

Welcome to living in a beautiful Critical Area of Anne Arundel County!



Because we love our trees, wildlife, and quality of water in our area, there are laws to protect the environment so we can all enjoy it for the future. Almost every house in Arundel on the Bay is in the Critical Area.* Consequently, if you are planning to take out trees or shrubs, regrade your yard, install or enlarge a driveway, garden, or deck or add a shed to your property, you will need a permit.

There are limits on how much of your property can be covered with impervious surfaces (like stones and concrete). Except for routine grass cutting, maintenance of existing garden and landscaped areas and “hazardous tree” removal, removal of any existing natural vegetation within the Critical Area buffer, expanded buffer, modified buffer, or protected forest is subject to approval through the Anne Arundel County Code Compliance Division.

Call 410-222-7441 for information on obtaining a standard Buffer Management Plan or Forest Management Plan. These are FREE. The forms are available online. [Click here](#).

There are several land classifications for the Critical Area. To find out about your property call 410-222-7445 and county staff will check for you and tell you what the laws are for your property. Those properties that are on the water have the strictest rules, even for removal of invasive species.



Do not ignore these steps. You can be fined thousands of dollars and may have to take out what you installed and replace vegetation with approved types. The minimum fine for a grading issue is \$1000 and \$500 for a building issue per person on the deed. So, if there are two people on

the deed, it is a minimum of \$2000 and \$1000. And you can be fined for both for certain issues thus finding yourself paying a minimum of \$3000. Work with the county to do it right and avoid any problems. This will all help to keep our water and community beautiful.

Websites for more information:

[Anne Arundel County Inspections & Permits](#)

[Maryland Department of Natural Resources Critical Area Information](#)

*Critical Area is located 1,000 feet landward from mean high tide or the edge of tidal wetlands, as designated on the State Tidal Wetland maps, and all waters of and lands under the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. [Learn more](#).

Thank you to our neighbors in the Oyster Harbor community, particularly Joanne Christofel, for providing this important information