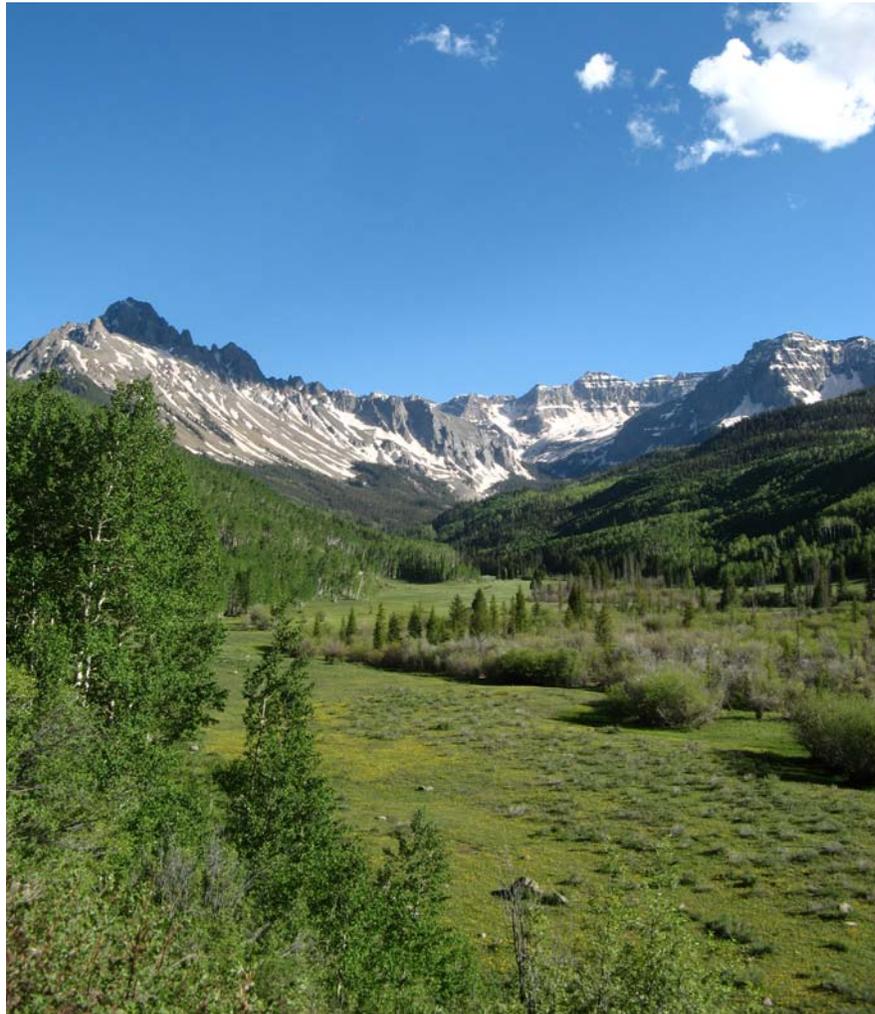


## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO PLAN YOUR PROJECT**



**Ouray County Land Use Department  
P O Box 28 • 111 Mall Road, Ridgway, CO 81432  
(970) 626-9775**

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# Introduction

The information contained in this guide is intended as a general overview of the building process in unincorporated Ouray County and should not be relied on as a definitive, current, or comprehensive summary of our codes. As owner, you are responsible for compliance with the latest land use and building codes, subdivision covenants, applicable laws, and regulations. In many cases, subdivision plats may not accurately delineate required setbacks and building areas/envelopes. We encourage you to seek assistance from appropriate licensed professionals such as architects, engineers, or attorneys.

Building lots and plans have unique circumstances, and some land may not be approved for building permits due to a lack of water, sanitation, or adequate access. It is strongly recommended that you familiarize yourself with laws and regulations, and meet with the County Planner and the County Building Official *before* finalizing your plans.

The incorporated municipalities of Ridgway and Ouray may have significantly different requirements from Ouray County. Be sure to verify the jurisdiction of your property before finalizing any purchases or plans.

Not all remodel, replacement, or repair work requires a permit. For more information on which jobs need a permit, see the section entitled “Permits and Procedures” below. You may also contact the Building Official at (970) 626-9775 for further clarification.

## Rural Living

Ouray County is a small, rural county. The rural character of the county, along with its relative lack of development, lends itself to scenic landscapes and an abundance of recreation opportunities, and is the reason many choose to live here. However, newcomers to the area should be aware that, as a small, rural county, Ouray County does not have the resources (both financial and staffing) of larger, more urban counties and communities, and cannot provide the same level of services. Roads are primarily dirt and gravel, and may or may not be paved in the future, depending on future resources of the County. Some properties may not be accessible during the winter months except by snow cat, snowmobile, skis or snowshoes. Consider year-round travel conditions when planning access to your property. Maintenance of roads, year round, has limitations based on available resources for staff and materials. Please keep in mind that living in a rural setting such as Ouray County also means that emergency responses to medical situations, fires, and law enforcement requests may be slower than in urban areas, and may be more limited in remote parts of the County. The County does not provide water, waste water, curbside trash and recycling, or firefighting services. These services may or may not be readily available in some parts of the County and you should inquire about the specifics before making a decision to buy or build.

# Right to Farm and Ranch

Ouray County believes it is important to educate the public, non-agricultural residents and visitors about the importance of the County's agricultural operations and activities as critical elements for the continued vitality of the County's history, economy, landscape, lifestyle and culture. Colorado is a "Right to Farm" state pursuant to the provisions of C.R.S. §35-3.5-101, *et seq.* In order to fully recognize and implement the policies set forth in this statute, the Board of County Commissioners adopted Ordinance No. 01-01 and appointed an *Agricultural Review Board*. The purpose of these regulations is to protect qualifying farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits filed by individuals who move into a rural area where normal farming and ranching operations exist, and who later use nuisance actions to attempt to stop those ongoing operations. The purpose of the ordinance/board is to enhance protection of agricultural operations, educate property owners and the public and to provide for an adequate and efficient remedy to resolve agricultural disputes. If you would like more information regarding Ordinance No. 01-01 or the Agricultural Review Board, please contact the Land Use Department.

## Zoning Districts

Ouray County is divided into eight zoning districts. Each zoning district has different setback requirements, and there are other County, State, and Federal regulations that may affect building plans. Prior to applying for a building permit, check the zoning of your property to make sure the intended use is allowable. In some cases, the Board of County Commissioners must approve a Special Use Permit before a building permit can be issued. Again, we strongly advise you to contact the County Planner and the County Building Official early in the planning process.

### **Alpine Zone**

The intent of the Alpine Zone district is to preserve the natural beauty, wildlife habitat, and recreational, historic and archaeological values of high-altitude areas while allowing limited, low-density development. Uses allowed by right include farming/ranching, forestry (except commercial logging), non-commercial camping, underground mining (subject to State and Federal regulations), and single-family dwellings on parcels of at least 35 acres.

### **High Mesa Zone**

The intent of the High Mesa Zone is to encourage agricultural production, preserve areas for wildlife migration and habitat, preserve scenic, historical and archaeological values, and allow some low-density residential development. Uses allowed by right include ranching, farming and forestry (except commercial logging), home occupations (non-residential activities), non-commercial camping, and single-family dwellings on parcels of at least 35 acres.

### **North Mesa Zone and South Slope Zone**

The intent of the North Mesa and South Slope Zones is to preserve areas for wildlife migration and habitat and to allow medium-density residential development of up to one dwelling unit per 6 acres in some approved Planned Unit Developments. Some of the uses allowed by right include single-family dwellings on at least 35 acres, home occupations (non-residential activities), farming, ranching, and non-commercial camping.

## **South Mesa Zone**

The intent of the South Mesa Zone is to allow medium density and, where appropriate, high-density development (including commercial), if all appropriate infrastructure is available. Uses by right include single-family dwellings of one unit per 35 acres, home occupations (non-residential activities), and non-commercial camping. Planned unit developments may be allowed.

## **Colona Zone**

The intent of the Colona Zone is to maintain an area of high-density residential development (one unit per 6,000 sq. ft.) and commercial activity. Uses allowed by right include single-family dwellings and home occupations (non-residential activities). Other uses may be allowed.

## **Valley Zone**

The intent of the Valley Zone is to protect and preserve visually significant and sensitive areas of Ouray County, maintain its overall rural character, and encourage continued agricultural production. Some of the uses allowed by right include ranching, farming, single-family dwellings on at least 35 acres, home occupations (non-residential activities), and non-commercial camping. Other uses may be allowed.

## **Public Lands Zone**

The intent of the Public Lands Zone is to preserve and protect private lands that are not publicly owned and managed by Federal or State entities from future development, thereby providing visual and recreational enjoyment for the County's present and future residents, and visitors. Uses allowed by right include ranching, farming, non-commercial camping, and underground mining (subject to State and Federal regulations). Other uses may be allowed, but single family dwellings and Planned Unit Developments are excluded.

## **Access and Roads**

Not all roads in Ouray County accessing homes and home sites are county roads. Some roads are private and are privately maintained; some roads are public roads, but privately maintained; some roads are county roads and are maintained by the County. You should inquire about any road accessing a specific property to determine its legal status. Where no road currently exists to a property, you should inquire about legal access to the property as legal access may require a grant of an easement or right-of-way, or permission of a federal land agency.

Maintenance of County Roads is limited by available financial resources. The County endeavors to maintain its residential roads, primarily dirt and gravel, in a manner that allows access by conventional passenger vehicles. However, road maintenance is affected by natural conditions, including rain, snow, drought and flood, as well as heavy utilization of these roads. There will be times when roads may have potholes, washboard conditions, be muddy, dusty, or may otherwise not meet the expectations of those driving them. These conditions should be expected in a small, rural county.

In addition, please be aware that not all County Roads are maintained year-round. Many County Roads are not maintained during the winter months. The County does not permit private maintenance of County Roads without a written agreement approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Some properties may not be accessible during the winter months except by snow

cat, snowmobile, skis or snowshoes. Consider year-round travel conditions when planning access to your property.

In order to obtain a building permit, your lot must have legal access to a county or state road, or a properly maintained road built to Ouray County road standards. **You'll also have to complete an address permit and a driveway permit.** Forms are available on the Ouray County Web Site: [www.ouraycountyco.gov](http://www.ouraycountyco.gov) under County Departments/Land Use Department.

Per Ouray County regulations, an access road serving only one or two lots is considered a driveway. If the access road serves three or more housing units, it is a road. Different design standards apply to each designation. The standards are available from the Road & Bridge Department website, the office located at 111 Mall Road, or by calling (970) 626-5391.

Sensitive design and construction of roads and driveways is encouraged in order to minimize scarring, especially in view corridors. Steep, curving roads may cause difficulties. If your lot does not have access that meets minimum standards, you may not be able to get a building permit or fire insurance.

## Water

Only the Town of Ridgway and the City of Ouray have municipal water supplies. If you are within the boundaries of these municipalities, you must contact them to be sure you meet their regulations and pay the proper fees. In the unincorporated county, water is generally obtained in one of two ways: by an individual well or by special water district.

If you are located within the service area boundary of a water district, the district can advise you of the availability of water and the fee schedule. Many rural areas are served by individual wells. The State Water Resources Division in Montrose issues well permits and determines the type of water usage allowed. They can be reached at (970) 249-6622. You may be limited to in-house use only, be restricted in the watering of livestock, or be required to augment your supply for fire control. New wells and re-fracturing of an existing well can be expensive, with no guarantee that water will be found.

Your well permit will outline specific conditions under which your water may be used. Check to see:

- If a well permit was previously issued for the lot
- If an existing well has been registered
- If a permit to re-drill has been granted, or
- If a lot qualifies for a well permit

Please be aware that if you plan to build an accessory dwelling on your property, it may have implications to your well permit, or you may be required to pay additional tap fees to the appropriate water district.

## Utilities

There are parts of Ouray County where public utilities are not available. Consider checking on the following:

- **Electric service.** Extension of electric service may be required at your expense.

- **Gas.** Natural gas and propane service are available in some parts of the county.
- **Telephone.** Landlines may not exist, and cell phones may not work in every part of the county or with specific telephone company equipment.
- **Trash disposal.** Most areas have private trash collection service available, but in some areas the owner may be required to haul trash to an approved disposal or transfer site.
- **Fire protection.** Volunteers generally provide fire protection in the rural areas. The level of protection provided depends on the availability and proximity to a water source, distance from a fire station, type of access, number of volunteers, type and amount of equipment, and the number of safety measures exercised by the landowner to reduce fire danger. Home insurance rates can be higher than in urban areas. See the “*Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones*” brochure found in this document and on our website. Homes located outside of subdivisions or in subdivisions without central water systems must have a reserve water supply for fire suppression (a cistern or other approved storage) in the amount of at least one gallon per square foot of all residential structures on the parcel. This water reserve must be kept at least 90 percent full at all times. See “Fire Protection Cistern Specifications” in the Building Standards section of this booklet.

## Protective Covenants

If you are building in a subdivision, check to see if there are protective covenants and get a copy of them **preferably before you purchase the lot**. These covenants exist as private land use controls and are enforced by and between private parties as a matter of contract law. They are separate and distinct from zoning and other County requirements and **do not supersede County or Building Code regulations**. The protective covenants may affect the design, size, color, and type of materials that can be used when building your home, the number and type of accessory buildings, setbacks, landscaping, the number and type of domestic animals that can be kept on the lot, and more. In addition, a homeowner’s association (HOA) or architectural review committee (ARC) may have been established to review and approve all building design plans. **HOA or ARC approval letters are required when submitting a request for a building permit.**

## Weed Management Plan

Private landowners within the unincorporated portions of Ouray County are responsible for noxious weed management on their lands as specified in the Colorado Noxious Weed Act (Section 35-5.5-101, et. seq.), and the Ouray County Noxious Weed Management Plan. Landowners should be aware of the noxious weeds on their lands and take appropriate Integrated Weed Control measures. Any area of disturbed ground will require revegetation to help prevent infestations of noxious weeds. Disturbed areas such as roads, utilities, etc. may require a Weed Management Plan. Please consult the Ouray County Weed Department at (970) 626-9775 for more information before finalizing your building plans.

# Visual Impact Regulations

Certain areas of Ouray County fall into *Visual Impact Corridors* and as such have regulations regarding the potential visual impact of new structures. The intent of these regulations is to minimize the visual impact of both individual structures and development as a whole so that development does not compete with the existing physical environment for the viewer's attention. Visual Impact Regulations apply both within a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and on standalone lots.

In certain parts of the county, Visual Impact Regulations (Section 9 of the Land Use Code) dictate what may or may not be built on a specific parcel or tract of land.

If you are within 1.5 miles of the following County Roads, you may be affected by Visual Impact Regulations: Highway 550, Highway 62, portions of County Road 1 lying between County Road 24 and the south intersection of County Road 1A and County Road 1, County Roads 5, 7, 8, 10, 24, and 24A. Proposed structures affected by Visual Impact Regulations must comply with a point/value system, which uses the following criteria:

- Size of structure
- Height of structure
- Total size of parcel
- Amount of natural screening
- Exterior colors
- Distance from designated road(s)
- Within a PUD or subdivision approved prior to March 4, 1986
- Additional screening

No structures in any instance may break the skyline. Builders may be required to erect "story poles" to assist the Building Official in his assessment of the proposed construction. If you think you may be in a Visual Impact Corridor, or, have any questions regarding Visual Impact, please contact the Building Official or the County Planner at (970) 626-9775.

For further information, please review the guide to visual impact regulations located on the Ouray County Website: <http://co-ouraycounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/2634>

# Wildfire Defense

On January 28, 2020, the Ouray County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted significant revisions to the County's Wildfire Mitigation Regulations, which become effective May 1, 2020. The original wildfire Code section was adopted in 1997. The updated regulations were developed over two years, and the process included cooperation between Ouray County (Planning Commission, Land Use Staff, BOCC), local fire departments / fire districts, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC).

The revised regulations were developed using current wildfire science and takes into consideration recent scientific studies on wildfire and the "Wildland Urban Interface" or "WUI." Wildland Urban Interface is commonly defined as "a zone of transition between wildland or unoccupied land and human development."

Ouray County's revised Wildfire Mitigation Regulations will likely have an effect on most future building projects and will also require additional information to be submitted with the building permit application, including, including, but not limited to:

**Required Elements:**

- Description of Roofing Material - Must be "Class-A", ignition resistant
- Description of all siding materials - Defensible space required if combustible
- Details on flashing and skirting/materials
- Identification of proper vent / gable screens - 1/8" or smaller required!
- Spark Arrestor - Required and must be clearly called out on plan detail
- 5-Foot Hardened Zone - Required and must be clearly delineated on site plan
- Doors - Must be ignition-resistant and called out on plan detail
- Driveway Design - plans clearly show: driving surface width, interior radii, driveway opening, grade (not to exceed 12%), site distance, etc.
- Gutters - description of materials if proposed, no vinyl

**Scored Elements:**

- Defensible Space - Required if combustible siding proposed
- Building Site Slope - must be easily determined by Staff or shown on site plan
- Forest Density - must be shown on recent photos / aerials
- Topographic Features - (i.e. gullies, canyons, ravines, ridge tops) clearly delineated on site plan or aerial photos
- Decking and Fence Material - May require composite materials
- Eaves, Overhangs, Structure Projections - May require ignition-resistant materials
- Windows - Glazing, tempering, low-e, metal framed may be required

**Important documents to review:**

*(Note that all of these documents can be viewed on our website by navigating to the Land Use & Planning page and then clicking on Wildfire Mitigation Regulations, in the banner on the left side of the page)*

- Section 16 of the Ouray County Land Use Code
- Companion document titled "Building for Wildfire Resiliency in Ouray County"
- Wildfire Mitigation Worksheets
- Implementation presentation (real world example)

# Slash Burning in Ouray County

The removal of “Slash”\* is a common practice of property management in Ouray County (e.g.; creating wildfire-defensible zones). Slash burning is allowed in Ouray County if the proper steps are taken. The Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 2012-01, setting forth the procedure to legally burn slash on your property.

Procedure to legally burn slash on your property:

- 1) Individuals conducting slash burning **MUST** notify Montrose County Dispatch at (970) 252-4023 when the burn begins and when the burn ends each day. Montrose County Dispatch will inform each person making a notification whether that day is a Red Flag Warning fire day.
- 2) The Ouray County Sheriff’s Office will notify the respective fire protection districts, Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit Dispatch and the Ouray County Department of Public Health that the permitted burn is to occur that day.
- 3) Notification to adjacent property owners and individuals with respiratory conditions will be sent via the County’s Wireless Emergency Notification System (WENS). It is the citizen’s responsibility to register for WENS.

The only exceptions to these requirements are burns being conducted by a State or Federal Agency, or agriculture property owners burning on their property. Additionally, **NO** slash burning will be allowed during a fire ban imposed by the Board of County Commissioners, or on a “Red Flag Warning Day”\*.

Other management practices to consider when burning slash:

- 1) Retaining slash on steep slopes, highly disturbed soils and burned sites can substantially reduce erosion and maintain water quality.
- 2) Slash piles should not be burned within 50’ of streams (or more, where steep slopes or riparian areas exist). This practice helps to protect water quality.
- 3) Burning slash piles can substantially damage and sterilize soils under the piles.

\* See definition of “slash” and “Red Flag Warning” in Ouray County Resolution #2012-01

Several publications are available at the Land Use Office for more information:

- 1) “Forestry, Best Management Practices to Protect Water Quality in Colorado”, Colorado State Forest Service.
- 2) “Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones”, No.6.302, by F.C. Dennis for Colorado State University Extension.

# Green or Energy Efficient Building

Ouray county has adopted the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).

A *green* or *sustainable* building is a structure that is designed, built, renovated, operated or reused in an ecological and resource-efficient manner. Green buildings are designed to meet certain objectives such as protecting occupant health and using water, energy and other resources more efficiently, and reducing the overall impact on the environment.

Ouray County has implemented several refund programs for use of green building/energy saving fixture installation. A brochure which includes guidelines and an application is available from our website or by request.

There are many additional resources available online to learn more about green building methods, products and certifications. Here are a few places to start:

[www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

[www.greenhomeguide.org](http://www.greenhomeguide.org)

[www.buildinggreen.com](http://www.buildinggreen.com)

[www.greenbuildingadvisor.com](http://www.greenbuildingadvisor.com)

[www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/](http://www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/)

[www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)

## Radon Mitigation Systems

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ouray County is located in one of Colorado's zones most likely to have elevated radon levels due to the content of local soil and bedrock. Radon is a cancer-causing natural radioactive gas that you can't see, smell or taste. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, and the second leading cause of lung cancer in America, claiming about 20,000 lives annually (source: [www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon)).

Ouray County currently recommends but does not require radon mitigation systems in new construction. Installing a system during new construction is much more cost-effective than a retrofit after construction is complete.

For more information on radon levels and zones, radon testing, and radon mitigation systems, visit [www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon) or [www.coloradoradon.info](http://www.coloradoradon.info). The EPA also provides a complete guide for *Radon Resistant New Construction*: [www.epa.gov/radon/rnrc](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rnrc)

## Septic (OWTS) Systems

Public sewer service is not available in most of unincorporated Ouray County. Only the Town of Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and the Fairway Pines Sanitation District offer such services. If you are not building in one of these three areas, you will need to install your own on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS).

Ouray County adopted new regulations pertaining to OWTS, effective June 1, 2014. OWTS systems must be designed and percolation tests performed by a licensed professional engineer. The engineer will consider the occupancy load and the structure design along with the percolation test results. In most cases, a septic system must be set back 10 ft. from lot lines, 20 ft. from dwellings, and 100 ft. from any well, including the neighbor's well(s). (continued on next page)

A copy of the completed Septic Permit Application form must be on file with the Building Office before construction may begin. A Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued and the structure cannot be occupied until all required conditions have been met.

## Flood Hazards

If your property is near a water source or in a flood area (such as near creeks, rivers, drainages, or streams) contact the Ouray County Land Use Department for further information on how to mitigate the possibility of flooding.

Flood hazard areas exist throughout Ouray County. Periodic floods can result in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, and disruption of commerce and governmental services. These flood losses are worsened by the accumulation of obstructions and debris in areas of special flood hazards, increasing flood heights and velocities. Structures that are inadequately flood-proofed, elevated or otherwise protected from flood damage also contribute to flood losses.

In order to minimize flood damage and loss of life and property, the County has enacted regulations to:

1. Restrict or prohibit uses which are dangerous to health, safety and property due to water or erosion hazards, or which result in damaging increases in erosion or in flood heights or velocities;
2. Require that uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction;
3. Control the alteration of natural flood plains, stream channels and natural protective barriers which help accommodate or channel flood waters;
4. Control filling, grading, dredging and other development which may increase flood damage; and
5. Prevent the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert flood waters or which may increase flood hazards in other areas.

The areas of special flood hazard identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency are outlined in a scientific and engineering report entitled, "The Flood Insurance Study for the Unincorporated Areas of Ouray County", dated July 3, 1985, with an accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). The maps are on file for reference at the Ouray County Land Use Office. The most current maps are available on the FEMA website: <http://msc.fema.gov/>

No land can be altered and no structures can be constructed, located, extended, converted or altered in these areas without full compliance with the regulations of Ouray County, and other applicable regulations.

Where the County's regulations and another regulation, easement, covenant or deed restriction conflict or overlap, whichever imposes the more stringent restrictions is the one that prevails.

The degree of flood protection required by the County is considered reasonable for regulatory purposes and is based on scientific and engineering considerations. However, larger floods can and will occur on rare occasions. Flood heights may be increased by man-made or natural causes.

Adherence to County regulations does not imply that land outside the areas of special flood hazards or uses permitted within such areas of special flood hazards will be free from flooding or flood damages.

## Avalanche Hazards

As development in the high country grows in popularity, it is important for property owners to be aware of avalanche danger when choosing a building site. If you are planning on building a structure in the high country, please set up a meeting with Land Use Staff to discuss avalanche danger on your property.

## Property Identification

Property owners are required to conspicuously place an address number plate at the driveway and/or access road to the property. Numerals may be no less than two inches in height, placed on a contrasting surface, and preferably reflective so that they may be easily identified under all light conditions and read for a distance of 100 feet to facilitate emergency response, deliveries, etc.

## Manufactured and Modular Homes

Application forms and a submission checklist may be available on our website [www.ouraycountycogov](http://www.ouraycountycogov) under County Departments/Land Use Department. A complete guide to the installation of manufactured and factory built housing is available from the Colorado Division of Housing in Denver and other agencies. Manufactured homes must conform to Ouray County snow and wind load requirements (see below). Special foundation requirements may also exist.

## Yurts

Yurts may be constructed in Ouray County, but typically do not qualify as a single family dwelling. In order for a yurt to qualify as a single family dwelling, it must meet all building code requirements (just like a stick-built home does). Yurts may be used as a temporary structure for non-commercial camping. When constructing a yurt, building permits may, or may not be required. If a temporary foundation is being constructed a building permit will be required. However, if the yurt is to be placed directly on the ground, like a traditional tent, a building permit won't be required.

# Permits and Procedures

Ouray County has adopted and enforces the International Building Code, 2018 edition, the International Residential Code, 2018 edition, the International Mechanical Code, 2018 edition, the International Energy Conservation Code, 2018 edition, and the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings, 1997 edition.

## Work requiring a permit

No building or structure shall be erected, constructed, enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, removed, converted, or demolished without a building permit. Besides new construction, examples of work requiring a permit include but are not limited to:

1. Finishing a basement from storage to any use
2. Removal of structural walls, doors or windows
3. Solar panel installation or relocation
4. Changing a garage or storage to residential use
5. Significant changes in electrical or plumbing systems (may require state permits and inspections)

## Work allowed without a permit

Projects not requiring a building permit may include but are not limited to:

1. New cabinets in kitchen or bath
2. Cosmetic interior remodeling
3. Moving or removing non-structural walls
4. Minor repairs to electrical or plumbing (check with the state to be certain)
5. Replacement of light fixtures (must still follow code)
6. Non-structural work such as window and door replacement, and interior wall refinishing such as painting, wallpapering, and similar finish work
7. One story detached storage buildings with a total floor area of less than 200 square feet
8. Fences not more than 6 feet tall
9. Retaining walls not more than four feet tall (measured from the base of the footer to the top of the wall)
10. Platforms and walks not more than 30 inches above grade and not over any basement or story below

Some projects that do not require a building permit may still require approval of an ARC or HOA. If you have specific questions or require clarification, contact the Building Official.

## Demolition Permits

In order to maintain the public health, safety, and welfare, Ouray County requires demolition permits. This permit must be obtained prior to the demolition of any structure in Ouray County, and you can apply for the permit at the Ouray County Land Use Office.

Before you can apply for your permit from Ouray County, you will also need to submit a demolition permit from the State of Colorado (Contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for more information). This information must accompany your application to the County, before the permit will be issued.

If you are planning to demolish a structure by burning, you must notify the Sheriff's office after your county demolition permit has been obtained, and before you burn.

## Applying for Permits

**PLEASE NOTE:** Prior to accepting any new single family dwelling building permit application, you must schedule a pre-application conference with the Building Official. This meeting may take place prior to or at the same time you wish to submit your building application. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss various building issues including: flood plain, site development permit, setback requirements, visual impact, etc. This meeting will help to expedite your application process by avoiding delays due to an incomplete application. Should you have any land use questions (allowable uses, zoning, subdivision, variance, etc.) you may also schedule to meet with the County Planner at the same time.

Owners, contractors, or their authorized agents may make applications for building and sewage disposal permits. Property owners must sign an Authorization of Agent form in order to designate anyone to act on their behalf as a general contractor. Subcontractors involved may be listed on applications, but they will not be issued permits. Permit applications will be made to the Ouray County Land Use Administration office at 111 Mall Road in Ridgway. Please direct all mail to P.O. Box 28, Ridgway CO 81432-0028 as mail is not delivered to the Mall Road physical address.

A site address is required in order to obtain permits and services for your job site. The Ouray County Road and Bridge Department can provide current property addresses or establish a new one. They can be reached at (970) 626-5391 or by emailing [road@ouraycountyco.gov](mailto:road@ouraycountyco.gov).

With the adoption of the 2018 International Energy Conservation codes, information that must be included with the permit application will include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Insulation Materials and *R*-Values
- Fenestration *U*-Values and area-weighted *U*-factor
- Solar Heating Gain Co-efficient (SHGCs) and calculations
- Mechanical system design detail
- Mechanical and service water heating system listing equipment, sizes and efficiencies
- Economizer Information
- Equipment and system controls; fan motor horsepower (hp) and controls
- Duct sealing, duct and pipe insulation with layout
- Lighting fixture schedule with wattage and control descriptions
- Building Envelope Sealing

# Permit Procedures

The Ouray County Land Use office has a checklist available to help ensure you have all the pieces necessary to submit your permit application. This checklist and other necessary forms may be available on our website [www.ouraycountyco.gov](http://www.ouraycountyco.gov) under County Departments/Land Use Department.

**Applicants should allow two to four weeks for review of a building permit.** This time frame may be increased depending on the size and complexity of the project, the completeness of the submission, and the workload of the building department at the time of submission.

## Plans

1. **Site Plan** - Must show property lines, size and location of proposed structures, existing structures, distance of structures to property lines, proposed driveways, adjoining roads, easements, utility hook-ups, and setbacks.
2. **Foundation Plan** – The Building Official requires that a licensed engineer or architect must design foundations. Foundation plans must include dimensional plan views with footers, stem walls, interior pads, and exterior pads. Include dimensional section of foundation showing depth of footing, type, size and placement of rebar, wire mesh, anchor bolts, support ledges, height above grade, etc. Plan must also show depth of any slab portion of pour, support ledges, type of fill and compaction as well as size and placement of anchor bolts and ties to foundation or footers. In addition, show any foundation ties to steps, porches, or sidewalks.
3. **Lighting** -All exterior lighting must be fully shielded to comply with Section 27 of the Ouray County Land Use Code, or limited to 40 watts maximum *per fixture* regardless the number of bulbs.
4. **Mechanical Schedule** - List all furnaces, boilers, vents, fans, refrigeration units, etc. to be used in the construction project. Include efficiency rating (%), and submit manual J & D.
5. **Door Schedule** - Specify each door type and size for all door openings. A 20-minute rated, fire resistant self-closing door is required between attached garage and dwelling.
6. **Window Schedule** - Specify each window type, size, and U-factor (note: 0.30 or better) for each window opening. Specify safety glass where applicable. One egress window is required for each bedroom that does not have a door leading directly to the outside of the dwelling.
7. **Elevations** - Four elevation drawings are required, one for each facing view: North, East, South and West.
8. **Floor Plans** - Provide floor plans for each floor, garage, or basement described. All areas drawn will be dimensioned and the square footage for that area shown. A total of the individual square footages for the floor depicted will be shown. Each area or room must be named as to its use (bath, kitchen, closet, etc.).
9. **Wall Section** - Provide a cut-away view of typical exterior wall to illustrate wall construction, siding, insulation, plates, connections, sheathing, underlayment, roofing, etc.
10. **Framing Plans** - Provide dimensioned plan views of all floor and roof framing. Plans to include size, type, and spacing of all structural members. Truss specifications must be submitted when available from manufacturer.
11. **Design Criteria** – Engineered snow load (based on altitude), Wind load 90 MPH minimum, Frost Line 36”, Ice Shield – YES, High Temp Barrier under all metal roofs.

# Inspection Schedule

The following are REQUIRED inspections. Inspections may not be available every day. Inspections will be performed Mondays thru Thursdays 6:00 am to 4:30 pm. A minimum of **48 to 72 HOURS NOTICE** is needed to set an appointment for any required or special inspection. An inspector may arrive within two hours before or after the scheduled time. If the work is not ready, re-inspections will cost \$47 per hour payable at the time of re-inspection.

- 1) **Site Inspection** - Occurs prior to the start of any excavation or construction. The site inspection will include the following.
  - a) Visual impact (if applicable)
  - b) Flood plain, geological hazards (if applicable)
  - c) Setbacks
  - d) Driveway location (stake driveway)
  - e) Propane tank and utility locations
  
- 2) **Construction Inspections**
  - a) Footers/Foundation - Occurs after excavations, with reinforcing and forms in place prior to the pour. UFER must be in place.
  - b) Concrete Slab or Under Floor - Occurs after all under slab/floor installations are in place and prior to slab pour or floor sheathing or sub-flooring being installed.
  - c) Weatherproofing and French drain - Occurs before back filling around the foundation.
  - d) Framing - Occurs after roof, all framing, fire blocking, and bracing are in place. All pipes, chimneys, and vents are in place, and the rough electrical, plumbing, pipes, ducts, etc. are approved by the State Electrical and Plumbing Inspectors. Inspections by State inspectors are scheduled separately. Review smoke and carbon monoxide detector layout.
  - e) Insulation - Occurs prior to dry wall installation. Foam inspection required before covering it with other product.
  - f) Gypsum Board/Drywall Nailing - Occurs after all interior and exterior gypsum board is in place and prior to any joints or fasteners being taped or finished.
  - g) Septic - Occurs following the approval of the general layout with the tank and lines or infiltrator system in place, all other components or materials in place, and prior to back-fill. The engineering firm responsible for the system design will perform these inspections.
  
  - h) Final Inspection Occurs after:
    - Finish grading
    - The building is completed and ready for occupancy
    - Approved final electrical and plumbing inspections are complete
    - Wildfire mitigation and visual impact compliance are confirmed
    - Prescribed tests and inspections indicating compliance with 2009 IECC

***Occupancy is not permitted until a Certificate of Occupancy is issued!***

A Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) will be issued after all required inspections have been completed and the project complies with approved plans and specifications, the Uniform Building Code, and all local rules and regulations. Outstanding code violations must be corrected before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued. The building official may issue a Temporary C.O. if work to be completed does not involve fire, safety, or structural issues.

## Fees

Building permit fees shall be determined in accordance with Table 1-A of the 1997 Edition of the Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code, Section 107. Other fees may apply. Fee examples include but are not limited to Road Impact\*, Septic, Plan Check, Address, and Site Development. Any questions regarding fees should be directed to the Building Official.

\* The Road Impact Fee is \$3,244.22 and is charged to the construction of all single family dwellings.

## Permit Expiration

Building permits are valid for a period of one year from date of issue. Should work not commence in or continue during the 1 year period, the permit will be considered null and void and all fees paid will be forfeited. Start up will require reapplication and repayment of fees. If an extension on an existing, active permit is needed, contact the Building Official no less than 14 days prior to the permit expiration date. The Official will then assess whether an extension is possible, and whether a written request is required. The extension request must clearly explain the need for the request and must include the proposed amount of time required to satisfy that need. Failure to comply with this code provision may result in new permit procedures and new fees being assessed on the remainder of the unfinished project.

# County Building Standards

## Building Height

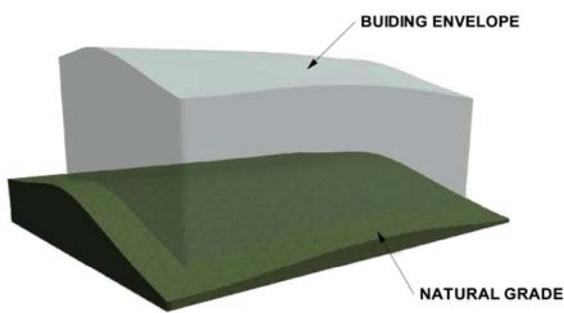
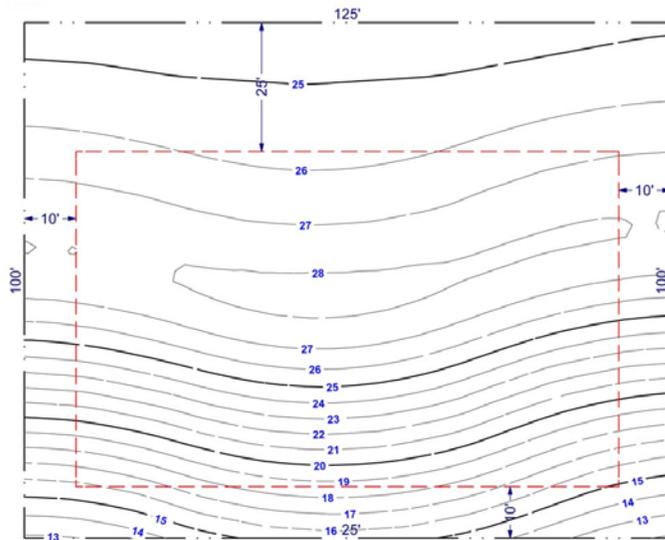
The maximum building height in Ouray County is 35'; Ouray County defines building height as:

“The vertical height of a building at all points measured from natural (pre-construction) or finished (post-construction) grade, whichever is lower.” Architectural design features that do not add habitable floor area to a building and are not accessible from such building, including but not necessarily limited to: cupolas, skylights, and chimneys, shall not be considered when measuring building height.”

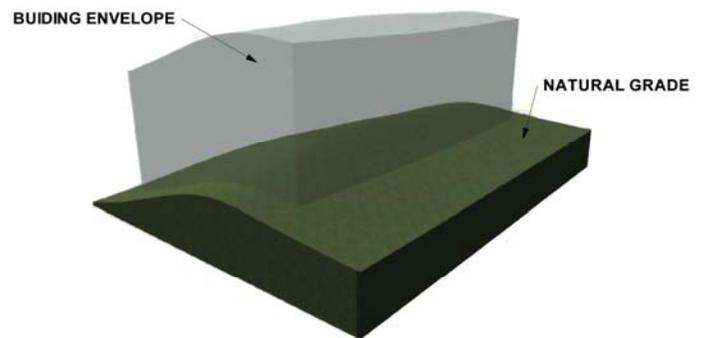
The building height definition, in essence, creates a building envelope based on the natural or finished grade, whichever is lower.



In this example, the green lines indicate the existing grade, and blue lines indicate the finished grade. The top line represents the top of the “building envelope”.



**VIEW FROM PLAN SOUTH WEST**



**VIEW FROM PLAN NORTH EAST**

These graphics illustrate the concept of the building envelope. The top graphic represents a building site, while the bottom graphics represent the building envelope created from the natural grade.

## Septic (OWTS) Systems

Public sewer service is not available in most of unincorporated Ouray County. Only the Town of Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and the Fairway Pines Sanitation District offer such services. If you are not building in one of these three areas, you will need to install your own on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS).

Ouray County adopted new regulations pertaining to OWTS, effective June 1, 2014. OWTS systems must be designed and percolation tests performed by a licensed professional engineer. The engineer will consider the occupancy load and the structure design along with the percolation test

results. In most cases, a septic system must be set back 10 ft. from lot lines, 20 ft. from dwellings, and 100 ft. from any well, including the neighbor's well/s.

A copy of the completed Septic Permit Application form must be on file with the Building Office before construction may begin. A Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued and the structure cannot be occupied until all required conditions have been met.

## Snow Load

The building designer will calculate the snow load with the equation shown below. **The Snow Load Table may also be used in lieu of the formula.** Ouray County does not have information on site specific elevation of building sites. Please refer to your site plan survey for site elevations.

### **- APPENDIX C -**

#### **OURAY COUNTY SNOW LOADS PER SEAC 2016 MAP K-FACTOR VARIES ACROSS COUNTY FROM 12 TO 13.5 THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNTY IS 13K**

<b>ELEVATION</b>	<b>GROUND</b>	<b>ROOF</b>
Under 6,500	35 psf	24.5 psf
6,500 to 7,000	45 psf	31.5 psf
7,000 to 7,500	55 psf	38.5 psf
7,500 to 8,000	67 psf	46.9 psf
8,000 to 8,500	80 psf	56.0 psf
8,500 to 9,000	95 psf	66.5 psf
9,000 to 9,500	112 psf	78.4 psf
9,500 to 10,000	130 psf	91.0 psf
10,000 to 10,500	150 psf	105 psf
10,500 to 11,000	173 psf	121 psf
11,000 to 11,500	198 psf	138.6 psf
11,500 to 12,000	225 psf	157.5 psf
12,000 to 12,500	254 psf	177.8 psf
12,500 to 13,000	286 psf	200.2 psf

## Wind Load

The minimum basic wind speed for determining design wind pressure at any site shall not be less than 90 miles per hour.

## Frost Depth

The mean frost depth in Ouray County has been established at thirty-six (36) inches. Frost depth will be measured from the top of the footer to finished grade.

## Seismic Design Category: C

## Winter Design Temperature: -16 Degrees F

## Ice Shield: Yes

## Air freezing index: 3000 (BF/days)

## Certifications

Trusses used in the construction project may be required to be certified by an engineer. Other certifications may be required for span and support members not specified in appropriate IBC and IRC tabulated data tables. Engineering certifications will also be required for any alternate method of construction, or as otherwise required by the Building Official.

## Insulation and Fenestration Requirements (per IECC 2018)

Highlighted Region is for Ouray County, Region 6 (continued on next page).

TABLE R402.1.2  
INSULATION AND FENESTRATION REQUIREMENTS BY COMPONENT\*

CLIMATE ZONE	FENESTRATION U-FACTOR <sup>a</sup>	SKYLIGHT <sup>b</sup> U-FACTOR	GLAZED FENESTRATION SHGC <sup>b,a</sup>	CEILING R-VALUE	WOOD FRAME WALL R-VALUE	MASS WALL R-VALUE <sup>i</sup>	FLOOR R-VALUE	BASEMENT <sup>c</sup> WALL R-VALUE	SLAB <sup>d</sup> R-VALUE & DEPTH	CRAWL SPACE <sup>e</sup> WALL R-VALUE
1	NR	0.75	0.25	30	13	3/4	13	0	0	0
2	0.40	0.65	0.25	38	13	4/6	13	0	0	0
3	0.32	0.55	0.25	38	20 or 13+5 <sup>a</sup>	8/13	19	5/13 <sup>f</sup>	0	5/13
4 except Marine	0.32	0.55	0.40	49	20 or 13+5 <sup>a</sup>	8/13	19	10/13	10, 2 ft	10/13
5 and Marine 4	0.30	0.55	NR	49	20 or 13+5 <sup>a</sup>	13/17	30 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 2 ft	15/19
6	0.30	0.55	NR	49	20+5 <sup>a</sup> or 13+10 <sup>h</sup>	15/20	30 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 4 ft	15/19
7 and 8	0.30	0.55	NR	49	20+5 <sup>a</sup> or 13+10 <sup>h</sup>	19/21	38 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 4 ft	15/19

NR = Not Required.

For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.

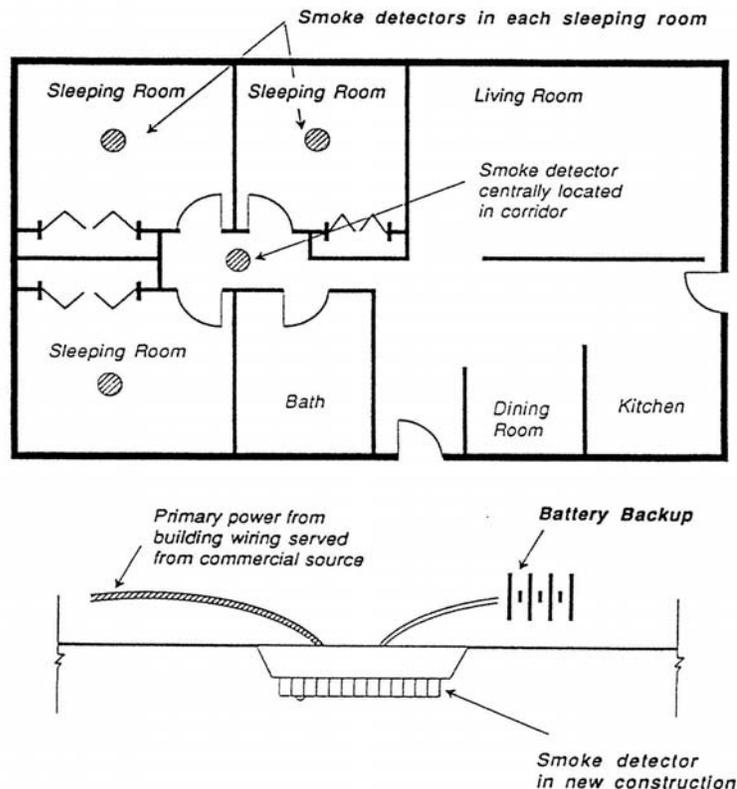
- R-values are minimums. U-factors and SHGC are maximums. Where insulation is installed in a cavity that is less than the label or design thickness of the insulation, the installed R-value of the insulation shall be not less than the R-value specified in the table.
- The fenestration U-factor column excludes skylights. The SHGC column applies to all glazed fenestration.  
**Exception:** In Climate Zones 1 through 3, skylights shall be permitted to be excluded from glazed fenestration SHGC requirements provided that the SHGC for such skylights does not exceed 0.50.
- "10/13" means R-10 continuous insulation on the interior or exterior of the home or R-13 cavity insulation on the interior of the basement wall.  
"15/19" means R-15 continuous insulation on the interior or exterior of the home or R-19 cavity insulation at the interior of the basement wall. Alternatively, compliance with "15/19" shall be R-13 cavity insulation on the interior of the basement wall plus R-5 continuous insulation on the interior or exterior of the home.
- R-5 insulation shall be provided under the full slab area of a heated slab in addition to the required slab edge insulation R-value for slabs, as indicated in the table. The slab edge insulation for heated slabs shall not be required to extend below the slab.
- There are no SHGC requirements in the Marine Zone.
- Basement wall insulation is not required in warm-humid locations as defined by Figure R301.1 and Table R301.1.
- Alternatively, insulation sufficient to fill the framing cavity and providing not less than an R-value of R-19.
- The first value is cavity insulation, the second value is continuous insulation. Therefore, as an example, "13+5" means R-13 cavity insulation plus R-5 continuous insulation.
- Mass walls shall be in accordance with Section R402.2.5. The second R-value applies where more than half of the insulation is on the interior of the mass wall.

# Detectors

Dwelling units used for sleeping purposes shall be provided with smoke detectors and each detector unit will be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's approved instructions. In new construction, required smoke detectors shall receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source. The required smoke detectors will also be equipped with a battery backup. The detector must emit a signal when the batteries are low. Smoke detectors may be solely battery powered when installed in existing buildings, or in buildings without commercial power, or in buildings that undergo repairs, alterations, or additions. Smoke detectors will sound an alert signal when any one of the detectors is activated. Further information on County standards is available from the County Building Department.

Carbon Monoxide detectors are not currently required in Ouray County, however installation of at least one unit per residential dwelling is strongly recommended. Refer to manufacturer's instructions for placement recommendations. New state regulations requiring Carbon Monoxide detectors will take effect on July 1, 2009.

## **Placement of smoke detectors**

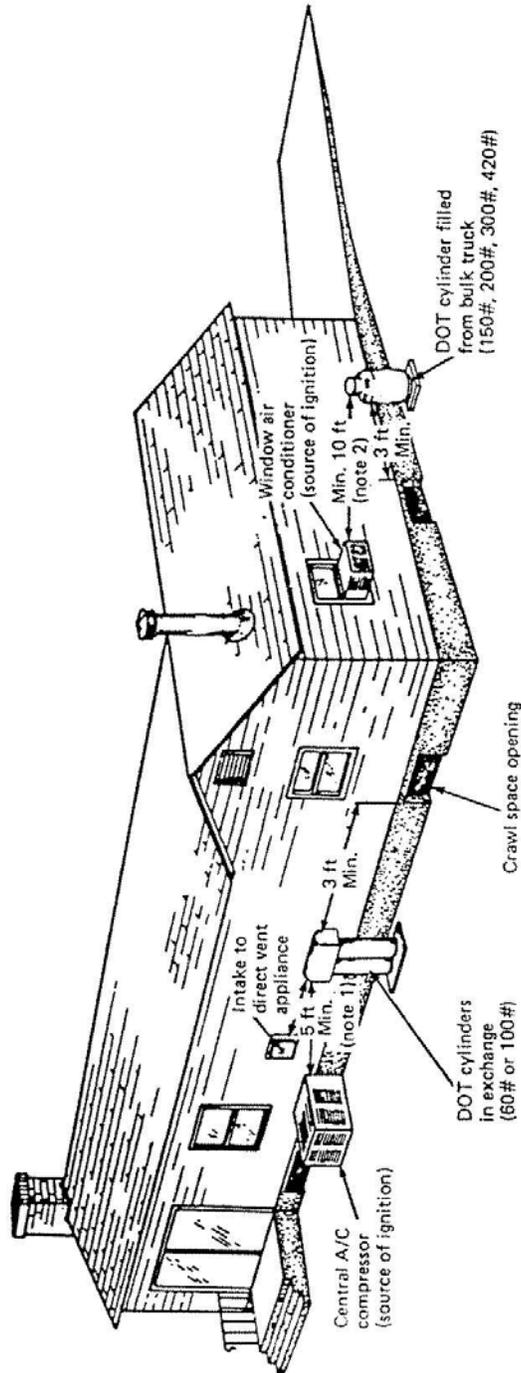


# Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

Wood stoves and fireplaces must be installed according to the International Residential Code requirements and manufacturer's specifications. New wood-burning fireplaces must have gasketed doors and outdoor combustion air.

## Propane Tanks

The following 3 placement diagrams are for reference only. Your propane supplier may provide more detailed specifications.



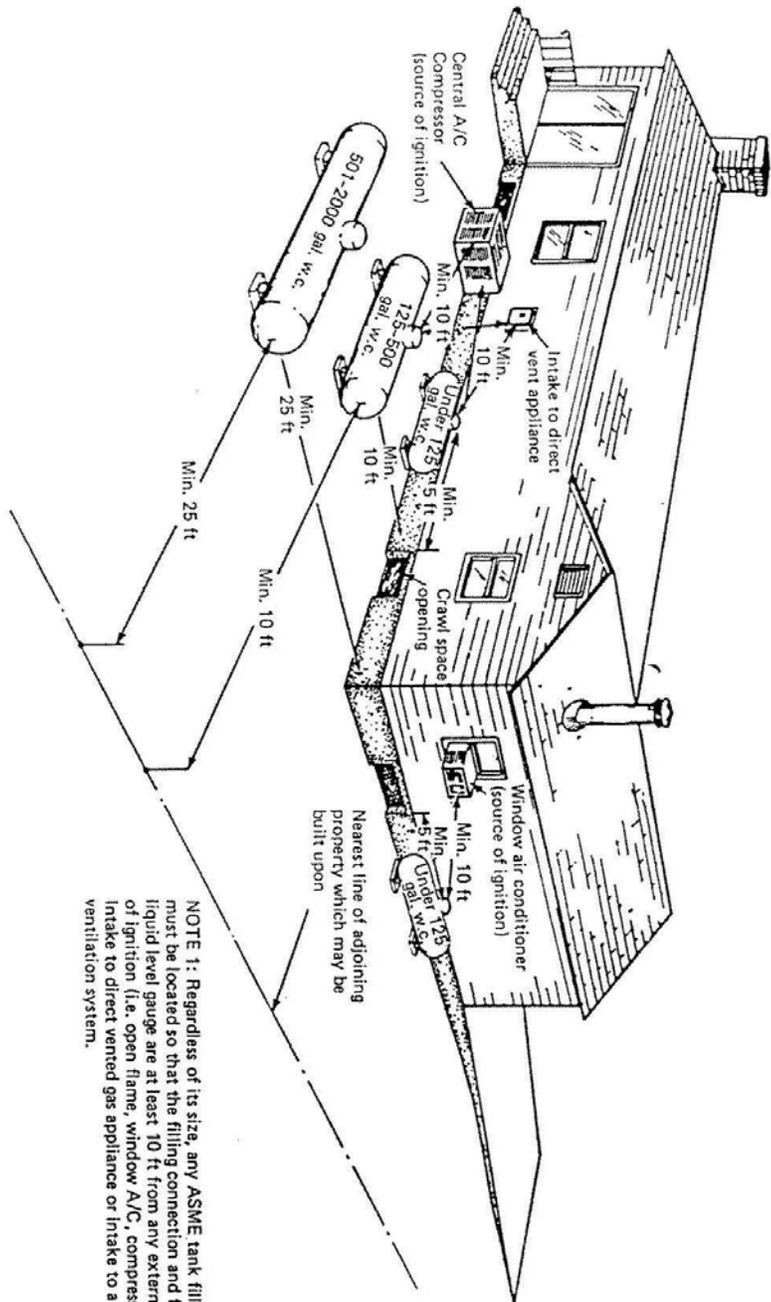
NOTE 1: 5 ft minimum between relief valve discharge and external source of ignition (air conditioner), direct vent, or mechanical ventilation system (attic fan).

NOTE 2: If the DOT cylinder is filled on-site from a bulk truck, the filling connection and vent valve must be at least 10 ft from any external source of ignition, direct vent, or mechanical ventilation system.

(For SI Units: 1 ft = 0.3048 m)

Figure I-1 DOT Cylinders.

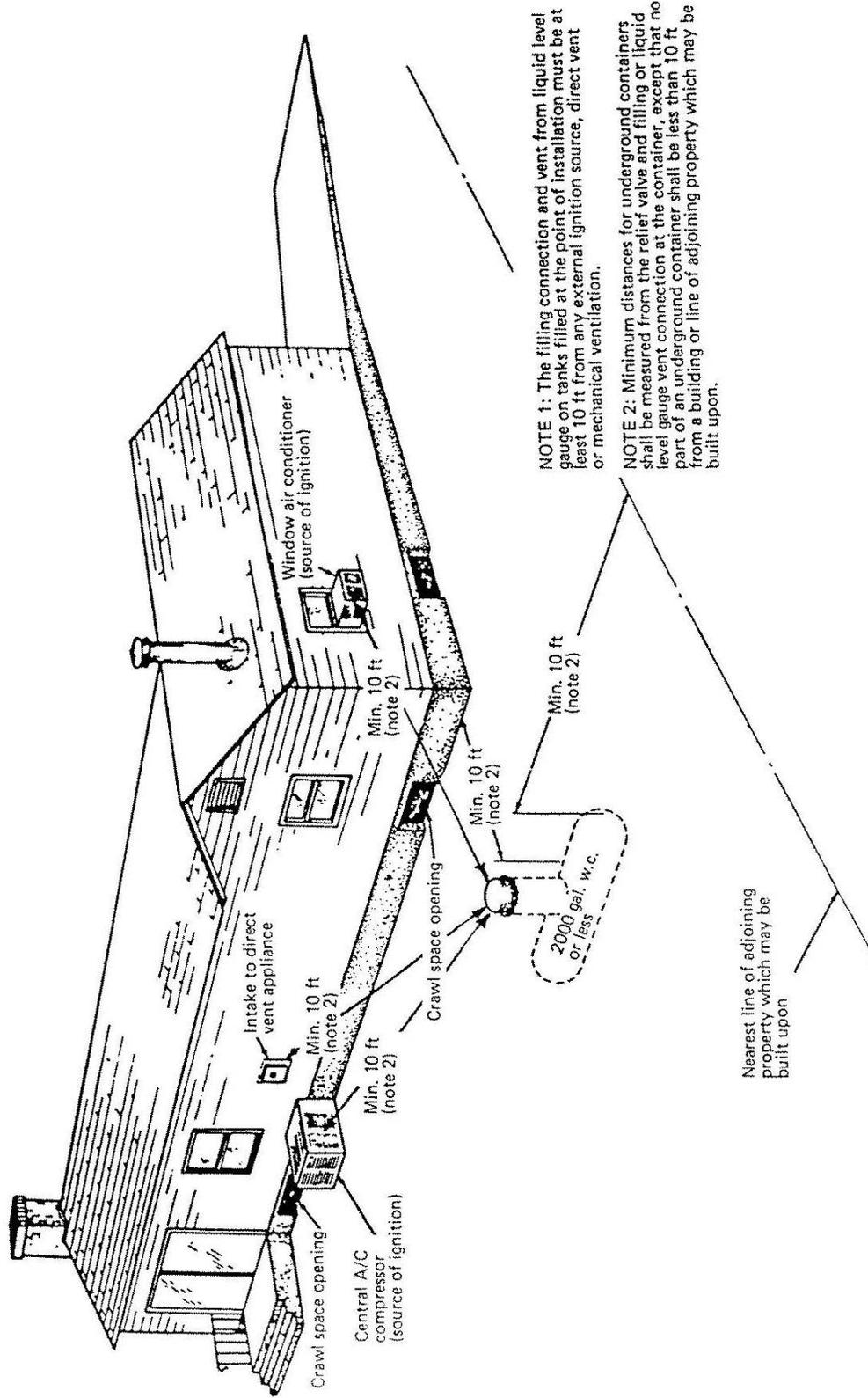
(This figure for illustrative purposes only; text shall govern.)



NOTE 1: Regardless of its size, any ASME tank filled on-site must be located so that the filling connection and fixed liquid level gauge are at least 10 ft from any external source of ignition (i.e. open flame, window A/C, compressor, etc). Intake to direct vented gas appliance or intake to a mechanical ventilation system.

Figure 1-2 Aboveground ASME Containers.  
 (This figure for illustrative purposes only; text shall govern.)

(For SI Units: 1 ft = 0.3048 m)



NOTE 1: The filling connection and vent from liquid level gauge on tanks filled at the point of installation must be at least 10 ft from any external ignition source, direct vent or mechanical ventilation.

NOTE 2: Minimum distances for underground containers shall be measured from the relief valve and filling or liquid level gauge vent connection at the container, except that no part of an underground container shall be less than 10 ft from a building or line of adjoining property which may be built upon.

Nearest line of adjoining property which may be built upon

(For SI Units: 1 ft = 0.3048 m)

Figure 1-3 Underground ASME Containers.  
(This figure for illustrative purposes only; text shall govern.)

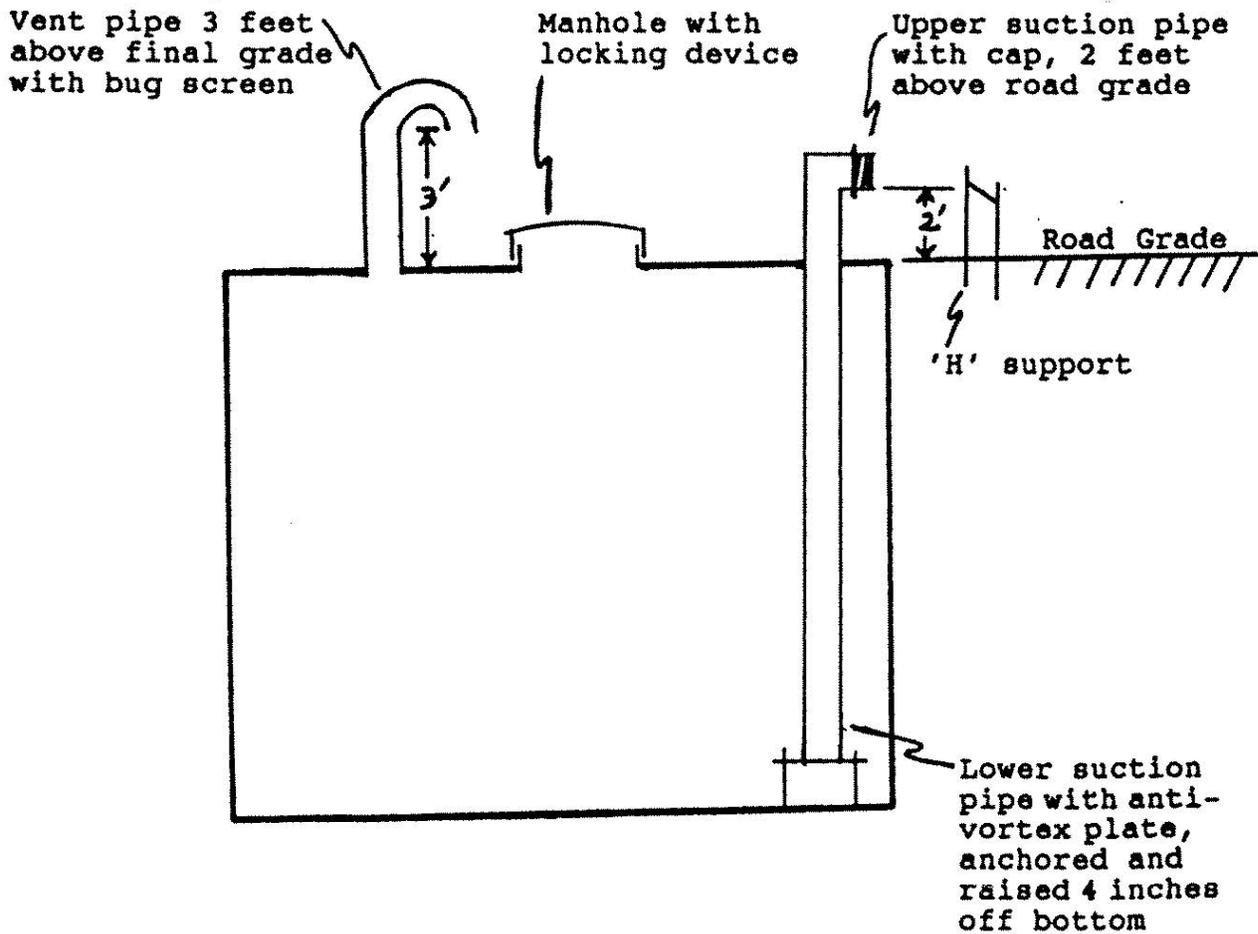
# Fire Protection Cistern

All residential structures that are not connected to an approved central water system must have an underground water storage tank or cistern for fire protection. The applicable fire district must approve tank location and system fittings. Cistern specifications are as follows:

1. Must store at least one gallon per square foot of the total square footage of all residential buildings on the parcel; 1,500 gallons minimum.
2. Maintain cistern water at 90 percent of capacity or more.
3. Fill with clean water (no surface or roof runoff).
4. Prevent freezing by burying container, or by other means.
5. Verify that tank is suitable for burial. Follow manufacturer's directions for bedding and backfilling around the tank
6. Locate within 15 feet of an all-weather road or driveway, with the top of the cistern at the same elevation as the road.
7. Locate the cistern more than 100 feet from all structures.
8. A four inch suction pipe (Schedule 40 PVC or stronger) shall have the lower end with an anti-vortex plate anchored and raised four inches off the bottom of the cistern. The upper end of the pipe shall terminate two feet above the ground surface with a horizontally oriented 2-½ inch male National Standard Thread aluminum fitting for attaching fire hose. A threaded cap seals the fitting. NOTE: A PVC reducer bushing (4-½ inch smooth to 2-½ inch iron pipe threads) and a 2-½ inch aluminum nipple are available by special order from plumbing supply companies.
9. An "H" shaped steel support for the suction hose shall be placed four feet in front of the PVC outlet with the horizontal bar of the "H" level with the lower edge of the PVC outlet.
10. Must have a four inch inverted "U" screened vent pipe.
11. A manhole with locking device shall be located on cistern top.
12. Standpipe shall be painted red and clearly mark it as a water source for fire fighting.

NOTE: A swimming pool that is full year-round will substitute for a cistern, provided that it is of adequate capacity and meets the other requirements, such as prevention of freezing, providing road access, etc.

Suggested design for cistern for fire protection:



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Forms and other information may be available on our website [www.ouraycountyco.gov](http://www.ouraycountyco.gov) under County Departments/Land Use Department.