

FAQ

What projects require a land use permit from the Land and Resource Management Department?

A permit is required for any structure built or moved onto a property, including but not limited to: Houses, storage sheds, decks, patios, playhouses and garages. A permit is also required if you are remodeling and planning to change the footprint of the original structure, changing the roof pitch, or making any structural changes. Permitting procedures are relatively similar for all projects. For information on how to obtain a permit and what it will cost see our handout "Procedure for Obtaining Land Use Permits" and the current fee schedule. Before issuing any permit Pope County Land and Resource Management requires that subsurface sewage treatment systems over 5 years old obtain a compliance inspection. In most cases, a permit is not needed for new siding, windows or shingles, or remodeling projects that do not affect the exterior footprint. Please check with our office to determine if your project requires a permit. Some projects may require a variance or a conditional use permit.

How do I get a building permit?

To obtain the permit you can apply in person at Pope County Land and Resource Management. You will need to submit a plan or drawing showing the dimensions of the lot, location of proposed structure and any other structures located on the property. You will need to know the percentage of impervious coverage of your lot. You will also need a building plan and names of licensed contractors that will be working on the project. For more information on obtaining permits see our handout "Procedure for Obtaining Land Use Permits" and the current fee schedule.

What's a setback?

A setback is the distance a structure needs to be from property lines or other features such as wells or sewers, on a piece of land. The actual setbacks for a parcel are dependent on zoning district, date platted and type of sewer system. For specific setback information see our Building/Structure Setbacks handout.

What do I need to do to add on to my house?

Any additions to an existing structure must meet the current setbacks as determined by the Pope County Land Use Controls Ordinance. A permit must be obtained in the same manner as when building a new house. If bedrooms are being added, it may be necessary to increase the capacity of the existing septic system. In addition, existing septic systems more than five years old must be inspected. Failing systems will need to be upgraded before a permit is issued. For information on how to obtain a permit and what it will cost see our handout "Procedure for Obtaining Land Use Permits" and the current fee schedule.

Do I need a permit to add a deck or patio?

Most of the time a permit will be required to add a deck or patio. To find out if your project requires a permit call the Land and Resource Management office at (320) 634-7791 [or email us the with your parcel number or address and a description of the project.

Am I allowed to remove shoreline vegetation?

It is a good idea to arrange a site visit with a Land and Resource Management technician before beginning any shoreline work. You can do this by calling (320) 634-7791. Removal of vegetation below the ordinary high water line (OHWL) is regulated by the MN Department of Natural Resources. Above the OHWL intensive vegetation removal is not allowed. Limited clearing (25% or up to 25 feet of the shoreline frontage) is allowed with a Shoreline Alteration Permit issued by Land and Resource Management. A Shoreline Alteration Permit is also required for any type of landscaping, construction, dirt work or excavation within the shore and/or bluff impact zones.

How can I find a licensed contractor, excavator, sewer designer?

Building contractors are licensed by the State of Minnesota. To find out if a particular contractor is licensed check the MN license lookup website. Septic designers and inspectors are also licensed by the State of Minnesota.

Do I need a feedlot permit?

A feedlot is any facility where livestock are kept in confinement where there is no sustained vegetation growth, including barns, sheds and open lots. Facilities with more than 50 animal units or more than 10 animal units if located in shoreland are required to maintain a registration with the County Feedlot Officer.

Feedlot rules apply to all types of livestock operations including but not limited to: cattle feeding operations, dairy farms, poultry barns and hog facilities. In most cases a feedlot permit is issued for expansion of an existing livestock operation, construction of a new livestock operation or to fix a pollution hazard on an existing livestock operation. If you own any number of livestock and do not have your operation registered, please contact the County Feedlot Officer in our office to discuss the requirements and benefits of registration.