

Drainage Around Your Home

Land development and construction alters natural landscape features. Areas such as roofs and pavement replace trees and other vegetation. There is less vegetation to soak up and evaporate the water. There are signs a homeowner can look for and solutions that help reduce drainage problems. Typical drainage scenarios may include:

Compacted Soils - In some newer developments, all the topsoil and part of the subsoil material are removed during construction. The subsoil may be densely compacted and, often, it cannot allow excess water to infiltrate into it. If the soil has a dense layer, especially a dense layer of clay or a severely compacted layer, the restricted water flow through the soil may cause ponding. Use a soil aerator to increase infiltration and reduce surface ponding. Also consider using deep-rooted, drought-resistant grasses and plants. As the new landscape develops, drainage is likely to improve.

Irrigation Management - Due to the amount of irrigation required for sod establishment and compacted soil conditions common in newer developments, areas of standing water may be observed during the first few years of landscape establishment.

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High Water Table, Springs, Seeps - The water table can be defined as the level below the ground surface where the soil is saturated with water. This level may fluctuate by several feet throughout the year.

Natural springs and seeps occur due to existing geology and landscape characteristics. Water may flow seasonally, throughout the year, or may flow around homes constructed near a spring or seep. If a high water table, spring, or seep exists, a gravity drain or sump pump may need to be installed. Also consider installing water-loving plants.

Roof Drains - Be sure roof drains are properly fitted with downspouts that will release water away from the home. Placing splash pads at the end of the downspout may help prevent the concentration of roof water from seeping into the soil next to the foundation wall.

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EXCITED ABOUT OUR FUTURE***

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Whom do I contact about drainage problems on my property?

In most cases, drainage maintenance on new lots is the responsibility of the private property owner and/or the Builder. If you require assistance, please contact the Department of Public Works at 226-6453. You will be asked a few general questions to help determine if:

- There is any County responsibility;
- It is a private property issue; or
- It is an issue between you and your builder.

Your concern will be forwarded to an Inspector. He/She will conduct a site visit and may be able to give you ideas that will help identify the best solutions to your particular home drainage problem.

For suspected Building Code violations (improper grade within 10 feet of the foundation or water in the crawl space), contact the Department of Building Construction and Inspections at 804-501-4360 or visit our website at:

<http://henrico.us/bldg/>

If expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. If you plan to hire a contractor, acquire more than one estimate, carefully evaluate different alternatives, and choose a contractor that guarantees the work.

New Residential Construction



Lot Grading and Drainage

This brochure has been prepared for homeowners to provide information about lot grading and drainage on new residential lots. Most "drainage complaints" brought to the attention of the County staff are private property issues and outside of local government authority.

- ◆ **Why is lot grading important?**
- ◆ **Who is responsible for final lot grading?**
- ◆ **What is a drainage and utility easement?**
- ◆ **Drainage around your home**
- ◆ **Whom do I contact?**

Why is lot grading important?

When a new home is constructed, it is essential that the lot be graded properly to ensure that drainage is directed away from the building and that it does not cause problems or damage to neighboring properties. Proper grading should allow runoff to reach a drainage area (ditch/channel, storm sewer, floodplain, etc...).

What is the county's responsibility?

The Department of Building Construction and Inspections inspects crawl spaces and the area adjacent to the building. Generally, the slope from foundation walls must fall at least six (6) inches in the first ten (10) feet (Va. USBC).

The Department of Building Construction and Inspections does not inspect lot grading beyond the required ten (10) feet from the foundation. If you think you have a Building Code violation (improper grade within ten (10) feet of the foundation or water in the crawl space) or you are unsure, a Henrico County Building Inspector will conduct an inspection to make a determination. Contact the Department of Building Construction and Inspections at 804-501-4360.

Henrico County representatives do not inspect the slope and drainage on new lots and cannot solve individual problems or private disputes between builders and property owners.

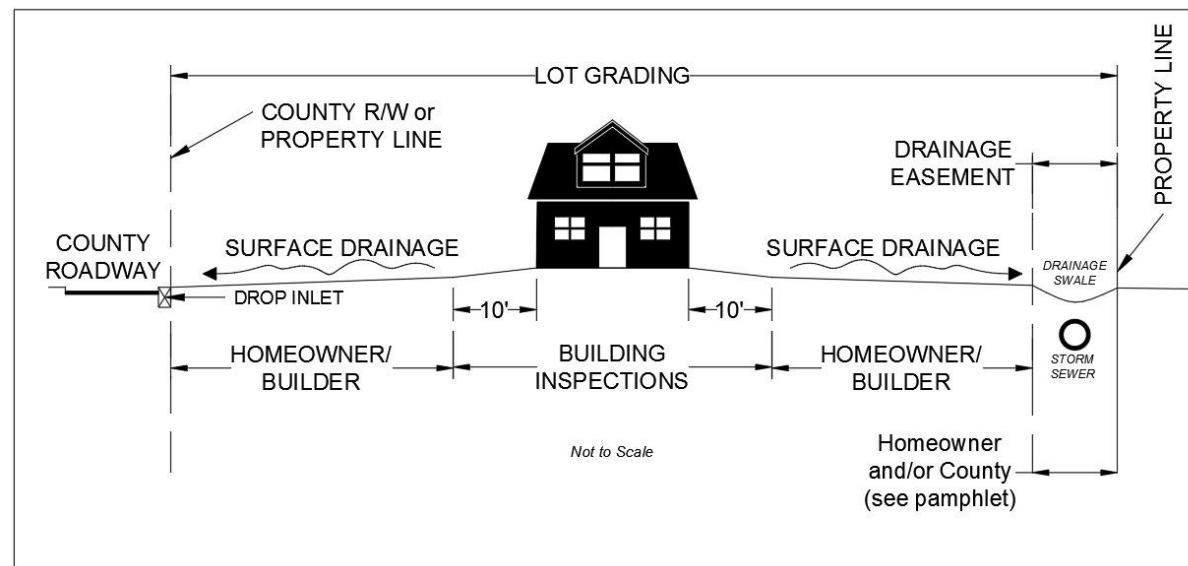
What is the builder's responsibility?

The builder is responsible for proper drainage on individual lots. The builder purchases lots from the developer and then sells the home and lot to the purchaser. The builder is responsible for constructing the house, the grading and seeding/sodding, driveways, and maintaining clean roads and a clean building site. Building permits are issued with the understanding that the builder will complete proper final grading for the entire lot.

What is the homeowner's responsibility?

It is the homeowner's responsibility to evaluate the condition of the lot and its grading.

Any concerns should be documented before closing and resolved with the builder. Homeowners may consider including proper grading and drainage in the home building contract and one-year home warranty.



What is a drainage and utility easement and who is responsible for maintaining them?

There are numerous easements dedicated for various purposes on private property. A drainage easement is intended to provide an area for the installation of stormwater conveyance structures. The developer/builder is responsible for final grading within easements, in accordance with the approved construction plans.

Henrico County does not maintain easements on private property unless a public drainage structure (i.e., inlet, underground storm sewer (pipe), paved channel, etc.) has been placed within the easement and is part of the County stormwater system. If this is the case, the county will maintain the improved drainage structures only. The responsibility for non-structural maintenance within a drainage and utility easement (mowing, clearing, etc.) lies with the private property owner.

Henrico County strongly encourages homeowners to keep easements clear of obstacles such as sheds and fences. These structures may impede drainage or result in drainage problems on surrounding lots. Landscaping within an easement should be minimal in the event maintenance of a drainage structure or utility is required.