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Buffalo County Courthouse
407 South Second Street
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Nathan Sampson
Zoning Administrator

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Zoning Technician/Inspector

Permit Requirements for Habitable Structures

Suitable means of disposal of domestic wastes are required for a habitable structure. Wisconsin Administrative Code Comm 83 and the Buffalo County Sanitary Ordinance Section 131.1(1) states that All structures or premises that are permanently or intermittently intended for human habitation or occupancy, which are not served by a public sewer, shall have a system for holding or treatment and dispersal of sewage and wastewater which complies with the provisions of this ordinance.

This includes seasonal occupancy. Wisconsin Stats 145.195(1) states that:

No county, city, town, or village may issue a building permit for construction of any structure requiring connection to a private domestic sewage treatment and disposal system unless a system satisfying all applicable regulations already exists to serve the proposed structure or all permits necessary to install such a system have been obtained.

You have some options when deciding which type of private sewage system is installed to serve your structure. A soil absorption system as defined in Wis. Stats. 145.01(12), an alternative such as a mound or in-ground pressure system, or an approved experimental system is required for water-carried wastes.

Wisconsin Stats 145.01(12) also allows substitutes for soil absorption fields and alternatives. These substitutes include pit and vault privies, gas fired toilets, composting toilets, or chemical toilets.

Pit privies introduce waste directly into the soil. A soil test, completed by a Certified Soil Tester (CST) must be completed for a pit privy installation. A Non-Plumbing Sanitary Permit can then be issued for a fee of \$125.00. The enclosed Non-Plumbing Sanitary Permit must be applied for by the property owner(s). The same permit is also required for a composting toilet, vault privy, or other substitute, if used. However, a soil test is not then required. All waste contained by any substitute must be land spread according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) land application regulations.

Wisconsin Administrative Code Comm 83 and the Buffalo County Sanitary Ordinance do not allow surface discharge of "grey water" wastes. These are water-carried wastes generated from sinks, washing machines, showers/baths, etc, and these wastes can only be discharged to a code compliant private sewage system or holding tank. Installation of a privy to serve a single-family dwelling is not acceptable if there is to be any plumbing, piping, drains, or other plumbing appurtenances inside unless a code approved and compliant private sewage system exists to treat grey water waste.

Your other alternative is to install a code compliant private sewage system as described in WI Admin. Code Comm 83. This requires a soil and site evaluation by a licensed CST for system suitability. The plans for the private sewage system are drawn up and submitted to this office by a licensed plumber along with a sanitary permit application. The system must also be installed by the licensed plumber.

If you intend to use a mobile home as a habitable structure, the Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance requires a conditional use permit for non-farm mobile homes located in the Agricultural District. A conditional use is acted upon by the Buffalo County Board of Adjustment during a public hearing. The fee collected for the application is non-refundable and payment does not guarantee issuance.

A zoning permit allowing construction or placement of a habitable structure can be issued after the sanitary permit (and conditional use or variance, if applicable) is issued. A uniform address number must also be applied for and issued if the access driveway does not currently have a number. Please make check or money order payable to Buffalo County Treasurer. The fees for each of these applications are listed below.

Sanitary Permits- In-ground pressurized and non-pressurized, mounds, at-grades, holding tanks, aerobic and experimental treatment systems, system modifications: \$250.00

Non-Plumbing Sanitary Permit- Pit and vault privies, incinerating toilets, composting toilets: \$125.00

Conditional Use/Variance application: \$200.00

Zoning Permit: \$40.00

Uniform Address Number: \$45.00 (\$60.00 w/ 2nd sign)

Please mail or submit in person individual checks for each permit application to:

Buffalo County Zoning
PO Box 492
Alma, WI 54610