

Top 10 Zoning Questions and Answers

A quick reference guide for Lake County residents. Always contact your township zoning administrator before starting any project.

1. Do I need a zoning permit before I build?

Yes, in most cases. Contact your zoning administrator before constructing homes, garages, pole barns, sheds, decks, fences, signs, manufactured homes, or placing an RV for extended use.

2. Can I build a pole barn before I build my house?

Sometimes. Some zoning districts allow an accessory building before a home; others do not or impose size and timing restrictions.

3. How far does my building need to be from property lines?

It depends on your zoning district. Setback requirements vary by district and lot type.

4. Can I live in an RV or camper on my property?

Usually only temporarily and often only with approval. Long-term occupancy is typically restricted.

5. Can I place a manufactured or modular home on my property?

Often yes, if it meets minimum size, foundation, and zoning requirements.

6. Can I run a business from my home?

Usually yes, if it qualifies as a home occupation and complies with limits on signage, traffic, noise, and outdoor storage.

7. Can I rent my property on Airbnb or VRBO?

Possibly. Short-term rental rules vary by township and zoning district.

8. Do I need a permit for a fence or sign?

Often yes. Height, placement, and size restrictions may apply.

9. Can I split or divide my property?

Yes, but land division rules apply, including minimum lot size, frontage, and access requirements.

10. What happens if I build without approval?

You may be required to stop work, obtain after-the-fact permits, modify the project, or remove the structure.

Bonus Question: Who should I call first?

Call your township zoning administrator before you start any project. A quick phone call can save significant time and expense.

Disclaimer: This guide is for general information only and does not replace the applicable zoning ordinance. Requirements vary by township, zoning district, and property characteristics.