

“Why Do I Need A Permit?”

and other commonly asked Zoning questions

Brought to you by: Rusk County Zoning
311 East Miner Avenue, Suite N110 Ladysmith, WI 54848
(715) 532-2156

Do I need a permit?

Yes. If you are building, moving on or adding onto a structure, if you are changing the use of your land (i.e. from residential to a business), or if your structure does not meet required setbacks, you must get a Land Use Permit from the Rusk County Zoning Office. This is applicable in all Comprehensively Zoned townships – Atlanta, Flambeau, Grant, Grow, Marshall, Thornapple, Stubbs, Washington, and Wilson. It also applies to all areas of Rusk County that are in Shoreland Zoning – within 1000’ of any lake, pond or flowage, or within 300’ of any stream or river.

What Zoning District am I in?

Comprehensively Zoned townships are divided into Zoning Districts. Each district represents the majority of land uses in that area. Rusk County has 9 districts, which include Agricultural, Residential, Residential/Recreational, Commercial, Industrial, Forestry, Resource Conservation, Planned Unit Developments and Shoreland. The permitted uses in each district are designated in the Rusk County Zoning Ordinance. Certain uses are allowed without permit, certain uses are permitted by Land Use Permit, certain uses are permitted by Conditional Use Permit and certain uses are prohibited. When buying or building, it is important to find out what is permitted in the zoning district you live in, BEFORE you start making plans. Call the Zoning Office to find out what district you live in.

LAND USE PERMIT! Why do I need a permit to use my own land?

Land Use Permits are required so as to separate conflicting land uses and promote and protect public health and safety. What we do with our land doesn’t affect only us. It affects our neighbors, the community and future owners, as well. The land and water will still be here even when we are not.

When we review an application for land use permit, we check things such as wetlands, floodplain, shoreland setbacks, sideyard setbacks, road setbacks, sanitary systems and the use of the property and surrounding properties. The review assists the landowner in many ways because it addresses some of the concerns that could possibly pose an unexpected problem in the future. By requiring Land Use Permits, we are able to better protect our community, and our waters.

Why do I need to get a Land Use Permit and a Building Permit?

The Rusk County Zoning Office for the reasons described above issues Land Use Permits. Townships issue the Building Permits so they can keep track of new development in their township. UDC Building Permits are required for site-constructed 1 and 2 family dwellings.

What is UDC?

The UDC is an acronym for Uniform Dwelling Code. The UDC law, Home Safety Act signed April 20, 2004, requires that all 1 and 2 family dwellings built since June 1, 1980 and their alterations or additions to be inspected by a certified UDC Inspector. The UDC is a uniform statewide code that sets minimum standards for fire safety; structural strength; energy conservation; erosion control; heating, plumbing, and electrical systems; and general health and safety in new dwellings. This is a uniform building code that applies

across the state. The State or local municipality will enforce the UDC. Please contact your Town Clerk for the UDC permit.

What's the difference between a Land Use Permit, a Conditional Use Permit and a Rezoning?

The Zoning Administrator issues a Land Use Permit. Land Use Permits are issued for new structures and additions. After a landowner submits an application and fee, the review process begins and it usually takes 1-2 weeks to get the permit issued depending on the issues that need to be addressed.

A Conditional Use Permit requires a public hearing and it is held at the monthly Rusk County Zoning Committee meeting. Conditional Uses are required for certain uses that may conflict with surrounding land uses, such as non-farm residences in Agricultural Districts. After a landowner submits an application, approved and signed by the respective town board, and fee, a public hearing date is set for the next available committee meeting. Notices of the proposed development are posted in the township and newspaper. Neighboring landowners are also notified by mail. The applicant and any interested parties attend the public hearing to voice approval or concern over the development and the Zoning Committee approves or denies the permit request. The committee may impose certain conditions on the permit. Conditional Use Permits may take 3-6 weeks to get approved.

A rezoning occurs when specific zoning districts are not appropriate for the actual uses in an area or where a specific use is prohibited (i.e. permanent dwellings in Resource Conservation Districts). A landowner must get approval from the town board for a rezoning. We have "Petition to Rezone" forms that need to be filled out and returned, along with a fee. The rezoning requires a public hearing and the notice and meeting process is like that for the Conditional Use Permit. The Zoning Committee makes the final approval. Rezoning may take 1-3 months to get approved.