

20 ZONING F.A.Q.s

1. What IS zoning and why do we need it?

- a. Zoning is the public regulation of land use, its primary purpose being to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare. Regulation of land use through zoning is needed to ensure the compatibility of land uses, to protect natural resources, and to protect property values.

2. Why do I need a zoning permit AND a building permit, aren't they the same thing?

- a. Zoning permits and building permits are NOT the same thing. Both are required for most projects, however, some zoning activities do not require building permits and some building activities do not require zoning permits. A simplistic clarification of the difference is Zoning regulates WHERE things are built, and Building Codes regulate HOW things are built.

3. Do I get a zoning permit and a building permit from the same office?

- a. No, in South Branch Township, zoning permits are administrated at the township level through the Township Offices, located at 5245 N. M-18, Roscommon. Building permits are administrated at the county level through the Crawford County Building Department at the County Courthouse Building, located at 200 W. Michigan Ave, Grayling.

4. How do I get a zoning permit?

- a. Zoning permits are obtained by submitting a completed application form, along with all the required documentation for your project, to the zoning office. Applications are available at the Township Offices, on our website, www.southbranchtownship.com and via email request sent to zoningadmin@southbranchtownship.com and may be submitted to the zoning office either in person or by postal service.

5. How long does it take to get a zoning permit?

- a. Target turnaround time for permit issuance is within two (2) weeks of receipt of a completed application for which the required permit fee has been paid. Normal turnaround time is closer to one (1) week, sometimes even less.

6. Are all parcel sizes suitable (able to be permitted) for building upon?

- a. No. Minimum parcel sizes required for development vary depending on the zoning district in which they are located. See, Section 5.08 – South Branch Schedule of Regulations of the SBT Zoning Ordinance. Link: [South Branch Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

7. Will I need a zoning permit to remodel or update my current home?

- a. YES, if any of the planned updates or remodel changes result in any of the following: an increase to the footprint area or height of the existing structure. If none of the exterior dimensions of the existing structure will change, then NO zoning permit is required,

however, building permits may be required. Contact the county building department for inquiries. Link: [Crawford County Building Department](#)

8. Do I need a zoning permit for a shed?

- a. YES, if the shed is 200 square feet or larger.

9. What if the shed is not attached to the ground?

- a. YES, if the shed is 200 square feet or larger, even if not attached to the ground.

10. What about a metal carport with a roof but open sides?

- a. YES, if it is 200 square feet or larger.

11. Is there a limit on how many accessory (garages, barns, sheds, carports, etc.) buildings I can have on my parcel and are there any size restrictions?

- a. YES & YES. Both the number of buildings allowed, and sizes for each, are dependent on several factors such as, zoning district, size of parcel, and if multiple parcels could be combined. For additional information, see [Section 3.03 – Accessory Buildings](#) of the SBT Zoning Ordinance. Link: [South Branch Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

12. Is there a minimum size requirement for houses, if so, what is it?

- a. YES, in all zoning districts, the minimum 'dwelling unit' floor area is 750 square feet. Floor area calculations would include a second story if present, however, does NOT include any of the following: enclosed and unenclosed porches, breezeways, garages, attic, basement, or cellar area.

13. Do I need a zoning permit for a fence and can I put a fence anywhere I want on my parcel?

- a. YES & NO! YES, a zoning permit is required for a fence. NO, you cannot put it just anywhere as they have setback requirements and height restrictions. For additional information, see [Section 3.11 – Fences and Walls](#) of the SBT Zoning Ordinance. Link: [South Branch Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

14. Can I build a garage on my vacant land before I build a house?

- a. NO. In South Branch Township, accessory buildings may be constructed in conjunction with the new construction of a primary dwelling as one permitted project, however, they may not be constructed as a primary land use without a dwelling, except as specifically provided for in Section 3.03.11 of the SBT Zoning Ordinance. Link: [South Branch Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

15. Can I have an in-ground or above-ground swimming pool?

- a. Swimming pools, both in-ground and above-ground, are allowed in South Branch Township, however, both must comply with all county building codes and permitting requirements. Setback restrictions/requirements would be the same as those for an accessory structure.

16. Can I keep chickens or other livestock on my parcel?

- a. Chickens and other livestock are allowed in SBT in certain zoning districts and have minimum acreage requirements which must be met. For additional information, see Section 3.24 – Pets, Livestock and Hobby Farms, of the SBT Zoning Ordinance. Link: [South Branch Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

17. How many dogs can I have before I need to get a Kennel License?

- a. Five (5) or more dogs residing, either temporarily or permanently, in one place and which are four (4) months of age or older would constitute a need to obtain a Kennel License. Additionally, any household in which dogs are bred and sold shall also require a Kennel License. For additional information, see page 2-8 of Article 2 – Definitions of the SBT Zoning Ordinance.

18. What if my request for a zoning permit is denied?

- a. If your request was denied, you will receive a written denial letter which includes both a reason for the denial and the avenue through which you may appeal the decision. If you feel your circumstances warrant special consideration to allow your requested project, you may apply for a zoning variance with the Zoning Board of Appeals. For additional information, see Section 9.05 & Section 9.07, Application Requirements & Variances, of the SBT Zoning Ordinance. Link: [South Branch Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

19. What if I fail to obtain a zoning permit for a project that required one?

- a. If a project which requires a zoning permit has commenced or been completed without having obtained an approved permit prior, it is considered a violation of our zoning ordinance. The parcel owner will be notified in writing that the violation occurred and given options to remedy the violation. Depending on the circumstances, the parcel owner may be required to remove, in part or in whole, any new structures or additions that were not properly permitted or possibly even relocate a previously commenced or completed project to a different location on the parcel to facilitate compliance with the zoning ordinance. Refusal to cooperate with a violation remedy plan may result in court action on behalf of the township, as well as, applicable fines and fees being levied on the parcel owner.

20. Who do I contact if I have additional questions not covered here?

- a. The South Branch Township Zoning Administrator is happy to assist you with any zoning related questions or requests for additional information regarding the answers provided above or for topics not covered here. Email: zoningadmin@southbranchtownship.com or phone at 989-275-8232.

Thank you and good luck with your project! 😊