

Understanding Lake Legislation

Legislation is in place to manage and conserve our natural resources. By following this legislation, we not only ensure that we can enjoy our lakes today, but also into the future. It is everyone's responsibility to be aware of regulations. For example, before starting any project that may alter the shoreline areas of a water body, you must have written authorization from all applicable regulators and a copy must be present at the work site.

Lake Related Provincial Law

Under the *Public Lands Act*, the occupation and use of public lands, including shorelands requires an approval. In addition, specific activities are prohibited on public land including activities that are:

- Likely to result in injury to the bed and shore of any river, stream, watercourse, lake or other body of water, or land in the vicinity of that public land, or
- Likely to result in soil erosion

Under the *Water Act*, approvals and/or licenses are required for activities such as:

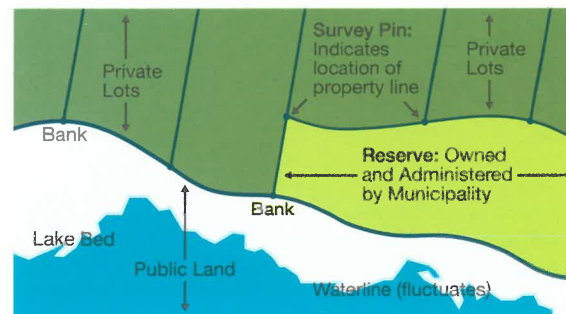
- Water diversion
- Alteration/modification to a water body, bed or shore
- Storm water management works
- Aquatic vegetation control and removal
- Activity that causes or may cause an adverse effect on the aquatic environment

The *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* (EPEA) prohibits the release of substances into the environment that may cause a significant adverse affect. It also covers:

- Pesticide regulations
- Fertilizer storage and application
- Storm water drainage systems
- Municipal wastewater treatment facilities
- Septage disposal

Applying Lake Legislation – Did You Know?

Property Boundaries: Most lakeshore properties DO NOT extend to the water's edge, rather only to the "bank" or ordinary high water mark (OHWM) where emergent aquatic vegetation ends and upland vegetation starts. An environmental or municipal reserve may also separate your property from the lake and is administered by the local municipality.



Natural Protection: Naturally occurring emergent aquatic vegetation dampens wave energy and along with adjacent riparian vegetation protects against erosion and ice scouring. Because of this, "soft" armoring with grasses and shrubs is encouraged due to its many benefits and "hard" armoring with rocks or boulders is only approved when erosion risk is very high.

Beach Creation: Sand can be a form of pollution as it can destroy fish habitat. Placement of sand often encroaches onto Crown land and seldom lasts as it is easily eroded. People are encouraged to use public beaches instead of creating their own.

Aquatic Vegetation Control: Vegetation removal and control contributes to loss of fish and bird habitat, loss of fish productivity, increased erosion potential, and an increase in nutrients that leads to more algal growth. Approvals for vegetation removal are generally limited to mechanical cutting to a maximum of a 4m width for lake access.

Water Diversion: Landowners bordering a water body are allowed to divert up to 1250 m³/year for household purposes and 6250 m³/year for agricultural purposes (if owned prior to 1999). Diversion over this limit or for other purposes requires a license. If a water supply line/pump is permanently installed on the bed and shore, approval is needed prior to installation.

Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) on Shore Lands: OHVs can cause nuisance/noise, public safety issues, erosion, wildlife/livestock harassment and habitat loss. The *Public Lands Administrative Regulation* prohibits the use of wheeled or tracked conveyances on the beds and shores of a permanent and naturally occurring body of water or naturally occurring river, stream, watercourse or lake.

Boat Lifts and Docks: Seasonal and temporary lifts or docks may be used by riparian landowners provided they are removed completely from a lake at the end of open water season, water can flow under them, and they don't increase erosion or restrict the public's right of access. Commercial or permanent lifts or docks require an approval.

Septic/Sewage Systems: If you are not connected to a municipal sewer system you must have a private sewage system—maintained and installed to the standards set by Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Respect Our Lakes

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For More Information

For more information about lake health,
lake stewardship or the approval process:

Environment and Parks

aep.alberta.ca (search 'Respect our Lakes')
ESRD.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca

Or call: 310-3773

For environmental complaints/emergencies
call the 24-hour environmental hotline:

1-800-222-6514

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