



TARRANT COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Guidelines for Development in the Unincorporated Areas of Tarrant County

General Statement

Tarrant County does not have the authority to implement or enforce zoning or building codes in unincorporated areas of the county and therefore, Tarrant County does not issue Certificates of Occupancy or Building Permits. Developments relying on state approval and/or state funding will need to coordinate with the Tarrant County Fire Marshal, who will perform a state inspection of fire suppression requirements and a life safety code (NFPA 101), (Randy Renios - Tarrant County Fire Marshal - 817-838-4660).

Residential Construction and Renovation in Unincorporated Areas

All new residential structures and improvements to existing residential structures that increase the square footage or value by more than 50 percent shall be constructed to the International Building Code (IBC). If a city has adopted building codes in their extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), then the municipal regulation applies there.

Tarrant County does not have inspection authority or responsibility, and can not charge fees; instead the builder is required to:

1. notify the county of the location, approximate date of completion and version of IBC utilized for the new residential construction ([see Notice of Residential Construction in Unincorporated Area form](#));
2. obtain three inspections during different phases of the construction; and
3. submit a notice of the inspections to the county and to the person for whom the new residence is being built, demonstrating compliance or non-compliance with the applicable building code, which is done by the inspectors ([see Notice of Residential Construction Inspection Compliance in Unincorporated Area form](#)).

Failure to obtain the inspections is a Class C misdemeanor and Tarrant County may also file for an injunction against a builder who does not file the required reports.

Floodplain Construction

All development and new construction within a FEMA designated floodplain will require a floodplain permit prior to any work commencing. Floodplain Permit requests may require a flood study, depending on the individual situation: [Floodplain Permits](#)

Drainage Standards in Unincorporated Areas of Tarrant County

Development of a subdivision or a plat that is located within the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of the City of Fort Worth will be reviewed by the City according to drainage standards set forth by the City of Fort Worth.

Developments, both in and outside the ETJ of the City of Fort Worth, will be reviewed by Tarrant County for drainage standards according to the The Tarrant County Subdivision and Land Use Regulations Manual. Although Tarrant County hasn't officially adopted the iSWM manual, we strongly recommend you follow the procedures and standards set forth within the manual. Additional information about iSWM can be found at [iSWM Information](#)

In instances where individual property owners are disputing drainage modifications or alterations that affect each other, Tarrant County will provide a contour map and a copy of the Texas Water Code, which may be utilized to initiate conversations between the two property owners to resolve the dispute. Tarrant County has no authority in these types of situations as they are deemed civil issues between two private property owners.

On-Site Sewage Facilities

Installations of new, or modification of an existing, On-Site Sewage Facility (septic tank or other systems) will require coordination with the Tarrant County Public Health Department for a permit. There are separation requirements between water wells and On-Site Sewage Facilities, regardless of property lines, so careful preplanning, including consideration of facilities on neighboring properties, may be required: [Health Department Link](#)

Water Wells

The Northern Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (NTGCD) has jurisdiction over groundwater in Tarrant County. Well registration and drilling permit requirements can be viewed on the NTGCD website: [Northern Trinity Groundwater Conservation District](#)

Alarm Permits

If a residential home is located in the unincorporated area of Tarrant County, an alarm permit is required and can be obtained by Josh Douglas with the Sheriff's office at 817-884-1323 or on the web at [Sheriff's Office Alarm Permit Information](#). Homes located in a municipality other than the unincorporated area of Tarrant County will need to coordinate with that jurisdiction for their regulations and requirements.

Roadway Setback Requirements

There is a 25' setback from the property line/ ROW line of all County roadways and a 50' setback line from all State roadways. These regulations can be found in the following link: [Subdivision and Land Use Regulations](#)

Driveway Permits

Driveways adjacent to a State maintained roadway require State review and approval. Please contact the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) at 817-370-6500 for any proposed improvements on State ROW.

Driveways adjacent to a County maintained roadway require County review and approval. Please contact Tarrant County at 817-884-1250 for any proposed improvements on County ROW. The driveway permit can be accessed at the following link: [Driveway Permit](#)

Work in County Right of Way

Any property owners, utility companies, or the contractors performing any work for a property owner within Tarrant County ROW will be required to obtain a permit from the following link: [Utility Permit](#)

Development in Proximity to the Naval Air Station Fort Worth/Joint Reserve Base

Companies or individuals desiring to develop property and/or build in the unincorporated areas of Tarrant County within the Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ), should coordinate with Tarrant County Transportation Services Planning Manager, Randy Skinner, at 817-884-1653, prior to development. These zones, as well as other information pertaining to compatible development around the military base in Tarrant County, can be found at: [RCC Information](#)

Deed Restrictions

Subdivisions in the unincorporated areas of Tarrant County may impose private deed restrictions and /or covenants that may require or disallow certain things. Tarrant County does not have the authority to enforce private property deed restrictions. Individual property owners or the Home Owners Association (HOA) of the subdivision, if there is one, may enforce these restrictions at their discretion.

Additional Questions and Contact

The issues listed above are not exhaustive of all requirements or regulations enforced by Tarrant County, but are representative of typical development related inquiries we receive.

Please address additional questions to:

Joe Trammel, P.E., CFM
County Engineer/Tarrant County
100 East Weatherford, STE 401
Fort Worth, TX 76196
817-884-1153
Call Sign: kg5nj

Email: jltrammel@tarrantcounty.com
Website: Tarrant County Engineering Division

