

HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Housing developments sited along the waterfront have a great potential for adverse impacts to the aquatic environment and to human health if appropriate measures are not taken. Construction of canal subdivisions is discouraged. Such developments commonly result in the degradation of water quality and are often detrimental to fish and wildlife. In addition to the guidelines for associated access canals, seawalls and bulkheads, boat ramps, marinas, docks and piers, sewage treatment and disposal, and disposal of dredged material, the following guidelines apply:

- a. Housing developments should be restricted to upland areas. Fill should not be placed in wetlands or other special aquatic sites. Houses on pilings should not be constructed over wetlands or submerged lands.
- b. Waterfront housing developments should be situated so that sufficient water depths occur to avoid the need to dredge access channels. If access canals are needed, they should be routed from housing developments to the parent body of water by the shortest and least environmentally damaging courses.
- c. If a canal subdivision is planned, such developments may require: a detailed hydrologic study including hydrologic and circulation patterns, inclusion of methods to ensure adequate circulation, inclusion of a water quality monitoring and reporting program, designation of individual(s) to be responsible for the monitoring and reporting program, designation of a responsible party in the event of problems such as fish kills and contaminant spills. These individuals may be financially responsible for remediation measures.
- d. Canal depths for recreational craft should be no deeper than necessary for navigation, but not to exceed 6 feet below mean low water. Width of interior canals should be maximized (minimum 100 feet) in order to provide for better mixing of canal waters and water quality. Canals should be oriented with the predominant summer wind direction to maximize water exchange.
- e. Dredging simply to obtain fill material is generally not recommended.
- f. A waste collection and treatment system infrastructure should be installed in coastal housing developments. The use of septic tanks is generally not a recommended method of waste disposal. Plans should be provided and coordinated with the County Health District for compliance with local and State regulations.
- g. Sewage treatment plant effluent or other point-source discharges should not be discharged directly into canal waters or other poorly circulating water bodies. Discharges into surface waters should be a sufficient distance from canals and other small or poorly circulating waterbodies to ensure that the effluent is not carried into these areas by currents.
- h. To prevent water quality degradation, surface drainage should be directed away from boat canals. In addition, an education program for residents should be considered which details why grass cuttings, garbage or other debris should not be dumped into the canal waterways and advising them on the prudent use of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other toxic substances.