proposed lot layout.

We realize that the Sediment & Erosion Control Plan and the road construction plan may not be completed until after preliminary approval is given. If this is the case, please provide these to us as soon as possible upon completion. The preliminary approval is contingent upon these plans since the location of detention ponds, easements and drainage ways or cutting and filling during road construction may affect some of the lots.

We will then review the application and preliminary plat to ensure that all of the lots meet the minimum lot sizes of usable area set by the Whitfield County Board of Health. We are looking for any problems that may be evident with any lots on the plat. This will be done by an in-office review of the plat and a visit to the property to walk over the proposed lots. The lots will be assessed based on a house location and sufficient area for a conventional (gravel absorption line) septic system and complete replacement with gravel absorption lines (or alternative system if needed). If the soils on a lot require the use of an alternative system, a site specific design must be provided for at least a four-bedroom home. (This site plan must be provided and approved before final approval will be given for the development). After the review process is completed, we will notify you in writing about the status of your preliminary plat (approved or not) along with the areas of concern if it cannot be approved.

If the property is very complex (many different soil types, lots of drains, etc.) we may need more information or need certain areas to be staked off in order to make a determination on a lot. We hope that the pre-development meetings will have already eliminated many of these potential problems.

Once all of the required information is received and preliminary approval is given, construction can begin.

FINAL APPROVAL

When you are ready for final approval, the roads should (at least) be roughed in and the front and back corners of the lots must be staked (it may also be necessary to clear and flag side lines). At this point we will make a site visit for the final walkover. Hopefully, by this point, any and all problems have already been addressed. If we see further problems that would prevent final approval, we will again notify you in writing of these problems.

Again, any site plans that are required must be provided to the Environmental Health Office before final approval. We will also require a copy of the final lot layout on a boundary plat with the topography and soils information with the proper professional seals (surveyor and soil classifier) before final approval will be given.