

# Water

## Buffer Authorizations

**Express Option\***

**What Activities Require This Permit?** If impacts to vegetated 50-foot buffers within the Catawba, Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River Basins or the Randleman Lake or Jordan Lake Watershed are proposed, or impacts to vegetated 100-foot or 200-foot buffers in the Goose Creek Watershed are proposed, these activities may require written authorization or a variance from the state of North Carolina. Typical types of projects include road crossings and utility corridors.

**What Is The Purpose of This Permit?** To protect waters of the state and aquatic resources through citizen compliance with state water quality laws. Mitigation of unavoidable impacts and inclusion of stormwater management features are two of the most important aspects of water quality review.

**Who Issues This Permit?** N.C. Division of Water Resources, 401 and Buffer Permitting Branch or Regional Office

**How Much Will This Permit Cost?** There is no charge for a Buffer Authorization; however, if the project is also linked with a 401 Certification or Isolated Wetlands Permit, the application fees for those authorizations apply.

**What Are My Payment Options for Permit Application Fees?** Not applicable.

**If Paying by Check, Who do I Make the Check Payable to and Where Do I Send the Check?** Not applicable.

**Where Can I Get The Application For This Permit?** <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-permits/wastewater-branch/401-wetlands-buffer-permits/401-application-forms-help-documents>

Qualifiers are described in Buffer Rules: <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-rules/401-certification-express-review-statutes-rules-guides>.

**How Long Will It Take To Review My Application?** Up to 60 calendar days (upon receipt of a correct and complete application package) for routine approvals and Minor Variances. Major Variances are subject to scheduling constraints associated with the Water Quality Committee of the Environmental Management Commission.

**Where Do I Submit My Application?** N.C. Division of Water Resources, 401 and Buffer Permitting Branch, 1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC, 27699-1617

**How Long Is My Permit or License or Certificate Valid?** As stated in the approval letter from the N.C. Division of Water Resources.

**Notes/Comments:** These buffer authorizations do not supercede Water Supply and Trout Buffer requirements.

**\*Express Option** - The express permitting option is available for this permit type. This option offers quicker review times than the standard traditional review process. [Learn more](#) about express permitting.

*Please note:* The Central Office is no longer accepting Express Permitting applications, however the Washington Regional Office is still accepting Express Permitting applications.

- For forms or questions about Express Permitting in the Washington Regional Office area, please contact Don Burke at: 252-948-3845 or at [don.burke@ncdenr.gov](mailto:don.burke@ncdenr.gov).

### Legal Authority/Statute Reference:

G.S. 143-214.1; 143-214.7; 143-215; 143-215.3; 143-215.6A-C  
15A NCAC 02B.0233 (Neuse); 15A NCAC 02B. 0243 (Catawba)  
15A NCAC 02B 0250 (Randleman); 15A NCAC 02B. 0259 (Tar-Pamlico)

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## Buffer Authorizations

Continued

### Links:

<http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-permits/wastewater-branch/401-wetlands-buffer-permits>

### Statewide Contact Information:

NC Division of Water Resources  
401 and Buffer Permitting Branch  
1617 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1617  
Telephone: (919) 807-6300  
Fax: (919) 807-6494