

Critical Area Terms

Critical Area (CA) is all land and water areas in the County within 1,000 feet beyond the landward boundaries of tidal wetlands and tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay.

Critical Area Buffer is a minimum 100-foot buffer extending landward from the mean high-water line of tidal waters, tributary streams, and tidal wetlands.

Expanded Buffer the Critical Area Buffer is expanded to include sensitive areas such as steep slopes, wetlands and highly erodible soils.

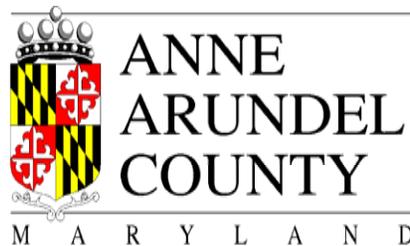
Intensely Developed Areas (IDA) areas of concentrated development where less natural habitat exists. Approximately 13% of the Critical Area in the County.

Limited Development Areas (LDA) areas of low or moderate development and includes areas of natural plant and animal habitats. Approximately 42% of the Critical Area in the County.

Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) areas of least concentrated development and contain natural environments or protective land uses such as agriculture, forests, fisheries or aquaculture. Approximately 45% of the Critical Area in the County.

What If I have Questions?

For questions about development activities in the Critical Area or to find out if your property falls within the Critical Area, please contact the Critical Area Team at 410-222-7960. You can also meet with a Critical Area Planner. Critical Area Planners are available 2 days each week on the 3rd floor at 2664 Riva Road. Please refer to our website at www.aacounty.org to verify days the planner is available.



2664 Riva Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-222-7960

What is the Critical Area and how does it affect my property?

*Please remember
to call before
you cut.*

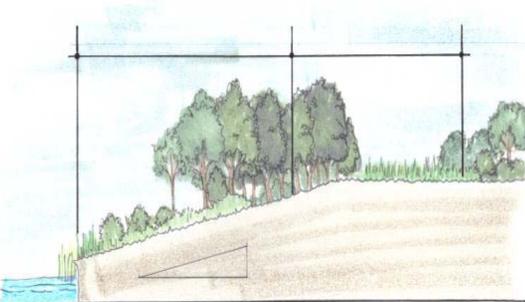
410-222-7960
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What is the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area?

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area is the area that extends a minimum of 1,000 feet landward of tidal waters and tidal wetlands of the Bay and its tributaries. The Critical Area buffer extends a minimum of 100 feet from tidal waters, wetlands and tributary streams and is expanded by steep slopes, wetlands and highly erodible soils.

State and local Critical Area legislation was enacted for the protection of the Bay and its tributaries. These laws regulate all construction and development activities, ground disturbance, removal or cutting of existing vegetation, and the installation of new or expanded lot coverage (asphalt, concrete, paving blocks and stone used for driveways, sidewalks, parking pads, etc.)



What am I allowed to do on my property without County approval?

Within the Buffer or Expanded Buffer

Approval is not required for the following activities:

- Planting vegetation
- Maintaining an existing lawn
- Transplanting existing vegetation

Outside of the Buffer

Approval is not required for the following activities if they disturb less than 5,000 square feet and do not fall within areas containing steep slopes or wetlands:

- Individual tree removal
- Removal of woody vegetation

If you are not sure, call us at

410-222-7441.

When is County approval required?

Within the 100 foot buffer or expanded buffer County approval is required for the following activities:

- Clearing or grading, including cutting or pruning of existing vegetation
- Disturbance of steep slopes
- Construction, alteration or relocation of a structure or lot coverage
- Installation of stormwater management system

Except for routine grass cutting and maintenance of existing garden and landscaped areas, removal of existing vegetation within the Critical Area buffer or expanded buffer is subject to prior approval through the Forestry Section of Inspections and Permits.

Call a County Forester at 410-222-7441 before you cut or trim trees in the buffer area to be sure you are in compliance.