

Impervious Surface Frequently Asked Questions

Most residential properties in the City of Shorewood are restricted to no more than 33% impervious surface coverage. Properties within a shoreland protection zone (within 1,000 ft of a lake) are restricted to no more than 25% impervious surface coverage. Some Planned Unit Development (PUD) neighborhoods have slightly different requirements. Individual projects which create 1,000 sqft or more of new impervious surface at once are required to submit a stormwater management plan with their permit application.

What is an Impervious Surface?

A constructed hard surface that prevents or hinders entry of water into the soil and causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities and at an increased rate of flow than prior to development. Common impervious surfaces include rooftops, decks, sidewalks, patios, swimming pools, parking lots, concrete, asphalt, gravel driveways, permeable pavers, artificial turf and other similar surfaces.

Cantilevers no greater than two feet from the side of the structure and at least four feet above the adjacent grade, and roof overhangs no greater than two feet from the side of the structure do not count as impervious surfaces.

What is the Rationale Behind the Requirement?

The City of Shorewood is required to regulate impervious surfaces near lakes by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources shoreland regulations. Given the number of lakes in the area, the City has historically enforced impervious surface requirements across the community. Impervious surface requirements ultimately serve a public benefit by providing stormwater management, reducing the amount of contaminants that enter a body of water, and preservation of natural habitat and vegetation.

Gravel driveways are defined as an impervious surface since soils become compacted after use and impair infiltration of water, and long term they are commonly paved over by property owners. Permeable pavers and artificial turf are also considered impervious as they remove habitat and natural vegetation and are frequently left unmaintained by property owners, which effectively eliminates any benefit they may have initially provided. Decks are also considered impervious, as even though a deck may have gaps between boards, stormwater does not infiltrate into the ground like it would on natural vegetation. Additionally, underlying surfaces are often compacted or paved over with other impervious surfaces.

What if I Use a Green Roof, Rain Garden, or Other Treatment System?

While these types of solutions have an environmental benefit and are encouraged, they do not provide any credit towards impervious surface requirements. The impervious surface requirement is solely based on the amount of hardcover on a property; no credit is given for mitigation or treatment.

How is Impervious Surface Coverage Calculated?

Property owners should work with a licensed land surveyor to calculate existing and proposed impervious surface coverage on their property prior to submitting a permit application. Impervious surface coverage is calculated based on the total square footage of impervious surfaces divided by the total square footage of the property.

Can I Apply for an Exception?

An exception can be applied for through the Variance application process. However, it is recommended that potential applicants contact City staff to discuss their proposal prior to submission of an application. For more information on the variance application process and requirements, see the Planning & Protective Inspections Department website at [Planning & Zoning Handouts & Checklists | Shorewood, MN](#). Variance applications can take up to 120 days to process pursuant to Minn. Stat. 15.99.

Questions?

If you have any questions please contact Planning & Protective Inspections Department staff at 952-960-7900 or planning@shorewoodmn.gov. The contents of this handout have been summarized and may not be all inclusive. Please see the City Code available on the City of Shorewood website at [City Code | Shorewood, MN](#) for a complete listing of requirements. City Code requirements are subject to change.