



A Property Owners Guide to Obtaining Consent for Uses within PUD Easement Areas

It takes thousands of miles of wires and hundreds of miles of pipes to provide power and water to the homes and businesses served by Snohomish County PUD. Many of these power lines are located in easement on private property. These rights may have been negotiated with you directly, or with prior property owners. Under these agreements, the PUD is allowed to access, construct, operate and maintain its equipment and manage vegetation.

Sometimes questions arise regarding what a property owner may or may not do in PUD easement areas. “Encroachments” are uses that typically are not compatible with the PUD’s easement rights and uses. Keeping easement areas clear of encroachments is a shared responsibility between the PUD and the property owner.

Why are encroachments a problem?

The PUD designs and constructs its systems to meet federal, state and industry safety and operating guidelines. Anything that creates inadequate clearance from power lines is extremely dangerous. The height of power lines above the ground changes depending on weather conditions and the operating temperature of the lines. If there isn’t enough clearance between a structure and a power line, the structure can become energized, creating electrical safety hazards and the potential for widespread power outages.

Structures or grade changes can violate required clearances for power lines, compromising safety and obstructing access.

What are potential encroachments?

There are many uses that may not be compatible with the PUD’s easement rights and uses, the more common of which are the following:

- + Buildings
- + Houses
- + Excavation
- + Swimming Pools
- + Retention Ponds
- + Playground Equipment
- + Retaining Walls
- + Flammable Material
- + Structures
- + Sheds
- + Decks
- + Changes to Existing Grade
- + Billboards
- + Rockeries
- + Fences

Additional incompatible uses are activities that change the land grade such as excavation or filling within the easement area.

What uses may be compatible with power lines?

Property owners may make any use of their property that does not interfere with the PUD’s easement rights or create hazards for PUD facilities. Generally speaking, driveways, lawns, gardens, low shrubs, and livestock grazing are examples of uses that are compatible with the PUD’s easement rights and its facilities.

If you are considering other uses, please contact the PUD. Our Right-of-Way Agents will review your request to ensure that the PUD can continue to provide safe and reliable electricity to our customers.

How do I know if there is an encroachment on my property (either constructed by me or a prior owner)?

Please send an email to easementinfo@snopud.com or call PUD Customer Service at 425-783-1000 (M-F, 8 AM to 5:30 PM, toll-free outside the Everett local calling area at 1-877-783-1000) and ask to speak with a Right-of-Way Agent in the Real Estate Department. We’ll work directly with you to explore what options may be available.

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Where can I learn more about PUD easements on my property?

A title report for your property will typically identify easements on your property, including any PUD easements. You can obtain a copy of any easement mentioned in your title report from your county recorder's office. If you are unable to obtain a copy of a PUD easement, please send an email to easementinfo@snopud.com or PUD Customer Service at 425-783-1000 (M-F, 8 AM to 5:30 PM, toll-free outside Everett local calling area at 1-877-783-1000) and ask to speak with a Right-of-Way Agent in the Real Estate Department.

Safety is Our Primary Objective

Whether you're a homeowner or contractor, call 811, the "Call Before You Dig" hotline, two business days before digging. State law requires anyone digging to call and have underground utilities located to avoid potential hazards. If you accidentally dig into a utility line, you may not only endanger your life but you are also held financially responsible for any repairs. It is a free service and more information is available at www.Call811.com.