

Things to Know Before Purchasing Land in Duchesne County

Building Permits – Building permits are required for any building that is designed or intended for human occupancy, regardless of size. Once a dwelling unit is established on a parcel, an accessory building, such as a storage shed, is allowed without a building permit if it is single story and 200 square feet or less in size. Zoning setback requirements still apply. A storage shed to be erected on a vacant parcel requires a building permit, regardless of size as it would not qualify as an accessory building. Garages and carports require a permit. For details regarding the building permit process, please visit the Duchesne County Department of Building Safety on their website at: <http://www.duchesne.utah.gov/your-government-2/county-departments/building-inspector/> or call 435-738-1150.

Culinary Water – Many parcels in the County are located within water districts that can provide a culinary water hook up for an established fee. However, many parcels are located outside of water districts or are within water districts that currently have no water service available. Some parcels have been approved on the basis that a private water well must be drilled to serve a future dwelling. Due to the potential for contamination, hauling water to a parcel is at the discretion of the County's Culinary Water Authority (the TriCounty Health Department - 435-722-6310) and is allowed only if there are no other options. Some areas of the county may lack groundwater of sufficient quantity and/or quality to serve a dwelling unit. Well water samples must be submitted to the health department for testing and approval before occupying the dwelling. Please contact the TriCounty Health Department or visit their website at: <https://tricountyhealth.com/environmental-health/drinking-water/> for guidance as to the acceptable water source(s) available to a specific parcel.

Legal Access – There is no guarantee that a particular parcel of land will have legal access. Please contact the Duchesne County Community Development Department at 435-738-1151 for a map showing the roads in proximity to the parcel. If legal access is not evident, you may need to employ a title company to search the County deed records to determine whether legal access is available. If there is no legal access, you may attempt to acquire an easement from willing land owner(s) in the vicinity. You may need to employ a surveyor to prepare a legal description of the easement to appear on an easement deed. Such a deed would need to be signed by the grantor(s) and recorded at the County Recorder's office. Recording fees will be charged.

Road Maintenance – Many roads in the County are “Class B roads”, which are maintained by the County Public Works Department. These roads will have a blue sign with yellow numbers identifying the County Road number. Many roads are “Class D roads”, which are roads open to the public but not maintained by the County. Generally, if a road has been opened and in use by the public for at least ten years, the road must remain open. Such roads either receive no maintenance or are maintained by property owners in the area. Some Class D roads receive occasional maintenance by oil companies if such roads access their facilities. Some Class B and most Class D roads may become impassible during the winter if there is heavy snowfall.

Subdivisions – Any division of land requires a survey and approval by the County. All new parcels must have legal access. Any new parcels less than 40 acres in size must have an approved water source unless designated as a “Remainder”, “Not a Proposed Building Lot” or as an “Agricultural Lot” on the survey. While there is no limit to the number of Agricultural Lots, the property must be assessed as Greenbelt land to qualify and an agreement must be recorded to maintain the agricultural status until the lots are approved as building lots. Only one parcel in a subdivision may be designated as a Remainder or Not a Proposed Building Lot. All new parcels not designated as a Remainder, Not a Proposed Building Lot or as an Agricultural Lot on the survey must have a soils site assessment approved by TriCounty Health. Call 435-738-1151 for details or view the County Subdivision Ordinance at: https://sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=861

Wastewater Disposal – While lots within cities and towns in Duchesne County are usually served by a sanitary sewer system, most lots in the County are served by private, on-site wastewater disposal systems (commonly known as septic systems). The TriCounty Health Department is the County’s sanitary sewer authority. There is no guarantee that a specific parcel will be suitable for a septic system. Some parcels in the County are too small and were intended for camping only. Some parcels contain soils that are not suitable or high groundwater tables that prevent the operation of conventional systems. The health department maintains a list of contractors who can be hired to conduct the necessary site assessment to determine the feasibility of an onsite wastewater disposal system. If the soils are suitable, the next step is to have the system designed to accommodate the size of home anticipated. The plans must be approved and the installation of the system inspected by the health department. If done correctly, the final step is the issuance of an operating permit. This system will need to be in place and approved before occupying a dwelling. The health department will consider alternative systems in cases where conventional systems will not function. Please visit the TriCounty Health Department website at: <https://tricityhealth.com/environmental-health/onsite-wastewater/> for details.

WUI Code – Duchesne County adopted the Wildland-Urban Interface Code in 2006. This code requires measures to help protect property from destruction in the event of a wildfire. The County Fire Warden (435-738-1226) enforces the WUI Code and reviews building projects to ensure that a defensible space is created around new structures. The Code also requires that the roads/driveways to a dwelling be improved to allow all-weather access by emergency vehicles. Metal roofs are required in wildfire-prone areas.

Zoning – All private lands in the County are zoned and minimum lot sizes are in effect. Five and ten acre zones are common. Please contact the Duchesne County Community Development Department to determine if a specific parcel complies with the lot size standards or if it is a legal nonconforming lot. When building on a parcel, be aware that there are requirements for a setback from property lines. Call 435-738-1151 for details or view the County Zoning Ordinance at: https://sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=861