



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT APPLICATIONS

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GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT APPLICATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *District Mission:*

Reclamation District 799 (District) reviews a project to see if it will have any impacts on the levee or drainage, or if it will affect District's ability to provide reclamation and drainage services to the residents of Hotchkiss Tract.

B. *Purpose:*

These General Guidelines are intended to give applicants some guidance when seeking District approval of a project. Applicants are encouraged to give abundant of time for District staff to review and formulate a decision. District Manager may exercise his/her discretion in approval of any terms and conditions of these guidelines.

C. *Important Reminders:*

- 1) This document is not intended to cover every situation, nor is it intended to give every detail about the project application process.
- 2) Furthermore, this document is not intended to give a complete list of what can, and cannot, be done on the levee or in a drainage ditch.
- 3) Levee safety is of the utmost importance to the district. The district receives supplemental funds for levee safety and emergency from the state and federal government thus is required to meet state and federal levee safety standards. The requirements contained in this document are to ensure that proper safety standards can be met.

D. *Application Requirements:*

- 1) Any work to be done on or near the levee, or in or near a drainage ditch, needs to be consulted with District staff to determine if a District Approval is required.
- 2) Although the term "projects" is commonly used when referring to the need to obtain a District Approval, "projects" are not limited to construction activities. (Construction activities, however, are the most common type of "projects" that is submitted to the district for review and approval).
- 3) As a general rule, most construction projects on Hotchkiss Tract must be reviewed and approved by the District before a County Building Permit can be obtained. Additionally, many activities taking place on the levee or near a drainage ditch will require a District approval, even if no County permit is required.
- 4) As examples, the following construction projects and activities will need a District approval before they are started:
 - a. any grading or digging
 - b. construction of a new structure, (such as a residence, garage or shed)
 - c. building of a retaining wall (including the stacking of pre-cast blocks)
 - d. erecting or maintaining any fence, gate
 - e. placing a walkway or gang plank on the waterside of the levee
 - f. planting grass on the levee crown (top of the levee)
 - g. erecting or maintaining any portable toilet, or other movable structure on the levee

- h. constructing wave-wash protection devices from the levee (such as rip-rap rock and bulkheads)
 - i. placing underground utilities in or near the levee
 - j. pounding a piling into the levee (including the submerged part of the levee)
 - k. demolishing a structure
 - l. most construction on the exterior of an existing structure (such as a house or dock)
 - m. construction of a new dock
 - n. any construction on the interior of a structure that is "non-conforming" and "encroaching"
 - o. creation of any impervious surface, such as surfaces made of concrete, asphalt, brick and tile.
- 5) Non-construction projects and activities such as storing or placing lumber, pipes, construction materials, trampolines, sports equipment, picnic tables, outdoor furniture, swing sets and wading pools on or near the levee will need a District approval before they are started.
- 6) Certain activities are prohibited on the levee, and District will not grant an approval for them. These include:
- a. planting trees, shrubs, bushes, cacti, and some types of ground covers
 - b. camping
 - c. launching a boat (except from a launching ramp or other facility regularly maintained for launching boats)
- 7) Applicants may apply for variance if they provide adequate documentation in support of their project not to be harmful to levee and/or drainage system. Variances need to be approved by the District Board of Directors.

II. DEFINITIONS RELATED TO LEVEES

- A. The "levee crown" is the flat (or nearly flat) area on top of the levee.
- B. The "design levee" is the minimum shape of the levee under federal standards. Those standards require a 2:1 waterside slope and a 3:1 landside slope, and a minimum levee crown width of sixteen (16) feet.
- C. The "landside toe" is the point at which the landside sloped side of the levee intersects the land surface of the island.
- D. The "waterside toe" is the point at which the waterside sloped side of the levee intersects the bottom of the slough.
- E. The "waterside levee setback" is a line which determines how close to the levee crown docks on the waterside of the levee can be placed. The exact position differs, depending upon the type of levee involved, however a "rule of thumb" is to say that it exists 31 feet out into the water from the waterside edge of the levee crown.
- F. The "landside levee setback" is a line which determines how close to the levee a structure on the landside can be placed. It is a discretionary decision to be made by the district to ensure levee maintenance work is not jeopardized.

III. DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Any applicant applying for District permit to construct new residence is encouraged to consider the following:

A. *General*

1. Applicants may consider widening and raising the levee to bring it up to federal standards. If the levee is widened later, the new residence might be adversely affected.
2. Consult with the District staff to examine the possibility of District to cost share or do the levee work providing the homeowner entering into a Levee Agreement with the District, which will be recorded in the County land records.
3. The new/proposed construction project must be a certain distance from the levee. That distance is called the "levee setback." There is a setback on both the waterside and the landside.
4. District requires that certain "standard notes" appear on plans that are submitted. Applicant may seek District assistance in preparing those "standard notes".
5. Applicant is responsible to obtain all other local, State, and Federal permits.

B. *Specific Facilities*

1. Ramps

- a) cannot have an outside width that exceeds 48 inches. (Note: Federal law generally requires a minimum unobstructed inside width ("accessible route") of 36 inches.)
- b) Only one ramp is allowed per dock.
- c) Ramps must be designed to be easily removable by the owner, so that they will not impair District's ability to perform maintenance work on the levee or levee road.
- d) All ramps must be supported by a concrete footing on the waterside of the levee.

2. Docks and Pilings

- a) The Army Corps of Engineers has rules that may affect the size, shape, and placement of docks, and therefore it is advised that applicants obtain their rules before designing the dock.
- b) The plans for all docks and pilings must include a cross-section (profile) of the levee, at the location of the proposed dock or pilings.-The elevations of the submerged part of the levee must be obtained by physical measurements on the water, usually by boat. The location of all pilings (both stand-alone pilings or pilings supporting a dock) must be shown on the cross-section.
- c) In addition to plans, the applicant proposing to erect a dock or pilings must also submit true and correct copies of any applications, plans, reports, covenant agreements, or other documents required by, or filed with, any governmental agency other than District, (including but not limited to the Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the County, the U.S Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service) pertaining to the project, plus any letters, memoranda, permits, or other documents received from any such governmental agency pertaining to the project.

3. Utility Lines Crossing the Levee

- a) Include sewer pipes, electrical conduits and household pressure water pipes, etc.
- b) Must not be buried more than 12 inches deep, unless approved by the District.
- c) Must be installed using a trench (no hydraulic or other drilling is allowed).
- d) Must be made of Schedule 80 PVC pipe, or a better material.
- e) The location of utility lines must be clearly marked on both sides of the levee, just off of the levee crown. Markers shall be either: (i) 4x4 wooden posts, painted white, 12 inches above ground, and embedded 12 inches into the ground; or (ii) Schedule 80 PVC pipe of the same diameter as the buried pipe, 12 inches above ground, and embedded 12 inches into the ground.
- f) Pressurized water pipes must have an accessible and clearly marked shut-off valve at the levee, on the side of the water source.
- g) Pipes must be installed in full 20-foot lengths (in order to minimize the number of couplings in the levee).
- h) Pipes must be directly buried. They must not be placed inside another pipe as a sleeve because open-ended pipes are prohibited.
- i) The applicant must acknowledge (by placing a note on the plans) that future levee maintenance may require removal of all or part of the utility lines at the applicant's expense.
- j) The above does not apply to water pipes having a pressure higher than normal household pressure, such as some commercial lines and fire lines.

4. Fences on the Levee

- a) Must be on the side property lines.
- b) Must be perpendicular to, or within twenty degrees of perpendicular to, the centerline of the levee.
- c) Cannot extend any closer to the water than 22 feet from the waterside edge of the levee crown on the designed levee profile or 2 feet, measured away from the water, from the landside edge of the levee crown, (whichever is farther away from the water).
- d) Only parcels in certain areas of Hotchkiss Tract (generally where farming is still conducted) can have fences across the levee crown.
- e) No fences are allowed on the waterside of the levee, except when used as a railing along a dock ramp or gangplank.
- f) No fences are allowed across the levee crown.
- g) Any fence must be of an open wire or semi-transparent design and construction (so visual inspection of the levee from either side of the fence is not impaired or hindered).
- h) The landowner must acknowledge (by placing a note on the plans) that future levee maintenance may require removal of all or part of the fence at the landowner's expense.

5. Stairs and Walkways on the landside of the Levee

- a) Must be made of wood.
- b) Must be above grade (they cannot be dug into the levee).

- c) Cannot have an outside width that exceeds 48 inches. (Note: Federal law generally requires a minimum unobstructed inside width of 36 inches.)
- d) Piles, concrete footings and posts will be allowed to support stairs and walkways above the levee.
- e) Concrete footings and posts for a stairway or walkway can usually be embedded up to 24 inches into the ground. Footings must not act as a retaining wall.
- f) The applicant must acknowledge (by placing a note on the plans) that future levee maintenance may require removal of all or part of the stairway or walkway at the landowner's expense.

6. General Excavation

Excavation may be allowed by the district if it meets the following criteria:

- a) Does not interphase with the projected landside slope of a levee.
- b) Does not increase levee seepage.
- c) Does not interfere with the levee maintenance work.

7. Decks

- d) A deck from a building cannot extend more than ten (10) feet toward the water from the toe of the design levee.
- e) The vertical clearance from the design levee to the deck structure shall be no less than eight (8) feet, (so that District has room to inspect the levee).
- f) Piles, concrete footings and posts will be allowed to support decks above the levee. Piles, concrete footings and posts supporting a deck can usually be embedded up to 36 inches into the ground. Footings must not act as a retaining wall.

8. Flagpoles in the Levee Setback Area

- a) Flagpoles are allowed up to the landside edge of the levee crown. They are prohibited on the levee crown itself.
- b) Flagpoles must have a proper footing for the size of the pole.

9. Landscaping on the slopes and crown of the Levee

- a) Most landscaping activities are prohibited on the levee.
- b) The planting of trees, bushes and most other vegetation is prohibited on the levee.
- c) Only certain types of ground covers are allowed, but only on the levee slopes. (The State of California has created a list of approved ground covers for levee slopes)
- d) Grass is allowed on the crown of the levee (sod is allowed however it will likely be damaged by District vehicles before it has a chance to root).
- e) The applicant must acknowledge (by placing a statement on the plans or the application) that the applicant assumes all risk of loss and damage to the grass caused by the use of the levee road.

10. Landside Drainage Projects

- a) Projects cannot obstruct a drainage ditch. (In general, no permanent structure will be allowed within 15 feet of the edge of a drainage ditch, because that area is required for equipment to clean the ditch.)
- b) Projects cannot redirect drainage waters onto a neighboring property.

- c) If there is a drainage ditch along the roadway in front of a lot, only one ditch crossing (culvert) will be allowed per lot. (Crossings for levee upramps are not counted towards the "one crossing" restriction if District has a written easement for the upramp.)
- d) Culvert pipes cannot exceed 20 feet in length (this is due to the fact that most contractors only have cleaning equipment to clean out culverts that can extend 10 feet into each end of a culvert).
- e) Culverts must be at least 18" in diameter. Any length or size that is different than what is described above will have to be submitted for a variance.
- f) As to lots that are at the levee, the lot must be brought up to a minimum of a one and one-quarter percent (1¼%) grade, sloped away from the levee toe, before building commences, so that water will drain away from the base of the levee and prevent ponding. (Note: 1¼% grade is approximately 1/4-inch vertical change for every one foot horizontal distance.)
- g) If the project is a large project (such as a subdivision) located near the levee, District will likely require that the property owner prepare a detailed report on the stability of the nearby levee.
- h) If the project is near the levee, some of District's design rules may be relaxed if the property owner, at the property owner's expense, places sheet pile on the waterside of the levee in accordance with the recommendations of District's engineer.

11. Demolition Activities

- a) Demolition activities generally require District approval.
- b) Applicant must get permits from other agencies before applying for District approval. Those other agencies include, but are not limited to, the County (a demolition permit) and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (a "J Number" permit).
- c) The applicant must disclose the location of where to dispose of the debris from the demolition.

IV. DRAWINGS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

There are several types of drawings that may be required by the district to properly evaluate the impacts that a project may have on the levee or drainage. Follow these recommendations:

- Applicant should check with the district staff to find out which drawings may be required for specific project.
- All drawings must be on paper that is at least 11 inches wide and 17 inches long.
- Applicant should submit three (3) sets of the drawings for review.

The following are the types of documents District may need:

1. Plot Plan

Nearly every application to the district requires a plot plan. The extent of the plot plan will be determined by the extent of the proposed project. For a residence, addition to a residential unit, or a garage, this drawing must show the following:

- a) The clearances for the side yards

- b) The front yard clearance (from the street right of way)
- c) Rear yard clearance (from the landside toe of the levee) and
- d) The existing various physical features of the property, such as all buildings and other structures, trees, driveways, culverts, retaining walls, and drainage systems.

2. Profile Drawing

The drawing should show the “side view” of the project. If a levee is involved, it must also show the profile (shape) of the levee in relation to the project and be prepared by a licensed land surveyor or civil engineer.

3. Title Report

A title report may be required to verify the existence or absence of easements across the subject property. A “Preliminary Report” or “Policy of Title Insurance” from the time when applicant purchased the property is acceptable.

V. PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS

For both landside and waterside projects, the project approval process starts when District receives a paper application and all required documents. District does not issue any permits. Instead, it issues a "District Approval" after reviewing a project application and related documents. District review is focused on a) project impacts on the levee or drainage, b) effect on District's ability to provide reclamation and drainage services to the residents of Hotchkiss Tract. All elements of the projects must be clearly described and shown on the plan drawings. All applications will be considered for approval by the District Board of Directors.

EXCEPTIONS: Most projects on the interior of Hotchkiss Tract are automatically approved except:

- An interior project in a structure that is built within the levee setback area
- Any interior work involving digging near the levee and
- Any interior work that affects drainage.

VI. CHANGES TO THESE GUIDELINES

The content of this document is subject to change, clarification and updating at any time. Please check District website and consult with the staff members for changes, clarifications, and updates.