



OBTAINING A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT FOR A CAMPGROUND

This document is intended to provide information on what should be included on plans submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the purpose of obtaining a construction permit. Plans are required to be submitted for new campground proposals and for additions or modifications to existing campgrounds. This document is intended only as a reference to the campground portions of the Public Health Code, 1978 PA 368, as amended, and the campground rules (Act). The Act and Rules, along with other forms and information, can be found on the DEQ website www.michigan.gov/deqwater (under the Campground link).

General

Items to consider prior to submitting plans include the following:

- Contact the local unit of government to inquire about zoning ordinances and any necessary approvals.
- If the campground will have a water well (see Water Supply), the owner must contact the local health department (LHD) to obtain an installation permit. The DEQ and LHD will work together to ensure that the campground water supply will have sufficient capacity, water quality, and well construction isolation for the campground proposal.
- If the campground will have an on-site wastewater system (see Wastewater System), the owner must contact the LHD and/or the DEQ to evaluate the soils to determine suitability for subsurface wastewater disposal. Typically, the LHD will issue a permit for an on-site wastewater system.
- **Permanent structures requiring footings on campsites are not allowed.** For more information regarding permanent structures, go to the campground website.
- Plans must be prepared and sealed by an engineer or architect registered in Michigan for all projects where the total cost is \$15,000 or more. Plans for projects less than \$15,000 are not required to be sealed. Plans are required for every construction permit application whether or not they are sealed.
- Complete the *Application for Campground Construction Permit* and submit with three (3) sets of plans and applicable fee to the address on the application. In addition, submit a copy of the application and one set of plans to the LHD where the campground will be located.

Definitions

- Campground sites are defined as **modern** if the site depends on flush toilets at a service building or if the site has a sewer connection. A campground site is defined as **primitive** when flush toilets are not available and sewer connections are not provided to the sites. Primitive sites are required to have privies. Campground sites with water and/or electrical connections can be considered primitive or modern.
- Group site camping areas do not have defined boundaries but are determined based on the maximum number of equivalent campsites in a group area. One camping unit is allowed per 1,200 square feet. For example: a 12,000 square foot group area divided by 1,200 square feet per campsite = 10 campsites.
- **Camping cabin** means a recreational unit that is a hard-sided tent or shelter that is less than 400 square feet in area, are on skids designed to facilitate relocation (is moveable), and does not have a direct connection to a source of water.

Plan Submittal

A complete set of accurate plans should include the following:

- A scaled site plan of the entire project showing the project location and adjacent roads is required. The plans must show the total number of sites, type of sites (group, modern, or primitive), and location. Each site is required to have not less than 15 feet of road frontage width and be a minimum of 1,200 square feet in area. Each site must have an unobstructed 4 foot space between recreational vehicles.
- The plans or information must include numbering or other identification for each site. Each campsite should indicate if it has electrical, water, and/or sewer connections. Each site must be well-drained.
- The water well location(s) and sewer location(s) must be indicated. Obtain all LHD permits and approvals for the water supply and wastewater disposal systems. If there are primitive sites, show the number and location of privies.

Water Supply

- Designate the type of water supply: municipal or on-site water well system.
- For on-site water well systems, obtain a LHD permit and/or approval of the water well. Show the water well location(s) and isolation distance to potential sources of contamination. The water supply should be of an approved design above-ground and allow access to the pump for maintenance and repair, provide equipment for the disinfection of the entire water system, provide sample taps, and provide pump-to-waste facilities for all wells.
- Adhere to the required pipe sizes, material specifications, and proper isolation distances for all site water connections. Plans must show the waterlines for new sites. Plumbing permits may be needed.

Wastewater System

- Designate the type of wastewater disposal system: municipal or on-site (i.e., sewage system, septic tank/tile field, lagoons) and/or privies (and their design).
- Adhere to the required pipe sizes, material specifications, and proper isolation distances for all site sewer connections. Plans must show the sewer lines for new sites. Plumbing permits may be needed.
- For on-site wastewater systems, obtain a LHD permit (or DEQ permit where applicable) and/or approval of the systems. Show the system location(s), size and type, and proper isolation distance.
- Privies, outhouses, or portable privies must be properly constructed, have a watertight vault with a minimum storage capacity of 500 gallons, and vented above the roof. Provide the adequate number of privies (one for each sex) for every 25 sites. Assure compliance with proper isolation distance (>50 feet from campsites). A LHD permit may be required. Portable privies are allowed with a copy of the annual contract for pumping service.
- Sanitary stations (dump stations) must be properly designed and constructed. They are required when RVs cannot connect directly to the campground's water and sewer systems and in primitive campgrounds if the campground is served by water under pressure. (See Rule 26 for more details.)

Service Buildings

- Service buildings must be constructed in accordance with the applicable state or local building codes, and the building details and specifications shall be included on the plans.
- Provide the required number of toilets, urinals, and lavatory facilities in accordance with the fixture schedule in Rule 21 of Act 368.

After DEQ Issues the Construction Permit

- The owner must obtain all electrical and plumbing approvals and a construction affidavit from the engineer indicating that the campground was constructed in accordance with the approved plans. The approvals and affidavit must be submitted to the DEQ before a license can be issued.
- The owner must obtain water well, wastewater disposal system, and plumbing approvals including compliance with any water supply sampling requirements.
- After the construction has been completed and before campsites can be offered for camping, please contact the DEQ or the LHD where the campground is located for an initial inspection (1-2 weeks prior to planned opening).
- It is unlawful to occupy the campground before the license has been issued. The annual license fee must be paid prior to opening the campground and before the initial inspection. Contact the DEQ for an invoice and campground license application.

NOTE: The information in this document is intended to supplement the campground portions of the Public Health Code, 1978 PA 368, as amended, and the Campground Rules. These comments do not replace or supersede any portion of the Act and Rules. To download a copy of the Campground Act and Rules, please go to www.michigan.gov/deqwater and click on Campgrounds and Pools.