



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. It's my land--Why do I have to get a permit?**

#### **Answer:**

In the 1800's, the concept of zoning was introduced in New York City. Since then the courts have held that the state may have an interest in restricting what private property owners may do on/with their land under the federal police powers act. This act states that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public at large, certain restrictions may be placed on a private property owners' ability to use their land as they see fit. For instance, in Ford County we have a building height restriction of 35 feet. This restriction is to allow Fire Department's ladder equipment to reach the top story of all homes in the county. Numerous other examples could be offered, but to simplify the answer, there is a viable reason for every regulation in the book. If we find a regulation is not working, we try to get the elected officials to remove it.

### **Q. Why should I get my water tested, it tastes fine?**

#### **Answer:**

There are many things that can make you sick that naturally occur in Ford County's groundwater. None of the contaminants have an odor or taste at levels where they can make you ill. If you drink from a private well, it is a good idea to have your water tested by a certified laboratory once a year. You would be surprised by the amount of illnesses that are directly related to bad drinking water in the rural areas.

### **Q. I want to put a trailer house out in the county on my own land. Are there any regulations I have to follow?**

#### **Answer:**

Yes-- the regulations are quite complex. Please come by for a visit BEFORE purchasing your land, home, or signing a contract. Many people have bought land only to find out that the lot was not usable for their desired purposes. Others have bought manufactured homes only to find out that their home was not eligible to be placed in the county. When in doubt, please CALL US!

### **Q. My friend said I don't have to get a permit for that, do I?**

#### **Answer:**

Please call our office at (620) 801-4288 to find out for sure.

### **Q. Can I build in the floodplain?**

#### **Answer:**

Yes, but it can be very expensive to meet the federal flood plain requirements. You may be better off paying twice as much for a lot out of the floodplain because of the increased costs associated with elevating the home, septic system, utilities and other associated costs. If you really want to go this route, come visit with us first. If you build a home in the floodplain without meeting the federal requirements, you CANNOT be covered with floodplain insurance and may actually be liable for the damage your home does to others as it floats downstream.

**Q. My neighbor is really doing some bad things with his or her property. What can I do about this?**

**Answer:**

First, talk to your neighbor. You would be surprised how nice some people can be if they are given a chance to explain their situation and why they are doing something. If that doesn't work, you can report a problem to us. If it is something that is controlled by the zoning regulations, we will start an investigation. Our goal is to assist citizens to come into compliance. Prosecution is a last resort. We only refer a case to the County Attorney when there is no hope of resolving it at Administrative level.

**Q. If I make a complaint, will they find out it was me that complained?**

**Answer:**

We do not release the name of the complainant to anyone other than law enforcement officials that have a need to know. The Kansas Whistleblowers Act protects your name. However, there have been cases where the name of a complaining party was released during court proceedings. One other thing to know, in most cases, the person being turned in immediately tries to guess who turned them in.

**Q. I am for/against a case in front of the Zoning Board. How can I make my opinion known?**

**Answer:**

There are several methods effective people and organizations use. The most effective methods compare the proposed zoning change to the County Comprehensive Plan. The most effective counter or support arguments use logic and facts to express a point of view. Write a concise and well-reasoned letter to the board after you have reviewed the development plan. Include references to specific sections in the Ford County Comprehensive Plan and describe how the proposed changes fit the spirit and specifics of the plan. Include graphics if possible. Nothing demonstrates a vision or a concern better than pictures. Find other people that agree with you. Have them write a letter also. Twenty (20) letters expressing the same opinion carry more weight than one letter carrying twenty signatures. Research, Research, Research. Find out how other developments like this one have turned out. Then present these facts. Show up at the hearing! When it is your time to speak, SPEAK, do not assume someone else will express your point of view. They might be a little hesitant to talk and you could miss your chance. Have some notes with you if you are shy, and cover your points without rambling. Speak loudly and clearly and get to the point. Avoid name-calling, innuendoes, and cheap shots, these give the opposition ammo and sympathy. If the vote does not go your way, remember you still have the County Commissioner's hearing, and if it fails, you have the right to appeal it to the District Court and beyond.

**Q. Who are the Surveyors certified to work in Ford County?**

**Answer:**

Click the following link to be connected to the Ford County GIS/Survey Department webpage for assistance. <http://www.fordcounty.net/176/GIS-Survey-Department>