

## Main Misconceptions:

- There is a grandfather clause.
- One does not need a building permit if they are replacing a building.
- You only need a permit from either county or local municipality.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### 1. Do I need a permit for my project?

Permits are required in Ashland County for all new structures or alterations to the building envelope, including but not limited to houses, additions, commercial structures, garages, sheds, decks, and porches, as well as most land disturbance activities such as filling and grading. Rebuilding structures and change of use also requires a permit. The application may be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

### 2. What is considered a habitable structure?

Any structure arranged for sleeping or the preparation of meals is considered a habitable structure and will have to meet all of the necessary requirements. Any room which is arranged for sleeping – regardless of whether it has a window or closet – is considered a bedroom.

### 3. How do I get an address?

Address applications are available online or in the zoning office.

### 4. How long does it take to get a permit?

Generally permits are issued within 7-10 days of being received by the Zoning Department, however; if we do not have all of the paperwork or information required there will be a delay in issuance.

### 5. Can I clear my shoreline?

Yes, 35 ft per 100 ft of shoreline with a maximum of 200 ft. See Section 8.2 of Shoreland Protection Ordinance.

### 6. Where can I find a zoning map?

An interactive zoning map is located on the Ashland County [website](#). Click on GIS Maps and then click on Zoning Web Map in the top right-hand corner.

### 7. Is or are there any structure(s) that do not require a permit?

A residential land use permit shall not be required for residential non-habitable (non-shoreland) structure of *less than* one hundred (100) square feet in area, or for a private communication device if not in a shoreland/floodplain.

All structures within a shoreland-protected area require a permit. In the Shoreland Area, structure shall mean a principal structure or any accessory structure including a garage, shed, boathouse, sidewalk, walkway, patio, deck, retaining wall, porch or fire pit.

Temporary structure(s) of more than one hundred (100) square feet shall require a temporary permit.

### **8. Can my contractor file for a permit?**

Yes. However; the application must be filled out showing the property owners name and signed by the property owner. If anyone other than the property owner signs the application, the property owner must write and sign a Letter of Authorization, authorizing the contractor / agent to apply for the permit.

### **9. Do I need a permit for maintenance or repair?**

No.

### **10. What is POWTS?**

POWTS is an acronym for a Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System. A more widely used term is 'septic system'. It is intended to treat domestic wastewater. The most common onsite system used is a septic tank in combination with a traditional drain field. A property designed, installed, and maintained system should operate for 20 to 40 years or more, treating wastewater to minimize the negative impact on groundwater, surface water, and human health.

### **11. What is the reason for POWTS regulation?**

The State law is intended to protect the health and safety of Wisconsin residents and to protect the ground and surface waters of the State. It is important to make sure that wastewater or effluent from the septic system is being treated properly, and to identify septic systems when they are not functioning properly. If a failing septic system contaminates drinking water, it can affect many more people than just the owner of the septic system.

### **12. Can I install my own POWTS? If not, who can?**

In Wisconsin, homeowners may not install, inspect, or repair their own POWTS. By law, only Wisconsin licensed plumbers may do so. A list of licensed plumbers serving Ashland County can be found by clicking [here](#).

**13. Has a soil test already been done on my property? How long is a soil test good for?**

Ashland County keeps all permits and soil tests on file since 1969, however; not all soil tests are submitted to the county for review. In addition, any soil test/perk test prior to 1992 is no longer accepted because it does not meet code regulations. Valid soil tests performed using modern soil morphology do not have an expiration date.

**14. Can I have a holding tank on my property and do I need a soil test?**

Yes and you do not need a soil test.

**15. What if I do not have a sanitary permit on file with Ashland County?**

The state requires a dwelling to have a compliant septic system. If you intend to build on a property with a dwelling on the parcel, Ashland County must have record of a compliant septic system. If you do not have a sanitary permit on file, you can call a master plumber and get a septic inspection of your current tank. If your tank is compliant, the plumber will turn in the inspection report and that will in turn take place the sanitary permit on file. If your tank is not compliant, you will need to update your septic system prior to receiving a permit for building.

**16. Where can I find the regulations regarding POWTS maintenance?**

SPS 383.255 and State Statute 145.20(5) address the requirement that counties must inventory all septic systems (POWTS) in the county and have a maintenance program in place encompassing all of these systems. SPS 383.54 addresses the maintenance requirements for all POWTS, indicating the type of maintenance that must be performed on these systems and who must perform it.

**17. What is the \$8.00 POWTS Fee?**

An annual maintenance fee shall be added to the property tax bill at a rate established by the Zoning and Land Committee in January 2021. Each improved property within Ashland County except those served by a municipal sewer shall be charged the \$8.00 fee.

**18. What happens if I refuse to do a POWTS maintenance?**

If you fail to comply with POWTS maintenance, you will be subject to a citation or other forms of legal action.

**19. Can I have a privy (outhouse) on my property?**

Yes.

## **20. Can I turn my house into a Short-Term Rental?**

In order to turn your house into a short-term rental in Ashland County, there are a couple things that you will need to do. You will need to find out if there is a compliant septic system on the property, and you will need to contact the Health and Human Services Department for any further permitting.