

Know what you need *before* you build...



SHORELINE STABILIZATION and the Department of Environmental Protection

DEP regulates construction of seawalls, riprap, and other shoreline stabilization structures in order to protect Florida's fragile waterways, the beach and dune system, and upland property along the shoreline. Also, the State owns the submerged lands on which many of these structures are built. Therefore, **prior to construction**, you may need to obtain a permit from DEP to build a seawall or riprap, as well as authorization from DEP to use the State's submerged lands. However, the construction of some shoreline stabilization structures will have minimal environmental impacts because of their size, location, or proximity to other seawalls, and are exempt from permitting requirements. If your shoreline stabilization structure meets the criteria listed below, you will not have to obtain a permit from DEP. Depending on other criteria (indicated below), you may not need written submerged lands authorization.

Seawalls that do not need a permit or written submerged lands authorization from DEP:

1. A private seawall or riprap in an artificially created waterway, where the proposed work:
 - does not violate water quality standards
 - does not impede navigation
 - does not affect flood control
 - includes only that backfilling needed to level the land behind the seawall
 - does not include a vertical seawall in an estuary or lagoon unless the proposed project is within an existing man-made canal where legal vertical seawalls already exist along the shoreline of the canal.

2. Restoration of an existing seawall or riprap that meets all the following:
 - is still functional (no breaks which allow water to flow through the seawall) or only recently damaged by a storm or accident
 - is constructed at its previous location, upland of its previous location, or within one foot waterward of its previous location
 - involves no filling except for that used in the actual restoration of the seawall or riprap
 - is done with all necessary title or leasehold interest, especially where private and public ownership boundaries have changed as a result of natural occurrences such as deposition, erosion, or exposure of land due to a drop in water levels
 - is not located in an aquatic preserve or manatee sanctuary
 - is not located waterward of the coastal construction control line

3. A private seawall or riprap that is not located on State-owned submerged lands and meets all the following conditions:
 - is built between existing, legal seawalls or riprap and connects to them at both ends in a continuous and uniform construction line
 - is no more than 150 feet in length
 - includes no vertical seawalls in an estuary or lagoon
 - is not located waterward of the coastal construction control line
 - the work or materials do not violate water quality standards
 - the work or structure does not impede navigation
 - the work or structure does not affect flood control

Shoreline stabilization that does not need a permit from DEP but does need written authorization to use the State's submerged lands:

1. Projects that are located in an aquatic preserve or manatee sanctuary and meet all the other exemption criteria listed in Item 2 (above)
2. Projects that are located on State-owned submerged lands and meet all the other exemption criteria listed in Item 3 (above)

The State of Florida owns the submerged land up to the mean high water line (in tidal waters) or ordinary high water line (in fresh waters) of waterbodies such rivers, streams, lakes over 140 acres, bays, the Gulf of Mexico, and related waterbodies unless the State has conferred the land through a deed to another party. In order to qualify for authorization to build a seawall in wetlands or other surface waters that are State-Owned Submerged Land, you must meet certain requirements. All these requirements must be demonstrated in your application to DEP, and you must be in possession of the written authorization from DEP prior to construction.

Requirements for seawall construction on State-Owned Submerged Land:

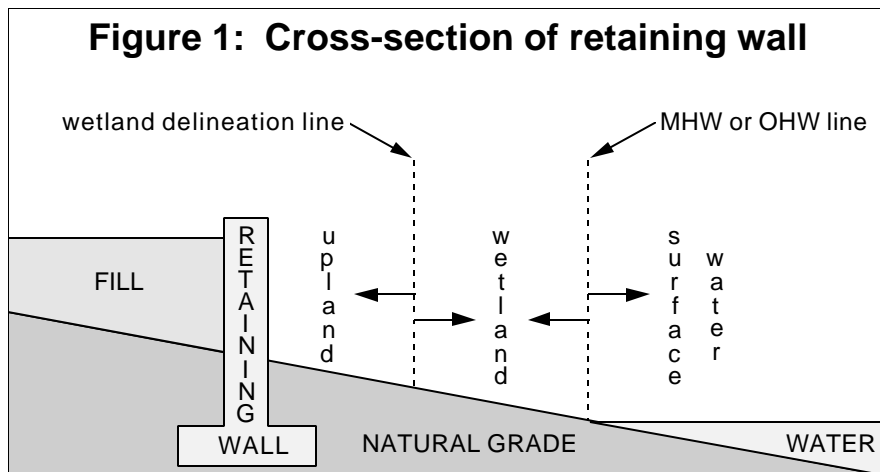
1. There is an adequate demonstration of significant erosion at the site
2. There are no viable alternatives
3. The project design includes riprap or non-structural shoreline stabilization (such as planting vegetation) if practicable

If you plan to build a seawall waterward of the coastal construction control line, you will need a **Coastal Construction Control Line permit** from DEP's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems. For more information about this program, please call (850) 487-4475..

Vertical seawalls may not be your best option for shoreline stabilization. They reflect the energy of the waves and tend to increase erosion at the toe of the seawall, in off-shore areas, and on adjacent property. This energy not only causes erosion, but it also causes the water to be cloudy. There are other design alternatives that may be just as effective in protecting your shoreline but are better for the environment.

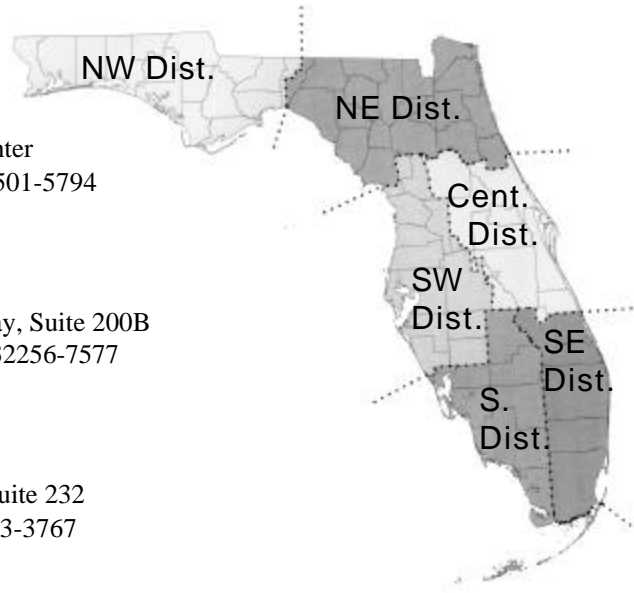
Alternatives to vertical seawalls:

- ← Retaining walls are identical to seawalls, but all portions of the wall are in the uplands. A retaining wall may be built without a permit from DEP if all activities (dredging, filling, slope grading, or equipment access) are confined to the uplands (see Figure 1) and the wall is located landward of the coastal construction control line. Please note that wetlands may extend landward of the mean high water line.



- ← Vegetation is a natural and inexpensive way to stabilize your shoreline. It can be used alone or in combination with other methods. Vegetation such as bulrush, arrowhead, blackrush, or *Spartina* may be planted directly into the soil or with a fiber mat for added stability. Planting of indigenous (native) vegetation by a private homeowner may not require a permit or sovereign submerged lands authorization from DEP.
- ← Riprap, which consists of loose boulders, rocks, or clean concrete rubble, can be placed along the water's edge to stabilize your shoreline and disperse the energy of the waves. A permit may be required for installation of riprap.

For additional information, please contact your DEP District office at one of the following locations:



Northwest District:

160 Governmental Center
Pensacola, Florida 32501-5794
(850) 444-8300

Northeast District:

7825 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200B
Jacksonville, Florida 32256-7577
(904) 448-4300

Central District:

3319 Maguire Blvd.; Suite 232
Orlando, Florida 32803-3767
(407) 894-7555

Southwest District:

3804 Coconut Palm Drive
Tampa, Florida 33619-8318
(813) 744-6100

South District:

2295 Victoria Ave.; Suite 364
Fort Myers, Florida 33901
(941) 332-6975

Southeast District:

In Martin, St. Lucie or Okeechobee Co.:
1801 S.E. Hillmoor Drive, Suite C 204
Port St Lucie, Florida 34952
(561)871-7662

Southeast District:

In Dade, Broward or Palm Beach Co.:
P.O. Box 15425
West Palm Beach, Florida 33416
(561)681-6649

Thank you for helping to protect Florida's environment.