

Frequently Asked Questions

Building, Planning & Zoning

- **How long does it take to get a building permit?**

The Planning and Zoning board only meets when needed. After this board approves permits, they go to the City Council for final approval. The City Council meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Limited Building permits for siding, shingling, and window replacement have a one to seven day turn around time, depending on if the City Administrator is in the office to approve them.

- **Do I need a permit for a shed?**

Yes. All buildings or changes to outside structures require a building permit.

- **Do I need a permit for a fence?**

Yes.

- **How is a setback measured?**

A setback is generally measured from the structure to the property line. For a fee, the Public Works Department will help you find your property lines. Please call City Hall for more information.

Cable Service

- **Who do I call to sign up for cable TV service, place a service call, or if I have a question on my bill?**

Midcontinent Communications can be contacted at 1-800-888-1300. Consolidated Communications also has digital TV service.

General

- **What is your address?**

City Hall is located at 104 Second Ave NE, P.O. Box 366, Mapleton, MN 56065.

- **What are your hours?**

Our hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Friday; 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. The office is closed for ½ hour for a lunch break, generally from 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. daily, but times vary between 12pm and 1 pm.

- **Do I need to license my dog or cat?**

Yes, you need a license for a dog. Please call City Hall at 524-3492. Your dog must have rabies shots before they can be licensed. Licenses can be applied for at City Hall. You need

to show proof of rabies vaccination. A kennel permit is required whenever more than three (3) dogs are housed at a private residence. No license is required for cats.

- **I'm just moving in & need to contact utility companies to put the service in my name. Who should I call?**

Water, Sewer, Refuse and Recycling: City Hall 524-3492 / Electricity: Xcel Energy 1-800-895-4999 / Natural Gas: Northwest Natural Gas 524-4103 / Cable: Midcontinent Communications 1-800-888-1300 or Hickory Tech 387-1151 / Mail: Post Office 524-3688 / Telephone: Consolidated Communications 387-1151

- **Where do I get recycling bins?**

The city has a contract with LJP Waste Solutions for recycling. If one did not come with your house, please City Hall 507-524-3492 to have one delivered.

- **Where can I take my law clippings and brush?**

The compost site is located on the West edge of Mapleton on Highway 30. It is just west of the Union Cemetery on the north side of the road. The compost site is open April-November. Items that can go to the compost site are: grass, leaves, garden plants, brush and tree branches 4-inches in diameter or smaller. The Public Works Department does curbside pickup the first Monday of the month. Please have all items to the curb by 8:00 a.m. All items for curbside pickup must be in plastic bags or tied in bundles.

- **Where is the Post Office and how can I contact them?**

The Post Office is located at 315 Main Street East. Their phone number is 524-3688.

Fire

- **What is recreational fire?**

A fire that is 3 ft. x 3 ft. in size and used for recreational purposes.

- **Do I need a permit for a recreational fire?**

No permit is required.

- **Do I notify anyone if I'm having a recreational fire?**

No.

Landscaping

- **May I trim or cut down my boulevard tree?**

No. Boulevard trees are city property. If you notice a broken branch that is in need of trimming, please call city hall, 524-3492, to report it.

Park Shelter

- **How do I reserve the picnic shelter for a group event?**

Please contact City Hall. A reservation form needs to be filled out. There is a \$30.00

Public Works

- **Who should I call if my streetlight is burned out?**

Please report any damaged, malfunctioning, or burned-out streetlights to City Hall.

- **What if my sod or landscaping is damaged by a snowplow?**

If sod on city right-of-way (boulevard) adjoining your property is damaged by our plowing equipment, call City Hall at 524-3492 to report it. Damage to the boulevards from plows will be repaired in the spring. The city is not responsible for damage to landscaping and sprinkler heads located in the city-owned right-of-way. The street right-of-way (boulevards) are important areas needed for snow storage during the plowing operations; therefore, it is recommended that residents remove and relocate objects (i.e. fences, landscaping, large rocks) that could hamper or be damaged by the snow removal operation.

- **What is the small metal disk in my yard, sidewalk or driveway?**

This is the water shut-off valve to your home. Seasonal settling can cause the valve (sometimes referred to as a curb box) to stick up above the surrounding ground and become a problem for lawn mowing. Do not try to push or pound the valve down yourself as this may result in a leak that could cause costly damage.

- **Why do I have rusty water and what should I do?**

Rusty water is the result of iron separating from the water as it sits in the pipes and accumulates to various degrees within the lines. Any disruption of the water system (watermain breaks, turn hydrants on, heavy sprinkling) can cause these accumulations to be churned up and mix with the water creating discoloration ranging from yellow to brown. When this happens, do not run your water unless absolutely necessary. In most cases, the rusty water is temporary and the discoloration will settle out. If you have rusty water in your water heater or softener and need to run water through your system, let the water run until it clears up and the fresh water has disbursed throughout your system.

- **Why does my water smell like rotten eggs and how do I get rid of it?**

Smelly water, or rotten egg odor, is hydrogen sulfide gas that is present in the water. It is not usually harmful at the low concentration that occurs in a household water system. The City maintains chlorine residual throughout the system that eliminates this smell, but if water sits in any place too long (dead-end lines, unoccupied houses, new developments with only a few homes), the chlorine dissipates and results in the smell. Water heaters with a magnesium anode rod are another common cause of this odor, especially in houses where little water is used. To eliminate smelly water, turn your hot water heater up to high for several hours (150-160 degrees). This should kill the sulfur bacteria. Then flush your system, especially your water heater. Also, the magnesium rod can be replaced with aluminum one, or removed completely. If you live on a dead-end line or in an area with just a few homes, we recommend call City Hall so that the lines can be flushed to assure that

there is chlorine present to kill the hydrogen sulfide odor.

- **Is anything added to the City's water system?**

The City adds chlorine, fluoride and potassium permanganate. Chlorine and fluoride are tested regularly and samples are sent to the Health Department for bacteria testing.

- **I'm installing a new water softener and need to now how hard the water is.**

The total hardness of the water is about 30 to 36 grains.

- **What is the city's water pressure?**

The city's water pressure is between 58-61.

Safety

- **How can I receive a copy of a report or access other law enforcement records?**

[Contact the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Department.](#)

- **How do I obtain a permit to purchase a handgun?**

- [Minnesota Uniform Firearm Application/Receipt Permit to Purchase/Transfer](#)

- Completed forms can be turned into the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Dept. Records Division.

- **Is there always a law enforcement officer at city hall?**

No. There is not always an officer at City Hall even if a squad car is parked in the lot.

Driving to City Hall to contact an officer is not recommended. Instead, use 911, or leave a message on the police answering system at 524-3091. An officer can return your call, arrange to meet you, or drive to your location in Mapleton.

Utility Billing

- **How often do I receive my utility bill?**

The City of Mapleton bills quarterly. Bills are mailed out around the first of January, April, July and October.

- **How does a new resident set up water service in their name?**

Call City Hall at 524-3492. We will make sure the resident moving out has called to cancel their service and take new service information.

- **How do I cancel service if I am moving out of my property?**

Call City Hall at 524-3492. We will need to know the following: The date you are changing possession, The address of the property you are leaving, Your forwarding address. If you know the name of the new owners when you are calling, please provide this information also.

- **What service am I billed for on my utility account?**

There are seven main services on your quarterly utility bill: *Water* – based on number of gallons used, *Water flat fee* - a quarterly fee for maintenance of our water system, *Sewer pumping* –based on gallons of water used. This is for the cost of pumping the sewage at the lift stations and treating the sewage, *Sewer flat fee* – a quarterly fee for maintenance

of the sewer system, *Recycling* – charged if you have a cart, *Refuse* – everyone is charged for refuse unless you have a dumpster. *Service charge* – a quarterly flat fee to cover a per meter charge that the State of Minnesota bills the city for each meter connection. A small portion of money goes to paying for postage and costs associated with printing the bills.

- **Why is my bill higher than usual?**

Where are a number of reasons water usage increases: Is this a billing period that may include outside summer watering?, Do you have faucets that are dripping or leaking?, Does the toilet fail to shut off after flushing?, Is your water softener malfunctioning?, All of these things can increase water consumption dramatically.

- **How is my water and sewer rate calculated?**

Water and sewer pumping rates are calculated as follows: Water: \$10.50 flat fee, \$4.77 per 1,000 gallons, Sewer: \$30.00 flat fee, \$2.83 per 1,000 gallons of water consumed.

- **I water a lot outside during the summer. What can I do so that I don't have to pay the sewer pumping charges on that water?**

You can get a second water meter to meter the water used outside your house. If you do a lot of outside watering or are establishing a new lawn, the amount of money that is saved on sewer pumping will easily pay for the cost of the meter.