

## TRPA COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

**1. What is the TRPA, and why do they have any say over what I do to my property?**

*Answer: The TRPA is a Federal Agency created by an act of Congress to solve planning and land development disputes in the Lake Tahoe basin. The TRPA regulates whether a property owner can build on a vacant lot, the height of buildings, the appearance of structures, and how much coverage can be created on a lot, among other things. The Building Department TRPA review focuses on the creation of impervious coverage. The goal of TRPA is to allow precipitation that falls on a piece of property to stay on that property, rather than to run off from impervious surfaces into Lake Tahoe. When a homeowner creates impervious coverage such as building or paving, the TRPA requires that the moisture that would normally perk into the ground be channeled into Best Management Practices (BMP) devices that will hold the moisture until it can be absorbed into the ground. The TRPA makes scientific studies of each lot, identifies the permeability of the soil, and assigns a percentage of allowable coverage and perk rate based on the results of the study. The TRPA also regulates activity that could cause erosion in order to maintain water clarity and quality in Lake Tahoe.*

**2. What are the TRPA requirements for an addition to my house?**

*Answer: Review the TRPA [Exempt and Qualified Exempt reference guides at Exempt/Qualified Exempt Activity](#) , as well as the [Single Family Dwelling Addition/Modification Application](#), [New Single Family Dwelling Application](#) to determine which type of approval your project will need, available online at [www.trpa.org](http://www.trpa.org).*

**3. How is a project determined and considered to be a Qualified Exempt?**

*Answer: Review the TRPA [Exempt/Qualified Exempt Activity](#) reference guide carefully to determine type of work covered and qualify proposed project as TRPA exempt. In many cases the scope of work proposed is limited to fit the QE approval process. Project status is more involved and time consuming approval to achieve; this requires verification of land capability and land coverage in the form of a site assessment for previous projects after July of 1987.*

**4. How do I get approval to build on a vacant lot?**

*Answer: TRPA allocates a limited amount of new single family approvals each year. To qualify for an allocation you need to have an IPES score of 726 or better, a set of TRPA plans submitted to the building department. Allocations are awarded on a first come first serve basis at the beginning of each year, up to a maximum of 45. If there are more applications than allocations, there will be a lottery to determine allocations, see item # 6.*

**5. How many types of land study systems within the basin?**

*Answer: There are two types of land study systems within the Tahoe basin.*

- *The Baileys system is for land that has all ready been developed.*
- *IPES (individual parcel evaluation system) are lots undeveloped. IPES type lots need a score of at least 726 or better to qualify for development. There is a potential to buy up points to achieve a score of 726, for the possibility of purchasing additional points, see the IPES book for details.*

**6. When will the allocation period be?**

*Answer: Applications will be accepted at eight a.m. on the first Monday after January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, commencing at eight a.m. In the event the first Monday is a legal holiday, the applications will be accepted, commencing at eight a.m. on the next county business day. Applications will be accepted for a total of five business days.*

*Should more applications be received than allocations available for that year, a drawing will be held on the third Monday of January at ten a.m. Those drawn for an allocation will have one hundred fifty (150) days to submit a complete building permit application. If a complete application is not received within one hundred fifty (150) days, the allocation will be awarded to the next qualified applicant in the waiting line.*

**7. What does TRPA do with their fees?**

*Answer: TRPA plan check fees pay for staff to review the plans for compliance with the codes and ordinances set forth by TRPA. Water mitigation fees collected on certain watershed*

areas are used to make improvements within that watershed, such as road side rock rip rap at exposed slopes, lining of drainage, ditches, etc.

**8. What are the requirements for TRPA final?**

*Answer: Completion of the work proposed by the approved plans. This includes the installation of the permanent BMPS as shown on the approved plans, and in accordance with TRPA, BMP hand book.*

**9. How do I extend a TRPA permit?**

*Answer: If proposed TRPA approval was granted by TRPA, not the county, provide a letter from TRPA stating the new expiration date, and the building permit will be extended to the date noted in the TRPA letter. If the TRPA was approved at the county, follow the [Permit-Plan Check Extension Application](#) and section 4.9 of the TRPA code of ordinances.*

**10. How do I arrange for a coverage transfer?**

*Answer: The applicant needs to contact the entity selling the coverage, usually the California Conservancy. A building permit is applied for and through the plan check process the amount of coverage to be transferred is confirmed. The Conservancy then enters into escrow with the coverage transfer; the building department is provided a grant of deed showing the transfer prior to issuance of the building permit.*

**11. How are 'scenic' projects determined?**

*Answer: Generally any sites visible from the lake, scenic corridor or recreation sites are deemed scenic. See pages seven and eight of the TRPA [Single Family Dwelling Addition/Modification Application](#) information packet and checklist; complete the scenic impact assessment form.*