



OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Public Property Information & Homeowner Resource Guide

A practical starting point for property history, permits, wells and septic systems, recorded documents, environmental research, radon information, and homeowner assistance.

PUBLIC EDITION

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PURPOSE AND LIMITATION

This guide is educational and navigational. It is not a title examination, legal opinion, boundary survey, environmental site assessment, code-compliance certification, or substitute for property-specific inspection or testing. Government records and online systems can be incomplete or change over time.

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Relationships First. Excellence Always.

1. Quick Start: Treat Property History as a Timeline

- 1** Locate the current parcel and confirm the exact legal municipality.
- 2** Check inactive property records and split history when older records do not match the current parcel.
- 3** Determine zoning authority separately from building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing authority.
- 4** For older construction, determine which agency held authority when the work occurred.
- 5** Search permit applications, approved scope or retained plans, inspection history, trade finals, and occupancy or completion records.
- 6** For private well or septic properties, search Environmental Health permits, transfer evaluations, water samples, repair records, and site visits.
- 7** Check drains, road access, soil erosion, floodplain, wetlands, coastal rules, and EGLE approvals when relevant.
- 8** If the answer is not established, change the source rather than treating a missing result as a conclusion.

[Ottawa County Real Property Search](#)

[Ottawa County Local Government Contacts](#)

BOUNDARY REMINDER

A mailing city or ZIP code does not necessarily identify the legal municipality or permitting authority.

2. Additions, Conversions and Changes of Use

For an addition, converted garage, finished basement, added bedroom, accessory structure, or change of use, research the property as a connected record set rather than searching only for one permit number.

- 1** Confirm parcel history and the legal municipality.
- 2** Identify current and historical zoning and construction-code authorities.
- 3** Request zoning approval, permit application, approved plans if retained, inspection history, correction notices, trade finals, and occupancy or completion records.
- 4** Compare the recorded scope with the work visible at the property.
- 5** Check well, septic, drain, road, floodplain, wetland, and environmental approvals when the project or site suggests they may apply.

MISSING-RECORD RULE

No record located in the sources reviewed does not establish that no permit existed. Older files may be archived, paper-only, indexed differently, or retained by a former agency.

PERMIT-FOUND RULE

An issued permit does not by itself prove that all work matched its approved scope, passed every inspection, or received final approval.

Current authority assignments can change. Confirm the responsible agency directly with the municipality before filing or relying on a routing decision.

3. Private Wells, Septic Systems and Water Testing

Ottawa County Environmental Health maintains searchable records for private well and septic systems. Search by the current parcel and address, then check predecessor parcel numbers and prior owner information if older records appear to be missing.

[Ottawa County Environmental Health Search](#)

[Ottawa County Environmental Health](#)

[Ottawa County Well Water Testing](#)

HISTORICAL RECORD VS. PRESENT CONDITION

A historical permit, evaluation, or water result documents conditions recorded at that time. It does not establish current system condition, remaining service life, present water quality, or the exact current location of every component.

WATER SAMPLING

Use the correct laboratory bottle and current sampling instructions. Bottle type, preservation, holding time, and delivery requirements can vary by analyte.

4. Property, Plat, Split and Deed History

[Ottawa County Recorded Deed Search](#)

[Ottawa County Plat Search](#)

USE THE CORRECT SOURCE

Parcel data and mapping are assessment and research tools. Recorded documents are the appropriate source for deeds and other recorded interests. Neither replaces a survey, title examination, or legal opinion.

5. Drains, Stormwater, Roads and Coastal Research

Projects involving drainage, road access, soil disturbance, flood-prone areas, wetlands, dunes, erosion areas, or the Lake Michigan shoreline may involve agencies beyond the local building department.

[Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner](#)

[Ottawa County Drain Use Permits](#)

[Michigan EGLE Joint Permit Application](#)

[Michigan Critical Dune Maps](#)

[Michigan High Risk Erosion Area Maps](#)

MAP LIMITATION

A mapped feature is a research signal, not a property-specific determination. Confirm applicability with the responsible agency and obtain professional evaluation when warranted.

6. Environmental and PFAS Research

[Michigan EGLE RIDE Mapper](#)

[Michigan PFAS Sites and Areas of Interest](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE RULE

A nearby mapped site does not establish contamination of the subject property, its soil, groundwater, or drinking water. Review the underlying site record and obtain property-specific evaluation or testing when warranted.

7. Radon, Household Safety and Assistance

Area radon information provides context only. It cannot determine the radon concentration of an individual home and does not replace property-specific testing.

[Michigan Indoor Radon Information](#)

Homeowner assistance programs, eligibility rules, funding, and availability can change. Confirm current details directly with the administering agency.

[Ottawa Community Action Agency](#)

[Ottawa Home Rehabilitation](#)

[Ottawa Utility Assistance](#)

[Ottawa Weatherization](#)

[Ottawa Veterans Emergency Grants](#)

8. When You Cannot Find the Record

- 1** Confirm the current parcel and exact municipality.
- 2** Check inactive parcels and split history for predecessor parcel numbers.
- 3** Search prior owner names, subdivision or plat information, and older address formats.
- 4** Determine current and historical authority for the approximate project year.
- 5** Ask whether older files are paper-only, archived, held by a prior contractor, or indexed differently.
- 6** Document exactly what was searched and what was or was not located.

DO NOT OVERSTATE

'No record located in the records reviewed' and 'no permit existed' are not equivalent statements.

9. Gray's Evidence Standard

OBSERVED	Directly seen at the property or shown in a record.
VERIFIED	Supported by an authoritative record or appropriate property-specific testing.
INDICATED	Available information suggests a possibility but does not establish it conclusively.
NOT ESTABLISHED	Available information is insufficient to determine the answer.

Good property research does not require forcing an answer into every blank. When the available evidence is insufficient, the correct conclusion is that additional verification is needed.

Additional Official Resources

[Ottawa County FOIA Request](#)

[Ottawa County Delinquent Tax and Foreclosure Assistance](#)

[Ottawa County Emergency Management](#)

[Ottawa Household Hazardous Waste](#)

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