

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Below you will find a list of frequently asked questions. If you have questions that are not answered, or if you would like specifics, please contact the Albany County Planning Office.*

- [Zoning Certificates](#)
- [County Rural Addressing](#)
- [Wastewater](#)
- [Casper Aquifer](#)
- [Floodplains](#)
- [Enforcement & Nuisances](#)
- [Other Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### Zoning Certificates: Frequently Asked Questions

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Zoning Resolution or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations. Some projects may require more than a zoning certificate.

#### **What is a zoning certificate?**

A statement issued by the Albany County Board of County Commissioners that the proposed development is in compliance with the zoning regulation.

#### **When do I need a zoning certificate?**

A zoning certificate is required for new uses, expansions of existing uses, conditional uses, or changes of use pursuant to W.S. § 18-5-203. Uses which require a zoning certificate are:

- Principal Structures – the main or principal use of the property. These buildings may be agricultural, residential, commercial, or industrial buildings (homes, cabins, commercial structures, etc. -- including structures moved onto the property, such as modular homes, mobile homes and relocated stick-built homes).
- Accessory Buildings – a building that is incidental, detached, and subordinate to the principal structure. These uses include sheds, barns, shops, garages (this includes any structure with a roof, attached or detached, as well as any temporary or portable structure).
- Additions to Principal Structures or Accessory Buildings – enclosed porches, additional living space, covered decks, garage additions.

#### **Where can I find a zoning certificate application?**

Applications can be found on our website or can be picked up in our office. We are located at 1002 South Third Street in the County Annex Building.

[\*\(Link to zoning certificate application here\)\*](#)

#### **When does the zoning certificate expire?**

Zoning certificates are valid for two years from the date of approval. A one year extension may be granted, at the discretion of the County Planner, if substantial progress toward completion has occurred.

**What is required for a zoning certificate?**

In order to have your zoning certificate processed, you must mail or bring in the completed application, correct fees (cash/check only), site plan, easements and/or approach licenses and proof of ownership (deed). Incomplete applications will be returned.

**What can be used for proof of ownership?**

A deed, warranty deed, or a contract for deed can be used for proof of ownership.

**Where can I get a copy of my deed?**

The County Real Estate Office, located at 525 Grand Avenue, will have a copy of your deed. If out-of-town, you can call the Real Estate Office at (307) 721-2547 and they can fax us a copy of your deed.

**What is required for the site plan?**

- The entire lot or parcel with dimensions and orient the drawing to the North Arrow.
- Adjacent roads and their names.
- Locations and outside dimensions of all buildings.
- Building setback distances.
- Setbacks for the well and septic systems.
- Significant features or improvement of the subject property, such as streams, ponds, irrigation ditches, wells, septic systems, corrals, fences, towers and overhead power lines.
- Driveway location.

*[\(Link to example of site plan\)](#)*

**When will my zoning certificate be approved?**

The Board of County Commissioners meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Your application must be received in the Planning Office by 5:00PM 14 days prior to the Board of County Commissioners Meeting in order to be on the earliest date.

**When will I receive the approved zoning certificate?**

You will receive your approved zoning certificate in the mail approximately one-two weeks from the date of approval.

**Can I build my shop (accessory building) first?**

County Zoning Regulations require that a principal structure must be permitted or applied for in order for an accessory building permit to be approved. An accessory building is defined as any structure not used as a principal structure.

**What if I build without a permit?**

A late fee charge of \$100.00 will be assessed for any construction begun prior to approval from the Board of County Commissioners.

**How do I know what the mileage fee is?** The mileage map can be found at: [\(Link here to mileage map\)](#)

- Mileage Zone 1 (a 10 mile radius from Laramie) no charge.
- Mileage Zone 2 is the southern half of Albany County (South of Rock River) and the fee is \$25.00.
- Mileage Zone 3 is the northern half of Albany County and the fee is \$75.00.

**Why do you need the estimated cost of my new structure?**

New construction and estimated building costs are reported to the Wyoming Center for Business & Economic Analysis, Inc. and the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Do I have to get a wastewater (septic) permit before a zoning certificate?**

It is strongly recommended that you obtain your zoning certificate and wastewater permit at the same time. If you are building on a small lot, this is highly recommended to insure that the proper location for the septic field can be determined.

[\(Link to wastewater permit here\)](#)

**When can I begin construction?**

Construction can be begun as soon as your zoning certificate has been approved. Dirt work can be started prior to approval.

## **County Rural Addressing: Frequently Asked Questions**

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Zoning Resolution or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations.

**How do I get an address?**

In order to get an address, you must file a principal structure zoning certificate application and pay the appropriate fees and mileage. Your address will be assigned and approved with your zoning certificate.

[\(Link here to zoning certificate application\)](#)

**Can I get an address for a shop built on my property?**

The county will not address vacant land, you must apply for a zoning certificate for a principal structure.

**When does the county name a road?**

The County Addressing Coordinator will name a road when two or more properties share a common roadway. All addresses will be changed to the new named road. A change may also

occur if the County Addressing Coordinator determines that naming the roadway to the property will aid emergency service responders.

### **Who names the new roads?**

In most circumstances, it is up to the land owners to name the road. If an agreement cannot be made, the County Addressing Coordinator will name the road. The proposed road name must not conflict with existing road names within the county (duplicate or similar sounding). The proposed name will also be checked against the Forest Service road name database.

### **How is the address number determined?**

The rural address is assigned to the centerline of the driveway accessing the property. This location cannot be changed after the rural address application has been submitted. If the driveway location is changed, you will be assessed a new rural address fee and assigned a new rural address. A flag can be picked up in the Planning Office to mark the centerline of the driveway.

### **When will my road sign be put up?**

Your new road sign will be made and put up as soon as possible by the County Addressing Coordinator.

### **How do I report a sign missing or down sign?**

To report a down, missing or damaged sign call the County Addressing Coordinator, Stan Gibson, at (307) 721-1862 or you may email him at [sgibson@co.albany.wy.us](mailto:sgibson@co.albany.wy.us) using the missing/down sign form.

[\(Link to missing/down sign form\)](#)

## **Wastewater: Frequently Asked Questions**

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Small Wastewater Installation Regulations or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations.

### **What is a wastewater permit?**

A wastewater permit is a written authorization issued by the County Water and Wastewater Engineer, which authorizes the applicant to construct, install, or modify the small wastewater facility. A small wastewater system is any sewerage system, disposal system or treatment works having engineering needs which is intended for wastes originating from a single residential unit serving no more than four (4) families or which distributes two thousand gallons or less of domestic sewage per day. [\(link here to Albany County Regulations for Permit to Construct, Install or Modify Small Wastewater Facilities\)](#).

### **Why do I need a wastewater permit?**

A wastewater permit is required to ensure that the wastewater system is installed in the best location on the property and that it meets a number of County, State and Federal requirements.

**Where can I find the wastewater permit application?**

Applications can be found on our website or can be picked up in our office. We are located at 1002 South Third Street in the County Annex Building.

[\(Link to wastewater application here\)](#)

**Who can I contact if I have any questions about the application?**

For any questions regarding the wastewater applications, an existing system or a proposed system, please contact Barney Bisson, the County Water and Wastewater Engineer, at (307) 721-1863.

**What is required for a wastewater permit?**

In order to receive authorization to begin a wastewater system, you (or your installer) must bring in the completed application, correct fees (cash/check only), plans, specifications or design data. It is highly recommended that you schedule an appointment with the wastewater engineer when you wish to turn in your application.

\* If your property lies within an area designated as the Casper Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone (CAPOZ), any septic field that is to be installed in that area will have to be designed by a Professional Engineer, licensed to practice in Wyoming and qualified to do such work. An electrical engineer, for example, may not have the requisite skills for this undertaking. The engineer should contact the County Water and Wastewater Engineer for guidance regarding what will be expected.

**When and how will my wastewater permit be approved?**

The wastewater application will be reviewed by the County Water and Wastewater Engineer and the applicant will be given permission to construct. At a later date, the County Water and Wastewater Engineer will schedule a time to approve the system before back fill.

**Who can install wastewater systems in Albany County? Can I install my own wastewater system?**

Wastewater systems must be installed by a licensed installer in Albany County. Property owners may install their own system under the guidance of the County Water and Wastewater Engineer.

**When am I required to get a wastewater permit?**

A wastewater permit must be applied for if you are installing, repairing or modifying a small wastewater facility.

**How do I determine the size of my wastewater system?**

The wastewater system is determined by the number of bedrooms in the structure, as well as other criteria. For more complete requirements, please schedule an appointment with the County Water and Wastewater Engineer.

**When can I begin putting the system in?**

The wastewater system can be begun when the applicant’s application has been reviewed by the County Water and Wastewater Engineer and the applicant has received a permission to construct letter. The installer cannot backfill until the County Water and Wastewater Engineer has come out to the site and given his final approval of the system.

**What are the setbacks for a small wastewater system?**

For domestic wastewater systems, with a flow of less than 2000 gallons per day, the following minimum isolation distance (in feet) shall be maintained.

From	To Septic Tank or Equivalent	To Absorption System
Wells (including neighboring wells)	50	100
Property lines (for properties originating on or after 1997)	50	50
Building foundation (without foundation drains)	5	10
Building foundation (with foundation drains)	5	25
Potable water pipes	25	25
Septic tank	-	10
Stream or surface body of water (including seasonal & intermittent)	50	50

\* Location: Absorption systems shall not be located beneath buildings, parking lots, roadways or other similarly compacted areas.

\* Setbacks for properties originating before 1997, the requirement was 10 feet.

**Casper Aquifer: Frequently Asked Questions**

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Zoning Resolution or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations.

**What is the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan?**

The purpose of the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan (CAPP) is the protect groundwater resources that supply Public Water Systems (PWS) and Albany County residents within the defined recharge area for the Casper Aquifer. The Casper Aquifer supplies approximately fifty to sixty percent (50-60%) of the City’s water supply depending on the time of year and one hundred percent (100%) of the water to approximately 450 rural residences in Albany County.

**Where can I find more information on the Casper Aquifer and the Casper Aquifer Protection Area Map?**

Information on the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan (CAPP), as well as maps of the protection area, can be found on our website. The Planning Staff are also available to answer questions. (Link to website here)

**What are prohibited uses within the Casper Aquifer?** The following are some of the prohibited uses within the Aquifer Protection Overlay (for a complete list, please see the Albany County Zoning Resolution).

- Underground storage or transmission of oil or petroleum
- Discharge to ground water of any waste product
- Storage, treatment, or disposal of hazardous waste
- Pest control services which involve storage, mixing, or loading of pesticides or other hazardous materials
- Salvage operations of metal or vehicle parts
- Water wells which are not cased at least to the top of the production zone

### **Can I build in the Casper Aquifer Protection Area?**

Development within an overlay zone must meet the additional standards of the overlay, in addition to the underlying zoning standards. In other words, your well and wastewater system must comply with the requirements found within the Albany County Zoning Resolution's Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone.

## **Floodplains: Frequently Asked Questions**

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Flood Damage Prevention Resolution or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations.

### **What is a floodplain?**

Any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source. These areas are expected to become inundated with flood water at least once in 100 years (and possibly more often).

### **Where can I find floodplain information?**

The Flood Damage Prevention Resolution can be found on the Albany County website. You may come into the Planning Office to see the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) or you may come in and speak with the County Water and Wastewater Engineer, Barney Bisson. ([Link to Floodplain Resolution on website](#))

### **What do I do if my property is in the floodplain?**

If your property is located within a floodplain and you are planning to make changes (such as excavation or construction), you will need to fill out an Application for a Floodplain Development Permit through the Planning Office. The County Water and Wastewater Engineer is available to assist you with any questions you may have about this application. ([Link to Floodplain Development Permit](#))

### **Can I contest as to whether or not the property is in the floodplain?**

The owner of the property can petition the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for a “Letter of map change” where the property will be evaluated more extensively to see if an error is present.

### **Who do I contact if I have questions about a floodplain?**

If you have questions about floodplains, you may contact the County Water and Wastewater Engineer, Barney Bisson, at (307) 721-1863.

## **Enforcement and Nuisances: Frequently Asked Questions**

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Zoning Resolution or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations.

### **What are different types of enforcement complaints?**

Enforcement complaints may include, but are not limited to the following: land use violations, buildings without permits, wastewater systems without permits, tires, vehicles, trash, metal, wood, batteries, buildings, cars, appliances and hazardous waste.

### **What does Albany County call a nuisance?**

A nuisance is any use or non-use of property, real or personal which causes material injury to others or which presents a threat to the health or safety of Albany County citizens. The Nuisance section is Chapter VI, Section 7 on page 84 of the Albany County Zoning Resolution. ([link here to Albany County Zoning Resolution](#))

### **How do I file an enforcement or nuisance complaint?**

To file an enforcement or nuisance complaint you may call the County Code Enforcement Officer, Gary Wilken, at (307) 721-1867. You may also fill out the nuisance complaint form and email it to: [gwilken@co.albany.wy.us](mailto:gwilken@co.albany.wy.us). ([link here to Albany County website complaint form](#)).

### **What is the Albany County Clean Up Day? When is it?**

The Albany County Clean Up Day, which includes the waiving of fees for Albany County residents to use the Laramie Landfill, is usually scheduled for a Saturday in August. In 2011, it was held the last Saturday in August. The Board of County Commissioners, the Laramie Rivers Conservation District and the City of Laramie sponsor this event. The disposal cost of auto tires and old refrigerators are paid for by the sponsors on this one day. Electronic waste can be delivered for recycling free any time the landfill is open.

### **Where can I find the Albany County Building Codes?**

Albany County does not have any building codes. However, if you wish to sell your property in the future, we recommend that you use a national building code standard.

## **Other Frequently Asked Questions**

NOTE: Please refer to the Albany County Zoning Resolution, other applicable County Regulations, or call the Planning Office before beginning a project. These Frequently Asked Questions are meant to be a guide, but are not the regulations.

***Below you will find questions regarding some of the other various issues the Planning Office deals with. These include, but aren't limited to, towers, land use changes, conditional uses, subdivisions, and outdoor signs. If you have questions that were not answered, or if you would like specifics, please contact the Albany County Planning Office.***

### **What can I do on my property?**

What you can do on your property depends on the planned use and what the current zoning is on the parcel. Please call or come into our office for specifics. ([link to contacts page on website](#))

### **Where can I find applications?**

Applications, as well as a fee schedule, for Towers (Small Wind Energy Tower, Land Use Towers, Temporary Towers (MET), Tower Co-Locates, and Wind Energy Conversion Systems), Land Use Changes, Conditional Uses, Subdivisions, Outdoor Signs, as well as other permits, can be found on the county website. ([link to website](#))

### **What are the setbacks and maximum height for towers?**

Setbacks and maximum height differ between different types of towers.

- Small Wind Energy Systems:
  - Setbacks from property lines must be 150' or three times the tower height, whichever is greater. Setbacks from above ground transmission lines, road rights of ways/easements, and railroad rights of way (must be at least 1.1 times the total tower height).
  - The tower height can be no more than 100 feet.
- Towers (Land Use Change):
  - Setbacks from property lines must be one (1) foot for every foot in height of the tower.
  - No maximum height
- Temporary Towers (MET Towers)
  - The tower location will be at least one thousand (1,000) feet from any residence unless the residents sign a document indicating no objection to the tower in the proposed location.
  - The height of the tower will be less than two hundred (200) feet.

### **How do I start the process of developing a subdivision?**

It is recommended that you talk to a planner in the Planning Office before you begin the subdivision application process. An applicant will need to have a professional survey completed. You will need to hire a professional engineer or surveyor to complete this process. Many engineering firms are familiar with our process and regulations. However, it is strongly

recommended that you speak with a planner to determine what is required and how long the process will take.

**How long is the Conditional Use Permit good for?**

Conditional Use Permits become void one (1) year after they are granted unless put to use. If the permit has been abandoned for one (1) year it becomes void.

**What is a notice fee and when is it required?**

The notice fee covers the notice expenses at the time of filing a development proposal. The notice fee is required for any application that is reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

**What are the requirements for the permits?**

Requirements vary depending on the permit. You can find the requirements on the permit applications and in applicable County Land Use Regulations. It is your responsibility to contact the Planning Office to get the specifics on each. ([link to permit application page](#))

