



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division – Campground Program

Starting a Campground in Michigan

In Michigan if you plan to have five or more campsites and/or allow five or more recreational units (RVs, tents, park models, etc.), you will need a Campground License from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The process of getting a license requires an application, payment, review, and approval of campground construction plans by an EGLE engineer. This process may take several months. This guidance document includes resources and items to consider as you begin the planning process. Be sure to review the [Michigan Campground Regulations](#) (Act 368, Part 125); these will be used to evaluate all campground plans.

Campground site evaluation and planning

Contact your local zoning authority to obtain tentative local approval to operate a campground at the subject property. EGLE will require tentative zoning permit approval.

- Check floodplain data and evaluate for wetlands as these may require extra consideration, permits, and setbacks.
- Check for any site contamination, nearby contamination, or potential areas of environmental concern (Ex: landfills, stamp sands, old gas stations).

The scaled construction plans must include the campground layout (roads, water/sewer utilities, sites, site numbers and site dimensions). **If the total cost of the project is more than \$15,000, the plans must be prepared and stamped by a Michigan-licensed Engineer.**

Campsites

All campsites need to be minimum 1200 square feet in size, and have a minimum 15 feet of road frontage, unless designated as a walk-in site. The campground road must be at least 20 feet wide and connect to outside roads (Rules 6 and 8).

- Only certain cabins and/or camping units are allowed on licensed campsites; if you are considering providing cabins please read this [guidance](#).
- The number of campsites dictates the number of water outlets, bath fixtures, the flow of water (gallons per minute) and wastewater capacity (gallons per day) required that need to be available.

Drinking Water

A campground needs to be supplied with a permanent potable water source meeting Rule 9. If municipal/ city water is not available at the property, this will require a well is drilled, or an existing well converted.

- The water supply needs to meet Type II public water supply standards. Contact the local health department (LHD) for well permit and assistance with water well system.
- To meet Type II standards the [wellhouse](#) needs to include a means for emergency disinfection of the system, pump to waste piping for each well, sample taps for each well, and the water supply has to pass initial and routine water quality testing.
- You will need to work directly with your local health department on your specific drinking water supply seasonal opening and/or routine sampling requirements.

Wastewater

A campground needs to be supplied with a means of wastewater (sewage) disposal per Rule 11 and the type of wastewater disposal determines whether the campground is considered primitive or modern

- A primitive campground does not have water flush toilets or site sewer connections. These campgrounds typically have privies (porta potties/porta johns/outhouses). Privies need to be routinely serviced by a licensed septic hauler and an LHD permit may be required.
- A modern campground has water flush toilets and water under pressure at a service building or campsite sewer and water connections.
 - If campsite sewer connections or a bathhouse is proposed, a connection to municipal sanitary sewer must be made if available. If not available, an onsite wastewater system (septic tank and drainfield) will need to be installed.

Municipal Sanitary System

Check with your sewer authority to ensure you'll be approved for a greater waste stream.

Onsite Wastewater System:

Apply for a site/soil evaluation by your LHD or approved soil evaluator. A soil evaluation which will help determine site suitability and/or site limitations (such as clay soil or high seasonal water table) for the future onsite sewage disposal system. Not every property is suitable for a septic tank and drain field.

- If soils are not suitable there are advanced treatment options, but this can be very expensive.
- A sanitary dump station for dumping RV waste may also be required per Rule 26.
 - EGLE highly recommends that a service building or other waste stream be connected to the same onsite sewage disposal system serving the sanitary dump station in order to dilute the high strength waste found at dump stations.

Electrical

EGLE does not permit electrical work. Please include information regarding working with a licensed electrician and obtaining a local electrical permit and final approval for all electrical work performed within the campground.

Submitting Plans

Once you/your engineer are ready, create a [MiLogin for Business account](#). Then request access to the Michigan Environmental Health and Drinking Water Information System (MiEHDWIS).

- The MiEHDWIS platform is where you will upload the construction plans, complete the EGLE Campground Construction Permit Application, and pay permit fees (\$965 for a new campground).
 - View the Campground Construction Permit Application [training video](#).
- Once the initial plan review process is completed and the EGLE Campground Construction Permit is issued, construction may begin.
- The owner must obtain all electrical and plumbing approvals and a construction affidavit from the engineer or owner indicating that the campground was constructed in accordance with the approved plans. Approvals and affidavit must be submitted to EGLE, license application completed, and fees paid before a license can be issued.

Licensure

You will renew your Campground License on an annual basis through the EGLE Campground Program. The [current fee schedule](#) is available online. The annual license issued by EGLE is based on your previous year's inspection conducted by your LHD.

- You will need an annual inspection from your local health department (please expect to pay their annual inspection fee).

More information and resources

This and other guidance can be found at Michigan.gov/EGLECampgrounds.

This publication is intended for guidance only and may be impacted by changes in legislation, rules, policies, and procedures adopted after the date of publication. Although this publication makes every effort to teach users how to meet applicable compliance obligations, use of this publication does not constitute the rendering of legal advice.

EGLE does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability, political beliefs, height, weight, genetic information, or sexual orientation in the administration of any of its programs or activities, and prohibits intimidation and retaliation, as required by applicable laws and regulations.

Individuals with disabilities may request this material in an alternative format by emailing EGLE-Accessibility@Michigan.gov or calling 800-662-9278.