

Homeowner's Guide to Lot Grading

Engineering Services conducts lot grading inspections on all new single detached or semi-detached housing sites developed within the City of Spruce Grove. The following will provide you with information on our processes and procedures.

WHAT IS LOT GRADING AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

Lot grading is the shaping of earth to allow surface water runoff to flow away from building foundations and to follow a pre-designed drainage path. Lot grading is necessary to:

- ◆ direct surface drainage away from structures, helping to prevent basement flooding;
- ◆ provide for controlled surface drainage discharge points and rate-of-flow entering public roads and storm sewer system; and
- ◆ minimize infiltration of surface water entering the sanitary sewage system.

When a new residential development is planned, the City approves an overall lot grading plan to ensure the entire subdivision will be graded in accordance with municipal drainage standards.

LOT GRADING APPROVAL PROCEDURE

Rough Grade (*Home Builder's Responsibility*)

Once the Builder completes the rough grading, they are required to have a qualified land surveyor survey the grades of your lot, prepare a Lot Grading Certificate, and submit this Certificate to the City for approval.

The City reviews the grades shown on the Certificate, inspects the lot grading for deficiencies, and sends an inspection report/approval letter to the Builder.

If deficient, the rough grade must be corrected by the Builder and re-inspected by the City for approval. There is a \$125 fee for each rough grade re-inspection requested by the Builder.

The City will not grant an Occupancy Permit for a new house until all rough grading requirements are met.

Final Grade Approval

In most cases, the homeowner is responsible for final grading, but this will depend on the sales agreement between you and your Builder. Final grading must be completed within one year of Occupancy Permit Approval.

Once topsoil has been placed and the final grading is completed, you must contact a qualified land surveyor to survey the as-built grades of your lot and provide the City with a Lot Grading Certificate for final grade. (*Look under "Surveyors - Alberta Land" in the phone book for a list of qualified surveyors.*)

Once the City receives your Lot Grading Certificate from the surveyor, the final grade will be inspected within five (5) working days (weather permitting), and an inspection report /approval letter will be sent to you. *****If you would like the report/approval letter e-mailed to you, please ensure you have provided your e-mail address to your surveyor to include on the Certificate, otherwise we will send you the report via standard mail.*****

If deficiencies are noted, you must correct them and request a re-inspection by contacting the City's Lot Grading Department at 780-962-7596. If the final grade is still deficient after the re-inspection, subsequent re-inspections will require a \$125 fee to be paid to the City.

SHOULD MY SOD BE LAID BEFORE OR AFTER MY FINAL GRADE IS INSPECTED?

You can have your final grade inspected at the topsoil stage OR after your sod has been laid. The City has no preference and can inspect at either stage.

However, if you choose to install sod prior to your inspection and your final grade fails due to deficiencies, it will likely require more work to correct the grading because you will have to first pull up your sod.

As a general rule, the acceptable amount of topsoil that should be placed on top of an approved rough grade is about 10 to 15 centimetres (4 to 6 inches), and you should follow the same slopes that your Builder has established.

SUMP PUMP DISCHARGE

The sump pump is part of the home's foundation drainage system and is a building requirement. In most newer subdivisions, the sump pump is required to be connected to the shallow storm sewer. If your sump discharge is connected to the storm system, ***you must ensure that the wye tee on the discharge pipe outside of your house is not obstructed or capped.*** The wye tee is an auxiliary discharge which provides an overflow during a storm sewer back-up due to freezing or other problems.

SPLASH PADS

Splash pads are recommended at your downspout outlets and your sump pump overflow (wye tee) area to help prevent soil erosion and to direct roof drainage and sump overflow away from your foundation. Concrete splash pads can be purchased at your local home building store.

WHAT IF I HAVE A CONCRETE SWALE IN MY YARD?

Swales provide an important function in the approved drainage plan of a neighbourhood. Although situated on your lot, the concrete swale remains property of the City of Spruce Grove, and in most cases there is a utility right-of-way protecting the swale. This right-of-way grants the City full access if the swale ever needs to be repaired.

Swales must not be covered, blocked, landscaped over, or have their drainage impeded in any way whatsoever. Interfering with the intended drainage of a swale can cause water to pool on your property and those upstream from you. If it is found that you are blocking the flow of the swale and property damage occurs, you could be held liable in a Court of Law for those damages.

LOT GRADING MAINTENANCE

Once the City has approved the final grade of a residential lot, the homeowner is responsible for maintaining the surface grades to the standards that were established at the time the grades were approved. Homeowners should be aware that the backfill area around the foundation will settle for one (1) year and up to five (5) years after backfill.

As a homeowner, you must ensure that you maintain positive drainage away from your house foundation and along your property lines to the road or swale. ***Never allow your lot to drain onto your neighbours lot.***

If you have a concrete swale within your property, you are required to keep it clean and free of debris at all times.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF MY FINAL GRADE IS NOT INSPECTED AND APPROVED?

If you choose to forego your lot grading responsibilities, your property will be filed as non-compliant as per our Lot Grading Bylaw C-546-05, and you may experience monetary fines, delays in house sale transactions, or drainage disputes with your neighbors.