

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Zoning

1. What is my property zoned?

Please refer to the Zoning Map to find out what a particular parcel is zoned. If you need further assistance, please contact the Zoning Office.

2. What are my setbacks?

How a parcel is zoned will determine the front, side, and rear setbacks on a parcel. Please refer to the Dimensional Requirements table for specific setback and minimum lot size information. Front setbacks are measured from the right-of-way, not the edge of the road. For most County roads, the right-of-way extends 33-feet from the centerline of road. For US-10 and US-31, the right-of-way varies depending on location. If you need further assistance, please contact the Zoning Office.

3. What types of uses are allowed on a parcel?

In order to determine what uses are permitted, allowed by special use, or are prohibited, it is recommended to call the Zoning Office. Another method is to refer to the Zoning Map to determine the zoning district for a given parcel, then refer to the Zoning Ordinance chapter that describes that zoning district. Permitted and special uses will be described in the Zoning Ordinance. For all special uses, new uses, or a change of use (other than a single family dwelling) a site plan and Planning Commission approval are required.

4. Can I build a garage or pole building if there is no house on the property?

It is prohibited to build an accessory building (garage/pole barn) if there is no dwelling on the property. See Section 3.01 in General Provisions of the Zoning Ordinance for additional information on accessory buildings.

5. Where can I put a privacy fence and how tall can it be?

In Residential zones, fences are limited to 6-feet in height measured from grade. In Commercial and Industrial zones, fences are limited to 8-feet in height. Fences may be placed as close to the property line as possible, provided that the property owner placing the fence can perform general maintenance such as painting and mowing without trespassing on the owners property. Privacy fences require building and zoning permits. Chain link and split row fences do not require building or zoning permits. There are special setback requirements for corner lots and front yards, please call the Zoning Office.

6. Can I keep animals? How many horses can I have?

If the property is located in the Rural Estates (R-E) or Agriculture (A-1) districts, animals are allowed. In the R-E district, animals are restricted by Section 3.19 Keeping of Animals. A minimum of three acres is required to keep animals for pets or recreational purposes in the R-E District. For horses, 1 horse is permitted on the first three acres and 1 additional horse for each acre, up to 40 acres. For example, if a person has 6 acres they could have 4 horses.

7. Can I bring in a camper (trailer, RV, etc.) and keep it on the property?

If the camper is located on a parcel with no dwelling, it is allowed for up to 30 cumulative days per calendar year without a temporary land use permit. If the camper remains on the property from Memorial Day to Labor Day, for example, a temporary land use permit is required. Permits are granted for a maximum of 90 days from the date the camper was placed on the property. It is prohibited to store or occupy more than 4 camper/trailer/RVs on a parcel with or without a dwelling for a period of more than 30 cumulative days per calendar year. Temporary land use permits can be downloaded from this website and mailed to the Zoning Office.

8. Are single-wide mobile homes allowed?

Dwellings less than 24-feet wide (measured at front, rear, and side elevations) are no longer allowed in Mason County. Single-wide mobile homes can only be placed in licensed mobile home parks.

9. Can I replace my single-wide mobile home with a newer single-wide?

Single-wide mobile homes cannot be replaced with a newer single-wide unless it is located in a licensed mobile home park. If a single-wide mobile home is removed, the replacement dwelling must have a minimum of 840 square feet of living area on the main floor and be a minimum of 24-feet wide measured from the front, side, and rear elevations.

10. What are the requirements for swimming pools?

All swimming pools erected in the County greater than thirty-six (36) inches in depth shall comply with the following. 1) The pool or its fence must not be built within the required front yard or required corner lot side yard. Rear yard setbacks shall not be less than ten (10) feet between the pool outside wall and the rear property line, or less than the established easement width at the rear property line, or less than ten (10) feet between pool wall and any building on the lot. 2) For the protection of the general public, all swimming pools shall be completely enclosed by a fence or other means of access control. Above ground pools may have gates, removable or swing up steps, or other means to limit entry in lieu of a fence. 3) All electrical installations or wiring in connection with swimming pools shall conform to the provisions of the State of Michigan Electrical Code.

11. How many splits do I have?

For information on land splits in Mason County, please determine the Township in which the property is located and then contact the Township Assessor. The Zoning Office does not administer land splits.