



Building and Zoning Regulations

A zoning guide for owners and builders
in the Town of Spider Lake

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Permit application forms are available online.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR zoning@townofspiderlakewi.gov

CLERK, Town of Spider Lake clerk@townofspiderlakewi.gov

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Overview

The Town of Spider Lake established its own zoning in 1967, pre-dating state and county guidance. As a result, the Town is statutorily allowed to have more restrictive zoning requirements in certain areas than current state or county regulations.

This zoning guide is intended for individuals who are interested in purchasing or building on property in the Town of Spider Lake (TOSL). It provides some of the basic provisions of the Town's Land Use Ordinance 17-88, and the procedures required to obtain permits. (The Ordinance in its entirety can be found and downloaded from the Town website: www.townofspiderlakewi.gov on the Ordinances and Resolutions page.)

This guide provides a high-level summary of key elements of the ordinance. Property owners and their agents/contractors are responsible for following the ordinance in its entirety. If you have more specific questions, please contact the Zoning Administrator or Town Clerk.

Purpose of the Land Use (Zoning) Ordinance

To promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare by:

- Guiding orderly expansion of growth and development
- Protecting agriculture and environmentally sensitive lands
- Protecting natural beauty and enhancing recreational opportunities
- Preventing pollution, and
- Preventing conflicts between different land uses

The above goals are accomplished by requiring permits for all structures and for grading and filling within the shoreland area, and through enforcement of the Town's Ordinances.

General Information

As a Town with village powers, TOSL administers its own land use and zoning ordinances. Some elements of these are more restrictive than Wisconsin and Sawyer County zoning ordinances. The bias of the Town's ordinances is to preserve and protect the natural resources and Northwoods character within the Town through orderly and planned development.

Specific areas where the Town's zoning ordinance is **more restrictive** than State and County requirements are:

- Minimum shoreland lot frontage is 200 feet, and
- New accessory buildings within 75 feet of OHWM (boathouses) are not permitted
- Lateral expansion of a non-conforming structure (a structure within 75 feet of OHWM) is not permitted on shoreland lots
- Accessory buildings (e.g., storage sheds or garages) cannot be placed on a lot without a primary (habitable) dwelling
- Access and Viewing Corridor width on shoreland lots is 30 feet
- Camping is permitted only in licensed campgrounds
- RV parking/storage is not permitted in plain view

Note these are highlights; please refer to the Ordinance 17-88 or consult the Zoning Administrator to ensure full understanding for your situation.

The Zoning Administrator

The Zoning Administrator (ZA) acts on behalf of the Town Board and the Plan and Review Commission. The ZA is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Land Use Ordinance 17-88. The Town also uses the services of a UDC Building Inspector. The Zoning Administrator is the primary contact for homeowners and contractors, and responsibilities include:

- Issuing Land Use Permits – No structure can be built, moved or structurally altered and no land use can be substantially altered until a Land Use Permit has been issued.
- Issuing Conditional Use Permits when authorized by the Town Board
- Identifying and recording non-conforming uses and structures
- Making onsite inspections
- Investigating and reporting violations of the ordinances to the Plan and Review Commission and the Town Board
- Administration and enforcement of all Town zoning ordinances
- Issuing citations

How is a Property Zoned?

Parcels in the Town of Spider Lake are zoned into several different zoning districts with specific permitted, conditional and prohibited uses. The most common Zone Districts in the Town are R (Residential), RR (Residential/Recreational) and F (Forestry). **Section 15** of the Land Use Ordinance describes each Zone District in detail.

To obtain specific zoning information on a parcel, you can contact the Zoning Administrator or look it up on the Sawyer County Land Record Portal (GIS Mapping Portal) on the County website.

When are Building Permits Required?

A zoning permit (Land Use Permit or Building Permit) is required **before any building is erected, moved or structurally altered**. Permits are required for **slabs/approaches/patios, dwellings, garages, signs, accessory buildings, farm structures, additions, walkways/pathways/sidewalks, retaining walls and some grading activities in shoreland areas**. (All structures must meet the setback requirements).

Accessory buildings less than 100 square feet (of roofline area) do not require a building permit. However, all setback requirements must be met. **If in doubt as to whether a permit is needed, please contact the Zoning Administrator.**

Who is responsible for obtaining Proper Permits?

It is the responsibility of both the property owner and the contractor to obtain all the necessary permits.

No work on any structure or private sewage system may take place until a proper permit has been issued and posted. Any work on such structures or private sewage systems undertaken without proper permits will constitute a violation of the Town of Spider Lake and the Sawyer County Zoning Ordinance. The violator will be subject to citations or other enforcement actions.

What information is needed to obtain a Land Use Permit?

You will need to provide the following information on the application form:

- The legal description of the property
- Size and Cost of the structure or addition
- Plot plan showing the location of existing buildings and the proposed building/expansion, with setback distances clearly marked from the new/expanded building to the OHWM of any navigable body of water and the center line or right of way line of the nearest road. Also required are lot lines and the location or proposed location of the well and septic system. (All setbacks for the structure are required to be shown.)
- The direction North should be shown on the plot plan
- Rural address / fire number
- Acreage (area) or lot dimensions
- Names of roads and bodies of water

What does it cost to obtain a Land Use or Building Permit?

The **Zoning Fee Schedule** for the Town of Spider Lake is posted on the website at www.townofspiderlakewi.gov .

- (Click the Forms and Permits icon).
- This schedule is updated periodically, and reflects the full spectrum of zoning related fees.
- The Town's **Citation Ordinance** and the **Citation Fee Schedule** are also posted on the Town's website, under the Ordinances and Resolutions tab.

Where do I find the Land Use Permit Application Form?

The Land Use Permit (LUP) or building permit application form can be found on the Town's website www.townofspiderlakewi.gov by clicking on the button on the home page.

Land Use Permit Application Process for a NEW dwelling:

- Apply for a Fire Number: **Sawyer County**
- Have a Certified Soil Test performed by: **Sawyer County**
- Have a Wisconsin licensed plumber apply for a **Sawyer County Sanitary Permit** for you
- Check Flood Plain requirements: **Sawyer County**
- Contact the TOSL Zoning Administrator or see the TOSL website for a Land Use Application Form
- Apply for and pay the fee for the TOSL Land Use Application. Permit approval is required prior to beginning construction.
- Fill out Uniform Dwelling Code information for the TOSL Inspector.
- A Grading Permit may be needed if excavating > 10,000 sq feet
- Submit application to the Zoning Administrator, who will schedule a review with the Plan & Review Commission.
- The Plan & Review Commission will recommend action on the application to the Town Board, which has ultimate approval or denial accountability.

Sawyer County Zoning and Conservation Department:

<https://www.sawyercountygov.org/217/Zoning-Conservation>

Town of Spider Lake Building and Zoning Department:

<https://www.townofspiderlakewi.gov/building-zoning>

Shoreland Regulations

One of Wisconsin's greatest natural assets is its clean water. Our many lakes, rivers and streams attract businesses, property owners and vacationers every year. As a landowner, angler, boater or water watcher, you can appreciate that anything done *on* or *to* a waterfront property affects not only the value of our own property, but also that of our neighbors. Our actions also determine whether visitors are attracted to our community. Shoreland zoning regulations promote wise use of lands surrounding our lakes and streams.

All building and structures shall be set back 75 feet from the OHWM (Ordinary High-Water Mark) of navigable waters, rivers, streams and creeks and 40 feet from the edge of a wetland boundary. Such setbacks shall be measured from the most water-ward projection of a structure to all points along the OHWM. (Fences and retaining walls fall into this category.) Certain structures *are* permitted (with a permit) within the 35-75 foot setback area; these include open sided / screened gazebos, decks/patios and stairways, walks and lifts.

Shoreland regulations require that buffer mitigation be performed when certain types of land use permits are issued. A buffer is the area of natural vegetation that is (or was) along the lake shoreline. Mitigation involves restoring this area to the natural condition, thereby protecting the aquatic environment and the aesthetics of the lake. **Before you plan to alter a dwelling on a waterfront lot, you should contact the Zoning Administrator to see if/when mitigation is required.**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regulates shoreline and waterway activities (waterward of OHWM).
(Visit [DNR – Wisconsin](#))

What is a Conditional Use?

Conditional Uses are approvals, which may be granted with conditions set by the Plan and Review Commission (PRC) after a public hearing. Conditional Uses described for each zone district are intended to be representative in nature - not all-inclusive. Uses similar to those listed as Conditional Uses may be allowed by the Plan and Review Commission, subject to approval by the Town Board.

Section 8 in the Ordinance describes the Procedure, Standards and Conditions attached to CONDITIONAL USES.

Section 15 in the Ordinance describes the Permitted and Conditional Uses for each ZONE DISTRICT.

Obtaining a Conditional Use Permit

The Conditional Use Permit Application Form can be found on the Town's website by clicking on the 'Forms and Permits' icon.

As detailed in Section 8 of the Ordinance, the process involves:

- Submitting the Application Form and fee
- A Public Hearing must be held. This requires a Class 2 Notice
- Following the Public Hearing, the PRC will review the Application and public comments, and recommend a way forward.
- Conditions may be attached to the recommendation.
- PRC recommendation goes to the Town Board for a final decision.

General Dimensional Requirements

Section 16 in Part I of the Land Use Ordinance contains the dimensional requirements for parcels NOT in the shoreland area. A partial table for select zone districts is below. Requirements for Shoreland parcels are in Section 12, Part II.

	R-1	RR-1	RR-2
Building Height Limits	35	35	35
Required Lot Area (s.f.)			
With public sewer*	30,000	30,000	30,000
Without public sewer**	30,000	30,000	30,000
Minimum Lot Width (ft.)			
With public sewer	150	150	150
Without public sewer	150	150	150
Minimum Lot Depth (ft.)			
	200	200	200
Yard Setback Required – All Structures*** (ft.)			
Front	30	30	30
Rear	40	40	40
Side			
Principal Structure	30	30	30
Accessory Structure	10	10	10
Principal Structure Minimum Width (ft.)			
Width	20	20	20
Minimum Floor Area Residence (s.f.)			
1 Bedroom	800	500	500
2 Bedroom	900	600	600
3 Bedroom	1,000	700	700

* Plus any additional area required by Wisconsin Administrative Code

Shoreland Dimensional Requirements

Part II of the Land Use Ordinance addresses the requirements for parcels within the Shoreland District. (This generally includes land within 1000' of the OHWM of a navigable lake, pond or flowage or 300' from the OHWM of a navigable river or stream.)

Please be aware that **shoreland parcels will require more scrutiny** from the Zoning Administrator throughout the permit review process.

Section 12 (Part II) in the Land Use Ordinance contains the full dimensional requirements for Shoreland parcels. It has similar dimensions listed as Section 16 (Part I, shown above), but with the following additions:

** In addition, minimum lot frontage adjacent to any lake, pond, flowage, river, stream or public or private road or roadway shall be 200 feet. Where lot is adjacent to and on the outside curve of a road, there shall be allowed a reduction in frontage of 4 feet for every one-degree of curve (arc definition) but in no instance shall such frontage be reduced to less than 175 feet. Frontage for lots abutting roads shall be measured separately for each side of lot where applicable and shall not be combined to determine frontage requirements.

*** Boathouse - See Part II Section 14.

Also note that the FRONT of a shoreland parcel is along the body of water (not the street).

Section 14 in the Land Use Ordinance details SETBACKS from lakeshores and wetlands (generally, 75' from the OHWM of a lakeshore and 40' from a wetland edge.) Be aware that a **wetland delineation** may be required to ensure appropriate setbacks can be met. Please contact the Zoning Administrator with any questions.

Sanitary Permits

Matters involving sanitary permits for septic systems, holding tanks, etc. are regulated by Sawyer County. (See Sawyer County at <https://www.sawycountygov.org/328/Sanitation-Office-Requirements>)

Wisconsin law requires a Sanitary Permit to be issued prior to any installation or repair of any Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (POWTS), including privies. The law requires that installation or repair of any POWTS, except privies, be done by a Wisconsin Licensed Master Plumber. In addition, Wisconsin law does not allow the Town or County to issue a Zoning Permit for a structure that requires connection to a POWTS unless the existing system satisfies regulations, or the necessary permits have been obtained to install such a system.

The County Zoning Office is the issuing agent for sanitary permits for conventional systems. The State Department of Safety and Professionals must review all plans for systems that require state plan approval. There is a Safety and Professionals office located in the city of Hayward. Plan review by SPS can take as long as a month and this delay should be considered when planning for the construction of a dwelling. SPS permits are valid for 2 years from the date of issue, and are both renewable and transferable.

Direct questions to the County Sanitarian at: (715)-634-8288

Rural Address Fire Numbers

This application is made through the Sawyer County Zoning Office.

A copy of the Sawyer County application form can be found on the TOSL website as part of the Land Use Permit Application form.

Visit www.townofspiderlakewi.gov and click on the Forms/Permits icon.

Driveway Standards

See Section 4.2 D) (Part I) of the Land Use Ordinance. A Driveway Permit is required for a new private access and can be issued by the Zoning Administrator as part of the Land Use / Building Permitting process. In general, the driveway must have:

- 12 feet width of driving surface
- 16 feet of clearance width
- 14 feet of cleared height

Other relevant ordinances

ATV and Boating

- ATV routes traverse the northern part of the Town, but not all Town roads are open to ATV traffic. See the specifics in Ordinance 01-01.
- Motorboat speeds are limited to 10 mph except on specific lakes during posted water ski hours (11:00 AM-3:00 PM on Spider Chain, Ghost and Lower Clam Lakes). See Ordinance #02-2024.

Signs and Lighting

The Land Use Ordinance provides sign standards in Section 5. It includes guidance for permanent and temporary (e.g., realty) signs as well as for commercial or private use. Advertising signs in the shoreland area have specific regulations as well. Please see the Ordinance to determine whether your sign requires a permit.

Section 4.4 in the Ordinance provides guidance for outdoor lighting. In general, lighting shall be controlled so as not to shine up into the sky or onto neighboring property or navigable waters. This may be accomplished by use of fully shielded fixtures which directs lighting downward. Thank you for your consideration to allow residents and visitors to enjoy the Dark Skies within the Town!

The DNR Shoreland Lighting guideline is also useful:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ShorelandZoning/documents/shorelandlighting.pdf>

Notes

Property legal description:
Property Fire #:
Year and Name of property owner at time of soil test and/or when permits were applied for:
Zoning District:
Distance of existing structures to the OHWM of navigable body of water:
Age of septic and well:
Can/does parcel or structure meet all dimensional criteria and setbacks?