



Small, Serene, Simply Garnett.

WHAT CAN YOU BUILD ON AN EASEMENT?

The short, accurate and prudent answer: nothing. If you value peace of mind over everything else, staying off of an easement is the way to go, and this includes any kind of building, from a house addition all the way down to a child's playhouse. But there is some flexibility when it comes to the rules.

* Fences:

Fences regularly get built along or across easements. Homeowners who do this must expect the chance that their fence might be pulled down by a utility company, or contractors working for utility companies. The cost of removing the fences and repairs or replacement is the responsibility of the property owner.

* Hot Tubs, Pools:

Above-ground hot tubs and pools are also subject to removal. In-ground pools are more problematic, not only because they cannot easily be removed but because they may interfere with in-ground easements. It would not be wise to put an above-ground hot tub or pool on an easement.

* Shrubs and Grass:

Bushes, lawns, and other shallow-rooted shrubberies may be planted on easements. Trees and other major vegetation should not be planted on easements. It's strongly recommended to take into consideration the canopy size of the mature tree planted. Example: a mature tree with a 30 foot canopy should be set back another 15 feet or more from the edge of an easement. One common scenario: you have an above-ground garden and/or landscaping planted on an easement, covering the manhole to the sewer main. Workers regularly access this manhole, working around the plantings. Shrubs are removed only at key areas.

* Meter Setting and Pad mount Transformers:

Trees, bushes and shrubberies etc. can damage distribution lines, service lines and your meter settings, and on some occasions can cause loss of personal property. In case of an emergency, utility workers need full access without any obstructions. Meter readers frequently require access to these work spaces. Utility workers are called to make needed repairs in these work spaces also. Trees, bushes and shrubberies can



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create a dangerous hazard for these workers. The minimum recommended safe work space in front of meter sets is 3' feet and 18" on the other sides. The minimum recommended safe work space in front of a pad mount transformer is 12' feet and 3' feet on the other sides. It's strongly recommended to take into consideration the canopy size of mature trees, bushes and shrubberies. Example: a mature bush with a 36" inch canopy should be set back another 18" or more to allow a minimal adequate safe work space for utility workers when the bush reaches full maturity. Trees, bushes and shrubs that grow up involuntarily within the recommended safe work space are not allowed and must be removed.

As you plan your project, please keep this guidance in mind. And as always, if you have any questions, please contact me at City Hall, (785)448-5496.

Eric Mills
Building Official/Zoning Administrator