



A Guide to Rural Living

SPOKANE COUNTY'S RURAL AREAS are a treasured natural resource. The terrain, wildlife, majestic beauty and quiet tranquility are all special amenities that characterize living in the country. This publication is intended for those considering the purchase and/or use of rural property within Spokane County. It serves as a guide on what to expect for services, land use, and the unique character of Spokane County's rural environments.

Introduction

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY can be significantly different from that in urbanized areas and there are a number of issues you should consider before moving to a rural area. One of the important differences is the distance from shopping areas and services. In a rural environment, the distance to common services such as grocery stores, gas stations, the post office, etc. may be a “country mile”. Public transit services are also very limited, making a dependable vehicle a necessity.

Services common in cities and towns such as garbage removal, mail delivery, drinking water, sewer and snow removal are either not available in rural areas or accomplished in a different manner. For example, instead of water from a municipal source you’ll have to dig a well on your property if it doesn’t already have one. In addition, popular amenities such as cable TV and high speed internet may not be available, and cellular phone service may be intermittent.

Rural character and living in the country may appear “charming” on a weekend drive, but it can be quite different if you’re unprepared. Farms and ranches are wonderful places, but livestock can produce odors, and agricultural activities generate dust from tilling and harvesting. Wildlife enjoyed from a distance can be a serious nuisance when they eat your flowers and vegetable garden. But, they can also become dangerous when they cause car accidents, invade your property, and threaten domestic pets. And, of course, the more land you enjoy, the more time and effort you can expect to put into property maintenance.

For those considering a move to Spokane County’s rural areas, we welcome you. Please browse through this guide and familiarize yourself with what such a move may mean. Our desire is to have your experience meet your expectations.

Enjoy!

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Rural Character

RURAL AREAS CAN BE CHARACTERIZED as being dominated by natural features, wildlife and open spaces rather than the human built structures and the infrastructure of urban areas. Homes are farther apart and residential densities are very low, typically less than one dwelling per every 10 acres. Land in rural areas tends to be used for resource-based activities like farming, grazing, forestry and mining. Landowners often customize their land to their particular use. Commercial development is minimal and is typically associated with agricultural and resource industries. Rural services are found in small towns and unincorporated communities that serve the local populations and traveling public.

Common rural activities can be considerably different than those in found in urban areas. The following are some important things to consider:

Hunting

While providing recreational opportunities for many people, hunting is also a tool for managing wildlife populations. Many areas in rural Spokane County are open for hunting. While you certainly have the right to exclude this activity from occurring on your property, your neighbors may allow it on theirs.

Gunfire

Gunfire is frequently heard in rural areas. Target practice on private property is most commonly the source. This is permissible during daylight hours,

outside of “NO SHOOTING AREAS” and if done in a safe manner. Spokane County does have designated “NO SHOOTING AREAS”. A map of the NO SHOOTING AREAS is maintained by the Division of Engineering and Roads (www.spokanecounty.org/engineer) and enforced by the County Sheriff’s Office (www.spokanecounty.org/sheriff).

Dogs and Cats

Pets such as dogs and cats are not supposed to run free in rural areas, but they often do. There is a leash law in unincorporated Spokane County – even outside of cities. All dogs and cats over the age of six months must be licensed. Contact Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Agency (SCRAPS) at www.spokanecounty.org/scraps or call (509) 477-2532 for more information on licensing pets. The Spokane County Zoning Code limits the number of dogs and cats that may be kept to a combined total of four. Keeping more dogs and cats will require a private kennel permit. To keep or house more than eight dogs and cats, a Commercial Kennel License and a Conditional Use Permit are required. Contact the Department of Building and Planning at www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 for more information on permits and kennel requirements.

Livestock, horses, chickens, etc.

Keeping livestock, horses, chickens, goats, rabbits, etc. are common in the rural areas of Spokane County. For public health reasons, there are regulations that limit the number of animals that may be kept based upon property size. The Spokane County Zoning Code also establishes setbacks for pens and runs from neighboring dwelling units. Contact the Department of Building and Planning at www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 for more information.

Off road vehicles (ORVs)

Off Road Vehicles such as quads, dirt bikes and snow mobiles are commonly seen and heard in rural areas. Many rural property owners use them for both property maintenance and recreation. Conversely, if you enjoy using ORVs, be considerate of your neighbors. They have a right to peacefully enjoy their property too. Excessive recreational riding in close proximity to homes may cause conflicts with your neighbors due to the noise and dust. Please read the county’s ORV brochure at www.spokanecounty.org/bp and click on the link for Brochures under Permitting and Land Use, and scroll down to ORV use in Spokane County for more information.

Wood or pellet stoves are commonly used as a heating source in rural areas, but their use is regulated. Installation of a stove requires a building permit and the stove must meet EPA and Washington State emissions standards. Contact Spokane County Building and Planning for permit information at www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675. The Spokane Clean Air Agency may restrict wood heating due to impaired air quality. Call the Burn Info Hotline at (509) 477-4710 prior to using your wood-heating devices. Firewood heats best and produces less air pollution when it is split, dried and seasoned before it's used. Please use caution storing combustible materials close to structures and remember that pellet stoves require electricity to operate. Contact Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency www.spokanecleanair.org or call (509) 477-4727 for more information about EPA-certified stoves and regulations related to the use of wood-heating devices.

Outdoor burning and recreational fires often occur in rural areas, but there are rules and there can be significant risks. If you start a wildfire, you may be responsible for paying for the cost of extinguishing it and for any damages. The use of burn barrels is prohibited in the State of Washington, as is the burning of garbage. Burning natural vegetation from improved residential property is prohibited in all areas of Spokane County, except, by permit, within the boundaries of Fire Districts 2, 5, 11 and 12. Please contact Spokane Clean Air Agency at (509) 477-4727 or your fire district for more information. Burning vegetation as a result of forest practices is administered by the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at www.dnr.wa.gov. Spokane County's Fire Code Official www.spokanecounty.org may issue an outdoor burn ban during periods of high fire danger. Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency www.spokanecleanair.org may restrict outdoor burning during periods of poor air quality. Contact your local fire district for further information on fire safety.

Outdoor storage is very common in rural areas. Agricultural products, fuel wood and equipment, such as vehicles, tractors, excavation and other items used for land management and agriculture uses are frequently stored outside.

Emergency preparedness is wise for rural dwellers. If the power goes out, it could be a while before it's restored to working order, especially if it's the result of winter storm activity. Many people make use of alternative heating sources such as properly installed and permitted wood stoves and have a generator to provide a back-up source of electrical power. Prudent precautions also include keeping extra non-perishable food and drinking water on hand.



Rural development often encroaches on the traditional habitat of **wild animals**. These creatures can be a nuisance or become dangerous. Animals like deer, turkeys and coyotes can cross the road unexpectedly and cause auto accidents. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance. Let the animals be themselves, watch them, but avoid chasing them or allowing your pets to do so. Also, trash not properly stored and pet feces may attract unwanted wildlife attention. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife www.wdfw.wa.gov and the Spokane Regional Health District www.srhd.org are great resources for additional wildlife information.





Access

THE FACT THAT YOU CAN DRIVE to your property today does not necessarily guarantee that you, your guests, or emergency service vehicles can achieve that same level of access at all times. Please consider the following:

Emergency response times for the Sheriff's Office, fire districts, emergency medical care, etc. are not as quick or as consistent in rural areas. Many emergency service and fire responders in rural areas are volunteers and not all stations are staffed 24-hours a day. These responders can be delayed due to travel distance, volunteer mobilization time, road conditions or difficulty finding an improperly posted/displayed address. Transit times for emergency medical services can take longer, as well, with most hospitals and medical providers located within cities.

The legal right to access can be an issue for properties that do not have direct access to a public road. Properties without frontage on public roads are typically served by easements or private roads. Easements are the legal right to cross other people's property for a specific purpose, in a specific location. It is wise to research and understand the easements that provide access to land you have an interest in purchasing. For more on easements, see the section in this guide on Land and Land Use.

Public vs. private roads. Spokane County maintains approximately 2,500 miles of roads. Many rural properties are accessed by private roads which are maintained by homeowners' associations, private parties or other landowners. Some County roads are classified as "summer roads" and are not maintained year round. Some public roads and right-of-ways are undeveloped and not maintained. Before you purchase rural property, make sure you know what type of road it is served by, what type and level of maintenance to expect, and who will provide that service. Please note that **Spokane County does not maintain private roads.** For questions about access and roads, contact the Division of Engineering and Roads www.spokanecounty.org/engineer or call (509) 477-3600.

Many large construction vehicles cannot navigate small, narrow roads. If you plan to build a house or outbuildings, it is a good idea to check out construction access. The Division of Engineering and Roads www.spokanecounty.org/engineer can be of assistance in this area.

School buses travel only on maintained roads designated as school bus routes by the serving school district. If you live on a private road, you may need to transport your children to a designated bus stop so they can get to school. Check with the local school district for bus routes, pick-up and drop-off times and procedures for extreme weather conditions.

Extreme weather conditions and natural disasters can destroy roads. Rapid snow melt or seasonal runoff may destroy roads, bridges, culverts and



driveways. Spokane County will repair and maintain County roads; however private roads and driveways are the responsibility of the property owner(s).

Private roads and driveways need annual maintenance. Even with proper engineering, design and construction, annual maintenance is necessary to prolong the life of private roads. This can require hiring a contractor or renting specialized equipment at your own expense.

Unpaved roads generate dust and contribute to air pollution. If you are considering purchasing property on or near an unpaved road, you may want to consider that it will generate dust. Spokane County does not treat roads to suppress dust. Unpaved roads may be treated for dust suppression by a contractor authorized by the Division of Roads and Engineering to do dust abatement. For more information, go to www.spokanecounty.org/engineer or call (509) 477-3600.

If your road is unpaved, it is highly unlikely that Spokane County will pave it without formation of a **Road Improvement District (RID)** to finance the improvements. RIDs make use of a special property tax levied on the benefiting properties to pay for road improvements. Check with the Division of Roads and Engineering www.spokanecounty.org/engineer for more information about RIDs.

Unpaved roads can be rough, especially in the spring. Potholes and washboards are usually created by vehicles traveling too fast. You may experience an increase in vehicle maintenance costs if you regularly travel on unpaved roads.

County roads are subject to weight restrictions, typically in the months of February through April during the freeze/thaw cycle. Posted load restrictions on County roads will affect your ability to haul heavy loads to and from your property. Contact the Division of Engineering and Roads www.spokanecounty.org/engineer or call (509) 477-3600 for more information.

Snow plows may block access to your property. Snow plowing creates berms along the sides of roads and across driveways. Please note that the County does not clear snow berms when public roads are plowed. Clearing the end of your driveway is your responsibility. Remember, removing snow from your private road or driveway by pushing or placing it into a County right-of-

way is unlawful. Spokane County maintains a **snow plow priority map** at www.spokanecounty.org/data/engineers/autodata/PrioritySnowRoutes.pdf and a real-time **GPS snow plow tracking map** at <http://snowplowing.spokanecounty.org>. Access to these links is seasonal from approximately October through April, depending on the weather. For more information, contact the Engineering and Roads Department at www.spokanecounty.org/engineer or call (509) 477-3600.

Snowstorms can make rural roads impassable. You may need a four-wheel drive vehicle, tire chains or traction tires for travel during extreme winter weather. Emergency vehicle response time may be significantly increased and school busses may use alternative routes or may not operate during major snow events. In some circumstances, snow removal may result in narrowed travel ways. Spokane County may also temporarily close a road for public safety reasons during significant snow events.





Utilities and Services

IN GENERAL, RURAL AREAS HAVE fewer utilities and service provider options than urban areas. Services such as water, sewer, electrical, telephone and cable TV may be unavailable, or accomplished in a different manner in rural areas. When service outages occur, repairs can often take much longer.

Land line telephone service is available in most areas of the County where there are existing structures. Service to new construction in rural areas may be expensive if new service lines need to be installed. Contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at www.utc.wa.gov or call 888-333-9882 to see which phone company serves your area of interest and what telecommunications services are available.

Sewer service is rarely available to rural properties. Instead, **on-site septic systems** are the norm. The cost of a new septic system can vary significantly depending upon the soil types present at the location. Contact the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) www.srhd.org for more information regarding septic systems.

Water typically comes from **private wells** in rural areas. Wells are regulated by the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE). The cost for drilling a well can be significant and the quality and quantity of well water can vary considerably from location to location and from season to season.

Most private wells are exempt from obtaining a water right and are often called “permit exempt wells”. Water use from a permit exempt well is limited to 5,000 gallons per day for domestic use, an unlimited quantity for irrigation of ½ acre of lawn and garden, 5,000 gallons per day for industrial/commercial use, and an unlimited quantity for stock watering. Some parcels do include water rights, but the extent and validity of the rights should be researched carefully.

In addition to DOE regulation, the use of a private well for a home is regulated by Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) www.srhd.org. Prior signing off on a building permit SRHD requires a pump test that demonstrates a minimum yield of one-gallon per minute and satisfactory nitrate and bacteria tests. The Department of Ecology www.ecy.wa.gov is an excellent resource to research the legal aspects of availability of water for your intended use in your particular location. They also maintain a database of well logs which can be used to research the physical availability of water in your particular location.

Electrical service may not be readily available in every area of Spokane County. It is important to determine the proximity of electrical power lines to your property of interest because it can be very expensive to extend power lines to remote areas. It may be desirable to cross property owned by others in order to extend electric service to your property in the most cost-efficient manner. A utility easement will be required to do this. Neighboring property owners may want to be compensated for granting easements across their property.

Electric power may not be available in two-phase or three-phase service configurations. If you have special power requirements, contact the service provider for your area for information about the types of service that are available and the associated costs.

When **power outages** occur in outlying areas it can take longer for service to be restored, especially during storms. A loss of electric power can interrupt the supply of water from a well and make heating devices and pellet stoves inoperable. Generators can serve as a back-up source of electricity and many rural residents use them.

Natural gas may not be available outside of urban areas. Propane is often used as a substitute. It is typically stored in above ground tanks and refilled by delivery trucks.

Trash collection is available at most locations within Spokane County. Rural residents also have the option to haul their own refuse to regional transfer stations. Recycling service is not available in rural areas, but is available at regional transfer stations. Garbage disposal fires and the use of burn barrels are prohibited statewide.

High speed internet is not common in rural areas. Internet service may be obtained through dial up, satellite TV providers or through cellular service, where available.

Cellular phone service is available in most rural areas, but terrain and proximity to cellular towers can result in service interruptions.

TV reception in rural areas may be challenging due to the terrain and distance from transmission towers. If over-the-air channels are available, their number will be significantly less than you will find in urban areas. Satellite TV is usually the preferred option of those who want a variety of television programming.

Mail and newspaper delivery may not be available to all areas. Contact the Post Office and newspaper of choice for delivery options available for your area.

Standard parcel and overnight package delivery may not be available in all areas. Check with service providers to see where delivery is available.

Emergency services like fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical are available to rural areas but response times are longer than in urban areas. To help ensure that emergency services are able to find your home, clearly post/display your address at the intersection of your driveway and the public or private road. Contact your local fire district with any questions. Also, consider that medical services and hospitals are typically located in urban areas which are separated by distance and time from rural areas.

Transit service is greatly reduced outside of urban areas. The Spokane Transit Authority (STA) serves Spokane's urban areas with bus, van pool and paratransit services. Rural area service is limited to van pool service. Contact STA www.spokanetransit.com or call (509) 328-RIDE (7433) for more information.



Land and Land Use

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF LAND USE REGULATIONS that affect how property can be used. Before purchasing rural property it is wise to review applicable land use regulations. Please contact the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 for more information.

Spokane County has made an effort to protect its rural lands in form, function and productivity through adopted policies, environmental regulations and development standards. The County documents listed below may be useful to review. They are available at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/bp/content.aspx?c=2635>.

Spokane County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 3, Rural Land Use)
<http://www.spokanecounty.org/loaddoc.aspx?docid=8150>

Spokane County Zoning Code
<http://www.spokanecounty.org/loaddoc.aspx?docid=4419>

Spokane County Critical Areas Ordinance (Chapter 11.20)
<http://www.spokanecounty.org/loaddoc.aspx?docid=8007>

Building permits are required for construction of dwellings, most buildings and placement of manufactured homes. The permitting process helps assure

that buildings are safely constructed and that they meet with applicable construction and land use regulations. During the permit process, a zoning review is done to ensure the proposed use is allowed and the required setbacks and building heights are observed. Applicable environmental health regulations are also reviewed to ensure that an adequate sewage disposal system and potable water supply are available. Before starting construction, be sure to contact the Department of Building and Planning at (509) 477-3675 or www.spokanecounty.org/bp for information on what permits are required.

Land uses in rural areas are regulated by the County Zoning Code. Go to www.spokanecounty.org/bp and click on the Zoning Code icon on the home page. All land has a zoning designation which corresponds to a set of allowed and prohibited uses. Check with the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 before starting a business, construction, or other uses of property to learn the rules and regulations.

Running a business is encouraged by Spokane County consistent with applicable regulations. Rural areas lack the services, infrastructure and amenities of urban areas and for this reason the types of businesses allowed are also restricted. The County Zoning Code allows a variety of rural dependent business and a number of smaller, less intense activities that are defined as Home Occupations and Home Industries. Please contact the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 prior to starting any business activity, for assistance with permits and applicable regulations.

Not all parcels are buildable. Many parcels were created by the Assessor's Office for taxation purposes only and are not considered buildable. Check with the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp to determine the legal status of a parcel and its development potential.

Easements are common for utility lines and vehicular access for properties not adjoining public roads. Before purchasing rural land, find out what easements benefit the property and what easements affect it. A title report will describe the easements affecting a parcel. Please contact the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp regarding building within designated easements.

Surveys are not always done or required for the division of land in rural areas. A land survey conducted by a licensed, professional surveyor is one

sure way to know where a parcel's boundaries are located. When a formal survey is done it is called a Record of Survey and it is filed with the County Auditor where the public can view it at www.spokanecounty.org/auditor. For more information, call the Auditor's Office at (509) 477-2270.

Fences that separate properties do not always reflect accurate property lines. A survey is the only way to confirm the location of your property lines. Spokane County does not verify the location of property lines or become involved in property line disputes between neighbors.

Covenants are common in subdivisions. Known as CC&Rs they are rules established by a homeowner's association for those who reside within the development. These documents are typically filed at the Auditor's Office www.spokanecounty.org/auditor and disclosed on title reports. Spokane County does not enforce CC&Rs.

Water rights are a legal instrument that allows for the use of ground and surface waters. They can be bought and sold and sometimes come with the purchase of property. The fact that a stream crosses a piece of property does not mean the right to use its water comes with the property. The water rights may belong to someone either upstream or downstream. Most private wells are exempt from obtaining a water right and are often called "permit exempt wells". Water use from a permit exempt well is limited by law to 5,000 gallons per day for domestic use, an unlimited quantity for irrigation of 1/2 acre of lawn and garden, 5,000 gallons per day for industrial/commercial use, and an unlimited quantity for stock watering. For more information, please contact the Washington Department of Ecology at www.ecy.wa.gov.

Creeks, streams, rivers and wetlands are regulated by the County's Shoreline Ordinance and Critical Areas Ordinance. Both documents are available at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/loaddoc.aspx?docid=8493>. These regulations limit uses and establish setbacks adjacent to various bodies of waters. Natural vegetation typically cannot be disturbed in shorelines and critical area buffers. If you are contemplating development of property near a lake, stream, marsh or wetland, please check with Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp before starting any work.

Undeveloped land may be developed in the future. Check with the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp to determine the zoning, comprehensive plan designation, and approved land

use actions for the area. This will give you an idea how neighboring properties may be developed in the future.

Animal keeping and raising is regulated in rural areas. Regulations apply to the keeping of domestic cats and dogs, as well as cows, chickens, pigs and other large animals. For health, safety and general welfare reasons, the number of animals is limited based on the size of the animal and size of the property. There are also regulations establishing setbacks from neighboring dwellings, wells and property lines for pens and runs. Contact the Department of Building and Planning for more information www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675.





The Inland Northwest Climate

SPOKANE COUNTY TYPICALLY EXPERIENCES all four seasons. Winters can be very cold, with a number of days below freezing and occasionally dropping below zero. Summers can be very hot, with many days above 80 degrees and occasional periods where the temperatures top 100 degrees.

Winter snowstorms and prolonged icy conditions are common and should be planned for. Preparing for winter (**winterizing**) should be done for both homes and vehicles. Make sure vehicles have good antifreeze, winter wiper mix, and an emergency kit that includes a snow scraper and a blanket. Homes need to have hoses drained and put away, sprinkler systems blown out and crawlspace vents closed. This is also a good time to stock up on firewood and fuel for generators and snow blowers, locate snow shovels, and get the snow blower ready.

Please remember, the responsibility for plowing your driveway is yours. **The County only plows public roads.** The Division of Engineering and Roads maintains a **snow plow priority map** at www.spokanecounty.org/data/engineers/autodata/PrioritySnowRoutes.pdf and a **real-time GPS snow plow tracking map** at <http://snowplowing.spokanecounty>. See the Access portion of this guide for more information on winter driving conditions.

Wildfires can be a serious threat to rural property owners. Fire danger, which is highest during the summer, can be reduced by clearing a defensible

space around structures. A minimum 30 foot clear area around structures, consisting of maintained and watered lawn, pruned shrubs and trees can help mitigate the spread of wildfires to buildings.

Other **recommended fire safety actions** include:

- Replace combustible roofs and building materials with non-combustibles materials
- Store combustible materials such as firewood away from your house
- Maintain your driveway and access roads in good condition
- Remove overgrowth and flammable vegetation along roads and driveways
- Ensure you have a reliable water supply
- Develop a fire safety plan for your home and family
- Clearly post your address
- Learn more about wildfire danger by contacting your fire district





Agriculture, Forestry and Mining

SPOKANE COUNTY HAS SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT of land designated as Resource Lands where activities associated with agriculture, forestry and mining occur. These activities are important to the regional economy, but can sometimes be disruptive to rural residential uses in close proximity. Below are a few things to consider:

Agricultural activities can be disturbing to nearby residential uses. Farmers often run machinery around the clock, especially during planting and harvesting. Dairy operators sometimes milk without stopping, and hay is often swathed and baled at night. Low-flying crop dusting planes may operate during irregular hours. Land preparation and other operations produce exhaust fumes, cause dust, and produce odors from the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.

Agriculture is an important business in Spokane County. If you choose to live among the farms and ranches of our rural countryside, please consider the activities of your agri-business neighbors. **Washington State protects farmers and ranchers from nuisance and liability lawsuits** with policies that support the production food, fiber and forest products.

Livestock can produce odors and be dangerous. Caution should be exercised around cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and other livestock because these animals have unpredictable behavior and be dangerous to humans.

County Code requires that pens and runs be setback from neighboring residences. Contact the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 for more information.

Most of Spokane County is designated as a Stock Restricted Area.

This means that your livestock should be confined to your property with proper fencing. There are three areas of **Open Range** within the County. For their location, refer to County Code section 5.08.020 http://library.municode.com/HTML/16337/level2/TIT5AN_CH5.08RAAR.html#TIT5AN_CH5.08RAAR_5.08.020OPRAARDE.

Noxious weeds are required to be controlled in Spokane County to protect agriculture uses. Some plants are poisonous to horses and other livestock, and others impede agricultural uses. Land owners are responsible for controlling weeds on their property. The County's Noxious Weed Control Board www.spokanecounty.org/WeedBoard enforces the County's weed control laws and can provide assistance on this issue. For more information, call (509) 477-5777.

Mining activities can be disturbing to neighboring residents due to the noise and vibrations from trucks, processing, machinery and blasting. Mining activities within Spokane County require permits. Please see the Department of Building and Planning www.spokanecounty.org/bp or call (509) 477-3675 for details.



Timber production is encouraged and protected by state laws. When timber is harvested dramatic changes to the landscape may occur. Harvesting timber requires permits which are accompanied with harvest plans that outline how the activity will be carried out and comply with the County’s Critical Areas Ordinance <http://www.spokanecounty.org/bp/content.aspx?c=2635>. Contact the Department of Building and Planning Department www.spokanecounty.org/bp or the State Department of Natural Resources www.dnr.wa.gov if you are considering a harvest, or for more information.

Property taxes can be deferred in many rural areas for engaging in activities that produce food, fiber or forest products under the State’s Open Space Taxation Act. Check with the County Assessor www.spokanecounty.org/assessor or call (509) 477-3698 for program information.





Conclusion

We hope this guide has been useful and has helped shape your expectations for rural living in Spokane County. This information is by no means exhaustive and you may encounter issues that we have overlooked. Let this be but one of many sources of information on your road to discovery.

Useful Contacts

County Departments

Assessor - 509-477-3696

www.spokanecounty.org/Assessor

Auditor - 509-477-2260

www.spokanecounty.org/Auditor

Building & Planning - 509-477-3675

www.spokanecounty.org/bp

County Commissioners Office - 509-477-2265

www.spokanecounty.org/commissioners

Engineering and Roads - 509-477-3600

www.spokanecounty.org/engineer

Fire Code Official - 509-477-3675

www.spokanecounty.org/bp/content.aspx?c=2314

Parks and Recreation – 509-477-4730

www.spokanecounty.org/parks

Sheriff - 509-477-4739

www.spokanecounty.org/sheriff

Treasurer - 509-477-4713

www.spokanecounty.org/treasurer

Utilities & Stormwater - 509-477-3604

www.spokanecounty.org/utilities

Noxious Weed Control Board - 509-477-5777

www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard

Regional Agencies

Spokane County Cooperative Extension - 509-477-2048

www.spokane-county.wsu.edu

**Spokane County Regional Animal
Protection Agency (SCRAPS) - 509-477-2532**

www.spokane-county.org/SCRAPS

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency - 509-477-4727

www.spokanecleanair.org

Spokane Regional Health District - 509-324-1560

www.srhd.org

Spokane Transit Authority - 509-328-7433

www.spokanetransit.com

Washington State

Department of Ecology - 509-329-3400

www.ecy.wa.gov

Department of Fish and Wildlife - 509-456-4082

www.wdfw.wa.gov

Department of Health - 360-236-4501

www.doh.wa.gov

Department of Natural Resources - 509-689-7474

[www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/HowTo/
FireInformationPrevention/Pages/rp_fire_findinfo.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/HowTo/FireInformationPrevention/Pages/rp_fire_findinfo.aspx)

Utilities and Transportation Commission - 888-333-9882

www.utc.wa.gov

Fire Districts

Spokane Valley Fire District - 509-928-1700
www.spokanevalleyfire.com

Fire District # 2 - 509-238-2195

Fire District #3 - 509-235-6645, 509-624-7103
www.scf3.org

Fire District # 4 - 509-467-4500
www.scf4.org

Fire District # 5 - 509-796-4793
www.scf5.org

Fire District # 8 - 509-926-6699
www.scf8.org

Fire District # 9 - 509-466-4602
www.scf9.org

Fire District # 10 - 509-244-2425
www.scf10.org

Fire District # 11 - 509-291-6666

Fire District # 12 - 509-283-4372
www.spokanecof12.com

Fire District # 13 - 509-226-1482
www.newmanlakefire.com



Spokane County Board of Commissioners Office
(509) 477-2265
www.spokanecounty.org