



**Snohomish County**  
Planning and Development  
Services

Visit us at :

2nd Floor Robert J. Drewel Bldg.  
3000 Rockefeller Avenue  
Everett, WA 98201

425-388-3311  
1-800-562-4367, ext. 3311



**ONLINE INFORMATION**  
[www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1190](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1190)



This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Assistance Bulletin

# 24

Revised May 2015

**WWW.SNOCO.ORG**

**Keyword: Assistance Bulletins**

## Q: What is a “legal” lot?

**A:** A legal lot is considered “legal” under Snohomish County Code if it has been legally created and met all zoning and subdivision code requirements in effect at the time of lot creation.

## Q: How is a legal lot created?

**A:** A lot is considered a legal lot if it was:

- Created in its present form by transfer of ownership before September 12, 1972, and the lot met all zoning and subdivision requirements in effect at the time of its creation. Evidence of the transfer of ownership of the parcel such as a deed or real estate contract is required. To issue a building permit, legal access to a county road is required.
- Created between August 9, 1969, and September 12, 1972, by county approved **Short Plat** but not recorded with the county Auditor’s Office. (Short plats processed between August 9, 1969, and September 12, 1972, were not required to be recorded).
- Created on or after September 12, 1972, by county approved and recorded **Short Plat** (lots that have been subdivided, approved, and recorded with the Snohomish County Auditor’s Office).
- Created by county approved and recorded **Large Tract Segregation (LTS)**. Lots, typically 5 acres or larger, that were approved by PDS and recorded with the county Auditor’s Office between July 30, 1979, and September 9, 1986.
- Created before September 16, 1986, by **Five-Acre Segregation** (a map filed prior to September 16, 1986, with Planning & Development Services (PDS) where all lots are 5 acres or greater) or where evidence such as a deed, contract, tax statement, or record of survey of 5-acre parcels demonstrates that a 5-acre parcel was created prior to September 16, 1986.
- Created before May 16, 1991, by **Twenty-Acre Segregation** (a map filed prior to May 16, 1991, with PDS where all lots are 20 acres or greater) or where evidence such as a deed, contract, tax statement, or record of survey of 20-acre parcels demonstrates that a 20-acre parcel was created prior to May 16, 1991.
- Created at any time by **Eighty-Acre Segregation** (a map filed with PDS where all lots are 80 acres or greater) or where evidence such as a deed, contract, tax statement, or record of survey of 80-acre parcels demonstrates that an 80-acre parcel was created.
- Created by recorded **Formal Plat/Subdivision** (lots in subdivisions that have had final approval by and recorded with the county Auditor’s Office).

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change.  
For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

**Q: What requirements must these lots meet?**

**A:** Recorded formal plat, short plat, and segregation lots are considered legal building lots if they:

- Meet current health requirements.
- Meet current zoning lot size requirements or those in effect when the lot was created.
- Meet access requirements in effect when the lot was created.

**Q: What if my lot was not created by a formal plat, short plat, LTS, Five-Acre Segregation, Twenty-Acre Segregation, or Eighty-Acre Segregation? Is my lot legal?**

**A:** Snohomish County uses a process called Lot Status to certify lots created in these circumstances. To receive Lot Status, you will need to obtain documentation (copies of real estate deeds, contracts, etc.) that demonstrates the lot was created prior to applicable subdivision laws. See the preceding, “How is a legal lot created?” information. You can usually obtain these documents from a title company, the county Auditor’s Office, or from your own records. In order to be considered a legal lot it must:

- Meet current lot size requirements or those in effect when the lot was created.
- Meet access requirements in effect when the lot was created.

**Q: Where do I take my documents?**

**A:** To obtain official recognition of a lot created outside of a county approved subdivision process, you will need to submit an “Application for Lot Status Determination” form and application fees by visiting the Customer Support Center, PDS, 2nd floor, Robert J. Drewel Building, 3000 Rockefeller, Everett, WA. To get forms online, go to:

[www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1190](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1190).

**Q: What happens after I bring in my application and documents?**

**A:** When you have submitted the application form and documents to PDS and when it has been demonstrated that the lot meets all zoning and access requirements in effect at the time the lot was created, a letter verifying that the lot is recognized by Snohomish County will be provided.

**Q: What if I received a lot through a will?**

**A:** If you received a lot through testamentary provisions, it may be a legal lot if it:

- Meets current lot size requirements or those in effect when the lot was created.
- Meets access requirements in effect when the lot was created. (Contact PDS counter personnel for more information.)

**Q: Is my lot eligible for a building permit?**

**A:** Recognition of property as a separate lot does not imply or guarantee the property is buildable nor necessarily entitle an owner to permits for property development. Building and other development permits will be issued dependent on consistency with applicable county codes, regulations, and policies. For example, legal access to a county road must always be provided before a building permit may be issued.

**Q: What if I don’t know the legal status of my lot?**

**A:** If you are in doubt about the legal status of a lot in Snohomish County that you intend to buy, sell, or build on, you may submit your question online by going to [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/FormCenter/PDSAsk-Permit-Tech-48](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/FormCenter/PDSAsk-Permit-Tech-48) or by visiting the Customer Support Center, PDS, 2nd Floor, Robert J. Drewel Building, 3000 Rockefeller Avenue, Everett.

NOTE: Three or more contiguous lots under single ownership created prior to April 15, 1957, that do not meet current zoning lot area requirements may need to be combined in groups to satisfy zoning code restrictions regarding development of substandard lots. Contact PDS counter personnel for more information.