

Lot Improvement Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL BUILDING QUESTIONS

Q: When do I need ACB approval?

A: *Anytime anything is altered on your lot. Examples include (but are not limited to) adding a swimming pool (both in-ground and above-ground), decks, patios, sheds, playhouses, any form of a fence, privacy screens, and any change in the contours of the landscape.*

Q: Is there any time I do NOT need ACB approval?

A: *Removing any of the above structures does not require permission, unless it alters the drainage contours. Planting trees, flowers, or shrubbery does not require approval (except in the area between the street and sidewalk, which is subject to ACB approval). For swing sets or play sets, no approval is needed unless there are walls and a roof.*

Q: When do I need Village approval (building permit)?

A: *Anytime you build a structure (defined as connecting two or more elements together), you are technically required to get a building permit. The easy answer is: apply to the ACB (the Village will not give you a building permit until you get ACB approval), and if the Village needs to be consulted, we will tell you in each case. Cases where you are definitely required to get a building permit include construction of any outbuilding, installation of any swimming pool, construction of any deck, or any modification of your house.*

SHEDS

Q: Do I need a concrete or brick foundation?

A: *Treated wood resting directly on the ground is certainly allowable, and may actually be the preferred method for many situations. It avoids moisture build-up under the shed (concrete block foundations may actually promote puddles), and not putting concrete on the ground avoids any drainage or runoff issues.*

Q: How large can my shed be?

A: *144 square feet is the limit according to the Village of Mukwonago. 10' x 14' comes very close to that maximum, and a 12' x 12' shed gets every square inch you can.*

Sec. 100-453. Yards. (4) (of the Village of Mukwonago code)

Accessory uses and detached accessory structures, such as garden or utility sheds, may be placed or erected in the rear yard, provided that no single accessory structure shall exceed 144 square feet in area; no structure shall be visible from the street; no structure shall be closer than ten feet to the principal structure; no accessory structure shall exceed 15 feet in height; no accessory structure or accessory structure overhang shall be located closer than three feet to any lot line; and the total of all accessory structures upon the lot shall occupy not more than 20 percent of the rear yard area. [keep in mind that utility rights-of way make the minimum distance from the lot line about 10 feet in that case]

POOLS

Q: Do I need a building permit for a pool?

A: Yes, for both in-ground and above ground pools. You must first get ACB approval, and then take that approval to the Village for a building permit.

Q: Do I need a fence around my pool?

A: For an above-ground pool, they must be "protected to prevent unguarded entry to the pool", which may include a fence, but would most of the time be a tip-up ladder. For an in-ground pool, a fence is required, "not less than five feet nor more than six feet in height to prevent unguarded entry to the pool." Note that this fence must be approved by the ACB.

Q: Where can I put my pool?

A: Pools cannot be under or over electrical transmission lines. They must be at least ten feet from any lot line (including the fence), and must be at least ten feet from the principal structure. Exterior lighting for the pool must also be at least ten feet from the lot line. Pools must be in the rear yard ("the area behind the furthest projection of the principal structure to the rear lot line.") On corner lots there are two street yards and additional review of the location is needed.

FENCES

Q: Can I put a fence in my yard?

A: ONLY decorative fencing may be installed. Decorative fencing may only be installed after approval of the ACB. If decorative fencing in the front yard is over three feet in height, Village approval must be obtained after ACB approval is obtained. The only non-decorative fencing allowed is around in-ground pools, and then only "as minimally necessary" (see above for more details on this).