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**The City of Rochester Hills**  
*Guide to*  
*Neighborhood*  
*Living*



**Prepared by the  
Rochester Hills Building Department**

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# *Introduction*

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Welcome to our *Guide to Neighborhood Living*. The Rochester Hills Building Department staff has put this guide together to help you, as a homeowner, understand some of the common ordinances we have in Rochester Hills that help to keep our city a beautiful place to live, work, and raise your family.

Homeowners in Rochester Hills have the responsibility to comply with local ordinances and your Homeowner's Association regulations. The key to keeping our community beautiful is the commitment, cooperation, and teamwork between you, your neighbor, your Homeowner's Association, and the ordinance inspector responsible for your area.

The Building Department ordinance staff is responsible for monitoring your neighborhood for compliance with local ordinances. Ordinance inspectors routinely patrol our neighborhoods and address any violations found in accordance with our code compliance process (outlined in this guide). Your Homeowner's Association is responsible for enforcing the association regulations adopted in your neighborhood.

It is our hope that through education and awareness, homeowners will do their part to be good neighbors by voluntarily complying with local ordinances and their Homeowner's Association regulations. We encourage you to read through these ordinances, talk to your neighbors, attend your association meetings, and work with the ordinance inspector responsible for your area.

As you look through this guide, you will also find information on safe drinking water, water quality protection, and tree regulations.

The Building Department staff is committed to working with you. We hope you find this guide a helpful tool and resource as we all work together to keep Rochester Hills a beautiful place to live, work, and raise a family.

If you have any questions or ideas on how we can improve this guide, please contact us by email at [building@rochesterhills.org](mailto:building@rochesterhills.org) or by phone at 248-656-4615.



The *Rochester Hills Guide to Neighborhood Living* makes reference, at the end of each ordinance section, to MUNICODE.COM. The following is a step-by-step guide to accessing the website.

1. Type in [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) in the search window.
2. At the top of the page click Online Library.
3. Click on the Michigan map.
4. Scroll down to Rochester Hills.
5. Click on the free online Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances line.
6. Use the index to locate the Chapter and Article listed in the manual.

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Information on *Maintaining Your Detention Basin and Rain Gardens*  
can be found on the web at [www.rougeriver.com](http://www.rougeriver.com)

# *Important Phone Numbers*

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## 911 EMERGENCY

### **City Departments**

Assessing.....	248-656-4605
Building/Ordinance Compliance .....	248-656-4615
Inspection Line.....	248-656-4619
Clerk’s Office .....	248-656-4630
52 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> District Court .....	248-853-5553
Engineering Services .....	248-656-4640
Human Resources .....	248-656-4708
Mayor’s Office .....	248-656-4664
Parks & Forestry Department.....	248-656-4673
Earl E. Borden Park.....	248-656-4797
Bloomer Park.....	248-656-4753
Thelma G. Spencer Park.....	248-656-4657
Environmental Education Center.....	248-656-4775
Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm .....	248-656-4663
Planning/Zoning Department.....	248-656-4660
Public Service Department .....	248-656-4685
Treasury Department.....	248-656-4675

### **Fire Department Business Offices**

Rochester Hills.....	248-656-4720
Fire Prevention.....	248-656-4717
Non-emergency dispatch.....	248-656-4650
Auburn Hills.....	248-370-9461
Oakland Twp.....	248-650-8605
Rochester.....	248-651-4470
Shelby Twp .....	586-731-3476
Troy.....	248-524-3419

## **Police Business Office**

Rochester Hills (Oakland County Sheriff's Dept. Rochester Hills Substation).....	248-537-3530
Auburn Hills.....	248-370-9444
Oakland Twp.....	248-858-4950
Rochester.....	248-651-9621
Shelby Twp.....	586-731-2121
Troy.....	248-524-3477

## **Oakland County Departments**

Animal Control.....	248-391-4102
Clerk/Register of Deeds.....	248-858-0597
Community Mental Health.....	248-858-1510
County Executive.....	248-858-0484
Drain Commission.....	248-858-1105
Emergency Response and Preparedness (ERP).....	248-858-5300
Equalization Division	
Personal Property.....	248-858-0757
Tax Descriptions.....	248-858-0762
Friend of the Court.....	248-858-0424
Health Department.....	248-858-1280
Planning and Economic Development.....	248-858-0720
Road Commission.....	248-858-4804
Sheriff's Department.....	248-858-4950
Treasurer.....	248-858-0624

## **Other Important Numbers**

Allied Waste Services.....	248-858-8999
Avondale Community Schools.....	248-852-4411
Cable	
Comcast.....	248-334-1144
Wide Open West (WOW).....	800-848-2278
City of Auburn Hills.....	248-370-9400
City of Rochester.....	248-651-9061
Humane Society.....	248-852-7420
Greater Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce.....	248-651-6700
Oakland County.....	248-858-1000
Oakland County Drain Commission (OCDC).....	248-858-1105
Oakland Township.....	248-651-4440
Older Persons Commission (OPC).....	248-656-1403
Paint Creek Trailway Commission.....	248-651-9260
Pine Trace Golf Club.....	248-852-7100
Road Commission for Oakland County.....	248-858-4804
Rochester Avon Recreation Area (RARA).....	248-656-8308
Rochester Community Schools.....	248-726-3000
Rochester Hills Public Library.....	248-656-2900
U.S. Post Office (Rochester/Rochester Hills).....	248-601-1024



# Code Compliance Process

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The Code Compliance inspectors become involved in the compliance process in two ways. The first is proactive patrol. Each inspector is assigned a specific geographic area of the city. The inspector's goal in proactive patrol is to visit every street in their district each week looking for violations and taking corrective action. The second process is in answer to resident complaints. The compliance inspector investigates complaints that are called in by residents, and then takes proper corrective action.

The first step of corrective action is to contact the property owner in person and advise them of the violation and the steps necessary to correct it. If the inspector is unable to talk with the homeowner in person, a Red Door Tag is left with a description of the violation and a specific date in which the violation must be corrected. Property owners who receive a Red Door Tag are encouraged to call the inspector listed on the notice to discuss the violation. It is the goal of the compliance staff to work with homeowners to help them gain compliance.

If a property owner does not correct the violation by the time indicated on the notice, the compliance inspector may take the following steps:

1. A **Code Compliance** letter with a deadline is sent to the resident.
2. A **Civil Infraction Notice** is issued. This is a ticket that is issued for Civil Infractions only and has a three-step fine schedule that goes up to \$500.00 and is payable at the City Treasurer's office. Appeals for this ticket are handled by the 52<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> District Court. Appeals for the Civil Infraction Notice ticket must be requested at the Treasurer's office.
3. A **Uniform Citation** is issued. A Uniform Citation can be issued for civil infractions and misdemeanors. This citation is handled by the 52<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> District Court and may result in fines of up to \$500.00. The court is also authorized to issue a court order mandating that the property owner take immediate action to clear the violation. *An important note for neighbors who live near a property that is out of compliance and a citation has been issued: Depending on the case load, it may take the District Court as long as three months after a ticket has been issued to hear the case. Often times, the court will allow the property owner a short period of additional time to clear the violation. If the violation is not rectified, and the court has given the city the authority to clean up the property, it may take additional time for the city to hire a contractor to get the violation corrected.*

It is important to understand that the ordinance compliance inspector must personally observe the actual violation before issuing a notice or citation. It may be necessary to give access to your property so the inspector can see the violation from your perspective, especially when the violation is not visible from the public street.

In some instances, such as a barking dog or a business activity in a residential area, it may be necessary for the concerned resident who has seen the violation to be the complainant, sign the citation, and be willing to testify at a District Court hearing.

Once again, it is up to each resident to be responsible and to care for their property to correct any code violations. It is our goal to work with residents, but we will use the necessary tools to gain compliance.

# Addressing

The proper display of an address on each home is very important for your safety. In the event of an emergency, it helps the police officer, firefighter, or paramedic locate your home quickly. It is also helpful for other delivery or service personnel to find your home as well.

The following addressing requirements will help us find you.

- The address shall be displayed in digits only.
- The digits shall be displayed horizontally or no more than 45 degrees from horizontal.
- Digits shall be at least three inches tall.
- Digits shall be of a color that clearly contrasts with the background surface that the address is installed on.
- Digits must be clearly visible from the street. The address should be placed near the main entrance of the home. However, if the address is better seen on the front elevation of an attached garage, then install the address there.
- If the house is 75 feet or more from the street, the address must also be placed on a separate sign, post, or mailbox visible from the street. This address display shall not be larger than two square feet and must be placed near the main vehicle entrance.

For a complete reading of the Addressing ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 18, Article 7,





# Animals

We love our animals and they quickly become very special members of our families. It is important to care for your animals by giving them a safe and clean place to live. Allowing your animal to roam away from home puts them in danger of getting lost or stolen and becomes an inconvenience to the neighbors.

The Rochester Hills Code (RH Section 138-1073) regulating animals allows:

1. Common household pets such as dogs, cats, etc., as long as there are not more than three of any one species permanently boarded or kept.
2. Livestock, so long as there are no more than three animals, and the parcel or lot shall be at least two acres in size.
3. Poultry, if there are no more than 12, and the parcel or lot is in excess of one acre.

## Other related requirements

The Rochester Hills Code (Chapter 14-76) requires that all dogs 6 months of age or older be **licensed**. Licenses can be obtained in the Treasurer's Office.

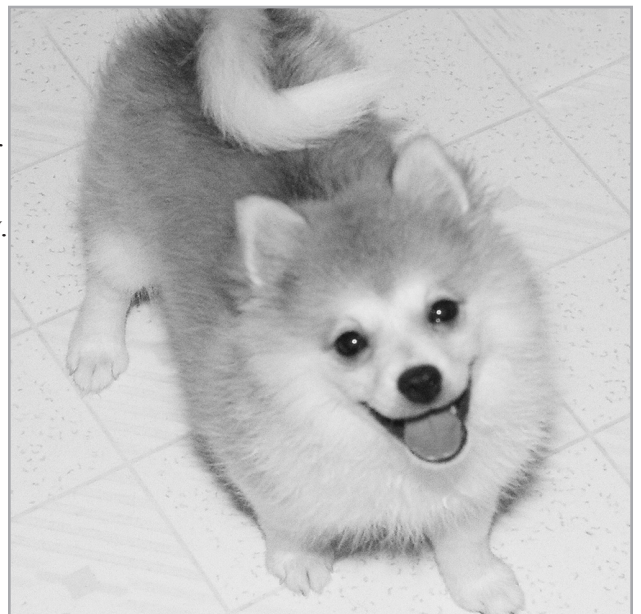
The Rochester Hills Code (Chapter 14-42) prohibits the owner of any dog from allowing the dog to **disturb the peace** and quiet of the neighborhood by barking or making other loud or unusual noises.

The Rochester Hills Code (Chapter 14-43) prohibits the owner of any dog to allow the dog to **run at large** in the city unless such dog is under the immediate control of its owner or an immediate member of the family. Immediate control means the dog shall be on a leash of suitable strength, held by a person able to control the dog.

The Rochester Hills Code (Chapter 14-12) requires the owner of any dog to clean up after the dog and **properly dispose the dog waste**, when walking the dog on a public right of way.

The Rochester Hills Code (Chapter 14-6) requires that the owner not allow the place where an animal may be kept to become **unclean or unwholesome** to an extent that it becomes a health problem or nuisance to abutting residences.

For a complete reading of the ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 14, Article 2.





# Blight

It seems to come from nowhere, it piles up over night, and soon it is out of control and begins to cause problems in the neighborhood. If it is not controlled, it can ruin a good neighborhood by inviting unwelcome pests, rodents, and criminals. Therefore, each homeowner is responsible to get the blight out of sight.

The ordinance defines blight in several ways.

- 1. Inoperable or unlicensed vehicles** - All vehicles that are unlicensed or inoperable must be stored in an enclosed building or removed from the property. Homeowners do have a reasonable amount of time to get an inoperable vehicle in working condition.
- 2. Building materials** - Old building materials are not allowed to be stored outside. Materials that are going to be used in a current project must be neatly stacked. Firewood must be split and stacked up off of the ground to avoid giving harborage to pests.
- 3. Junk** - This would include trash, appliances, equipment, brush piles, and rubbish or refuse of any kind. *Note: Brush can no longer be burned in the city.*
- 4. Vacant or uninhabitable structures** - Structures that are vacant must be kept secure. Secure means that all windows must have glazing, and all doors locked. Structures that appear to be uninhabitable, or have become structurally unsound, will be identified for demolition.
- 5. Partially completed structures** - Construction of structures must be completed in a timely manner according to the time frame indicated by the Building Code.

## Responsible parties

The ordinance holds **both** the property owner and tenants or occupants of the property responsible for any of the causes of blight and its removal.

For a complete reading of the ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 84-4.







# *Building Department Permits*

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If you are planning a building project such as a new deck, garage, addition or basement remodel, or if you intend to install a new furnace or hot water heater, don't forget to check with the Rochester Hills Building Department. Most likely you or your contractor will need to obtain a permit.

The Building Department staff is concerned about the safety of you and your family. We have professional trained inspectors that can help you with your project by inspecting to make sure the work is done properly. You can ensure your home will be safe for all to enjoy by working with our Building Department team.

Please review the items noted below to see if you need a permit for the work you are proposing. If you are unsure after reviewing this list, please call the Building Department at 248-656-4615 and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

A building permit is not required for:

- Re-roofing of existing structure with no structural changes or repairs
- Aluminum or vinyl siding with no structural work
- Repair or replacement of windows with no structural work
- Repair or replacement of exterior concrete work, sidewalks, driveways, patios, etc. on private property
- Repair or replacement of front porch concrete cap with no structural work and the area is not enlarged or altered
- Repair or replacement of interior/exterior doors with no structural work
- Landscaping on private property
  - Restrictions may apply to work proposed in drainage areas and easements. A permit from Engineering Services is required for any work in the right-of-way.
- Installing a fence on private property
  - The fence must comply with Ordinance 84-6.
- Structures 200 square feet or less
  - The structure must be located in the side or rear yard and 5 feet or more from property lines.
- Play structures
  - The structure must be located in the side or rear yard and 5 feet or more from property lines.

A building permit is required for:

- Demolition work (structures over 200 square feet)
- All work involving structural changes (roof framing, enlarging windows, interior remodeling, etc.)

- Accessory structures larger than 200 square feet (sheds, gazebos, garages, etc.)
- Wood decks
- Pools (above-ground and in-ground)
- Basement finishes
- Additions (living areas, attached garages, covered porches and patios, etc.)
- New Houses

A mechanical permit is not required for:

- Portable heating or gas appliance
- Portable ventilation equipment
- Portable cooling unit
- A window-type air conditioner not more than 1.5 horsepower

A mechanical permit is required for:

- Replacing a water heater
- Replacing a furnace
- Installing a gas fireplace
- Installing gas piping
- Replacement or installation of an air conditioning unit
- Any additions or alterations done to the heating, air conditioning or ventilation system in your home

An electrical permit is not required for:

- Minor repairs and maintenance
  - Replacing lighting
  - Replacing an existing outlet

An electrical permit is required for:

- Installing a new circuit
- Replacing the service panel (breaker box)
- Installing a new air conditioning unit
- Any additions or alterations done to the electrical system in your house

A plumbing permit is not required for:

- Replacement of existing fixtures
- Repair of leaks that does not require the installation of new material
- Cleaning stoppages in the pipes or fixtures

A plumbing permit is required for:

- Replacing a water heater
- Installing new fixtures such as sink, toilet, shower or bathtub
- Relocating existing fixtures
- Any additions or alterations done to the plumbing system in your home

The Rochester Hills Building Department has prepared informational booklets on many common building projects, which give a complete description of the permit process and required paperwork. These can be found on the City's website at [www.rochesterhills.org](http://www.rochesterhills.org) under "Building and Ordinance Compliance."

# *Child Day Care/Residential*

One of the most indispensable essential services for busy families is child care. Some parents prefer a smaller, residential type setting for their children while mom and dad are at work. This type of business is allowed in the residential districts, but with a few conditions. There are two primary types of Group Child Care providers.

1. Group Child Day Care providers who care for 6 or fewer children must comply with the conditions in the Home Business ordinance noted on page 41.
2. Group Child Day Care providers, who care for more than 6 children but not more than 12, must comply with all of the requirements of a Home Business noted on page 41, and the following additional requirements:
  - The operation of a residential facility with more than 6 residents but not more than 12 requires Conditional Land Use approval by the Planning Commission.
  - The facility must be registered and licensed by the State of Michigan.
  - The facility must be located a minimum of 1500 feet from any other licensed facility serving more than 6 but not more than 12 residents.
  - The facility must be maintained in a manner consistent with the visible characteristics of the neighborhood in which it is located.
  - The facility must have a minimum of 1500 square feet of outdoor play area, located in the rear yard and shall be suitably fenced and screened.
  - Adequate areas shall be provided for parking, and pick-up and drop-off of children, in a manner that minimizes pedestrian-vehicle conflicts and allows maneuvers without affecting traffic flow on the public street.
  - Hours of operation. Group Child Day Care homes shall not operate more than 16 hours per day.





# Commercial Vehicles

Vehicles that are defined as commercial are:

- step vans
- cube vans
- buses
- dump trucks
- stake trucks
- flatbed trucks
- wreckers
- semi trucks and trailers
- tank trucks
- commercial and construction equipment and trailers
- similar trucks and equipment

These vehicles shall not be parked or stored in the residential district unless they are engaged in the performance of a service on the adjacent or underlying property for a period of time reasonably necessary to complete the service.

Pickup trucks or passenger/cargo style vans, SUVs, and passenger cars with lettering, are allowed in residential districts, but are limited to one vehicle per property.

Accessory equipment attached to a vehicle that does not extend the vehicle to more than nine feet in height, or wider or longer than the manufacturer's specification for the vehicle without the equipment, is allowed. Roof accessory racks are allowed, but side racks are not allowed. Pickup trucks are allowed to have a snowplow on the front and salt spreaders on the back.

For a complete reading of the ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 84-16(a).





# *Compost Piles*

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For those who are involved in gardening, composting is a great way to create fertile soil for the garden plants. But if the compost pile is not properly cared for, it can become a smelly problem for the neighbors. The Property Maintenance Ordinance gives the following guidelines for composting:

- Compost piles may include a combination of yard and garden waste (such as weeds, bark, grass clippings, stalks and stems, brush or vines), wood ashes, horse manure, coffee grounds, vegetable scraps, citrus rinds and fruit peelings, egg, peanut and nut shells. Compost piles shall not include meats, dairy products, vegetable oils, cooked foods, or plastics, synthetics or other non-biodegradable materials.
- Compost piles shall not be located within any drainage easement, side yard or closer than five (5) feet to any property line. The piles shall not exceed four (4) feet by eight (8) feet or six (6) feet in diameter and shall not exceed four (4) feet in height. The compost piles must be maintained in a manner to prevent the escape of offensive odors to adjacent properties.

For a complete reading of the Compost Ordinance, see the website [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) and Chapter 84-4, (a)(8)

*Residential property extending into the Conservation Easement*

**Solid black line indicates the Parcel Property Line**

Solid Black Line Indicates the Parcel Property Line

**Dashed line indicates the limits of the Conservation Easement**

Dashed Line Indicates the Limits of the Conservation Easement





# *Conservation Easements*

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Early in the history of Rochester Hills, residents and their representatives on the City Council recognized the need to protect and conserve our natural features such as trees, wetlands, and natural watershed areas. As a result, ordinances were enacted to protect these resources that are now part of the review process of new development. In recent years, these resources have been delineated on site plans and called “Conservation Easements”.

Conservation Easements are intended to protect important watershed and wetland areas and other areas that have been determined by the Planning Commission to be environmentally sensitive. A Conservation Easement is an area of undeveloped land that retains or is being returned to its natural character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation.

Conservation Easements:

- (1) Generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of mans work substantially unnoticeable; or
- (2) Contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Nature paths, feeder stations, and similar non-disruptive uses are acceptable within the designated conservation easements. Residents who own property adjacent to a conservation easement are asked to respect and help protect this resource by not extending their property into the easement. Residents are asked to refrain from installing sod or planting grass seed, installing sheds or play structures, or using the property for any purposes which might compromise its natural features, function, and beauty.

Conservation areas should receive only minimal maintenance and be left in or returned to a natural condition. It is permissible to remove manmade debris,



maintain pathways, lands, rivers, streams, watercourses, or existing easements as required by law or deemed necessary to protect public health, safety and welfare.

Some conservation areas have boundary limits delineated by signage, but not always. If your property is adjacent to an open area and you are not sure if it is a Conservation Easement,

- (1) Check your mortgage survey or closing documents for any information related to property easements, or
- (2) Contact the Engineering Department at 248-656-4640 for assistance in determining the existence and location of a Conservation Easement near your property.

If you have concern that a property has been extended into a conservation easement, you may contact the Building Department's Ordinance Compliance division at 248-656-4615.

# Cross Connection

## *Is the water in your home safe?*

### *What is a cross connection?*

- It is a permanent or temporary connection between a hazardous source and your drinking water system

### *What does a Cross Connection do?*

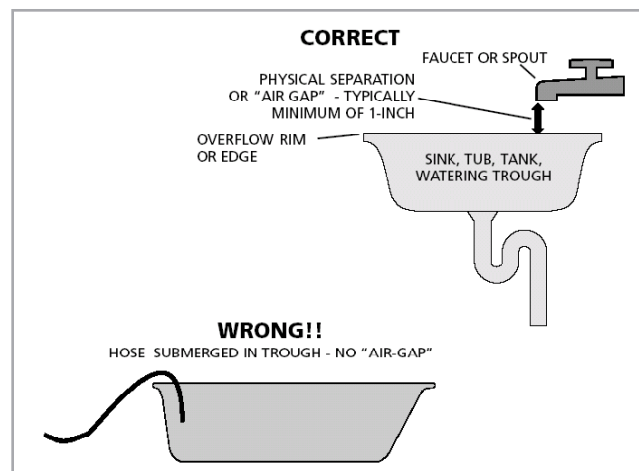
- It can allow contamination of your drinking water system if backflow occurs causing sickness or death

### *How does this happen?*

- When water flows in reverse of the normal direction (backflow), hazardous materials can be sucked into your water system through a process call Backsiphonage or Backpressure.

### *Where should I look for possible Cross Connections?*

- Sinks & Laundry Tubs
- Outside faucets & Hoses
- Lawn Irrigation
- Hand Held Shower Sprayer
- Boilers
- Toilets



## ***How do I protect my family?***

1. Perform a cross connection check of your home.
2. Make sure outside faucets are protected with approved vacuum breakers.
3. Never place a hose connected to your water supply directly into the water in a sink, drain, swimming pool, pond or chemical sprayer. To fill a pool or spa set the hose above the rim (air gap).
4. Check that your toilet tanks are working properly and that an anti siphon fill valve is utilized.
5. Check appliances that use water for proper drainage (dishwasher, washing machine, etc.).
6. When using a sprayer powered by a garden hose, be sure a vacuum breaker is attached to the faucet.
7. Maintain your water distribution system, faucets, etc., and have your backflow prevention devices tested as required.

## ***What is a backflow prevention device?***

- These devices will not allow water in the pipes to flow in reverse. There are many types of backflow preventers for all applications. Most homeowners have one testable device (it is on the lawn irrigation water line) and several non-testable devices (vacuum breakers on the garden hose connection).

## ***What do I have to do?***

- Backflow prevention devices must be tested by a state certified tester on a regular basis to make sure they are working properly.
- The plumbing code requires that you have the devices tested by a state certified tester every 3 years. The tester is required to fill out a test report that must be submitted to the City.
- A list of certified testers and the backflow prevention test report is available at the Building Department counter or online at [www.rochesterhills.org](http://www.rochesterhills.org).

If you have any questions about your responsibility for cross connection control, please contact our cross connection control inspector by calling the Building Department at (248) 656-4615.

# *Detached Accessory Structures*

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A detached accessory structure is a pool, shed, deck, garage, or gazebo. They are structures that have uses that are incidental to the use of the main structure located on the property. The limitations that apply to these structures are:

- Garages or sheds that have a floor area of less than 200 square feet do not require a building permit, but must conform to the Zoning ordinance as it pertains to height and distance from the property lines.
- Garages and sheds with a roof pitch less than 4/12 may not be taller than 14 feet. Those with a roof pitch 4/12 or greater are limited to 16 feet in height, measured from the ridge to grade. They may not be installed in the front yard setback or in any easements. If they are installed within ten feet of the main structure, required setbacks from the property lines to the main building apply. If they are at least 10 feet from the main building, then they may be located no closer than five feet to the side or rear property line.
- The total floor area of garages and sheds on lots less than two acres is 720 square feet. The floor area may be increased 200 square feet for every additional acre, over two acres, up to a total of 1520 square feet. Structures allowed more than 720 square feet of floor area require a 20 foot setback.
- Gazebos are limited to 180 square feet of floor area and a height of 16 feet.
- Pools may not be located in front yards and must be at least 10 feet from the property lines, measured from the property line to the waters edge. For permit and code information related to above ground and in-ground pools, please refer to our construction manual located in the building department or online at [www.rochesterhills.org](http://www.rochesterhills.org).

For detailed information on code and permit requirements for sheds, garages and gazebos, and for pool regulations, you may obtain an *Accessory Structure Manual* or *Private Swimming Pool Construction Manual* at the Building Department or online at [www.rochesterhills.org/city\\_services/building/manuals.asp](http://www.rochesterhills.org/city_services/building/manuals.asp).





# *Drainage Regulations*

## **Sump Pumps**

All footing drain (sump pump) discharge shall be deposited into the storm sewers or other storm water drainage facility in accordance with the city's engineering standards, or on the surface of the ground when no storm drainage facility is available.

Where a footing drain discharge is deposited upon the surface of the ground, the place of deposit shall be in that area of the yard that drains directly to a street, road, or alley, or to the drainage easement. In any case, the sump pump discharged line shall terminate well away from a neighboring property line or street to allow the water to be dispersed and settle into the ground. A general rule would be a minimum of 10 feet.

For a complete reading for sump pumps see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Section 114-97.

## **Sanitary Sewer**

Homeowners are not allowed to discharge or cause to be discharged any storm water, surface water, groundwater, roof runoff, subsurface footing drainage (sump pump) into the sanitary sewer.

## **Lot Drainage**

If a homeowner is considering a land altering project such as installing some landscaping, putting in a pool, or building a patio, they need to be aware of the drainage pattern on their property and that of the entire subdivision. Each subdivision is designed in a "big picture" method to ensure that the water goes away to retention ponds, streams, and rivers.

Therefore, it is unlawful to change the existing or natural drainage of lands within the city so as to obstruct, impede, accelerate, channel, or concentrate the flow of rain or surface waters onto or from the lands of another so as to cause damage or create a nuisance.

For a complete reading of the drainage regulations see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Section 114, Article 2, Division 3.







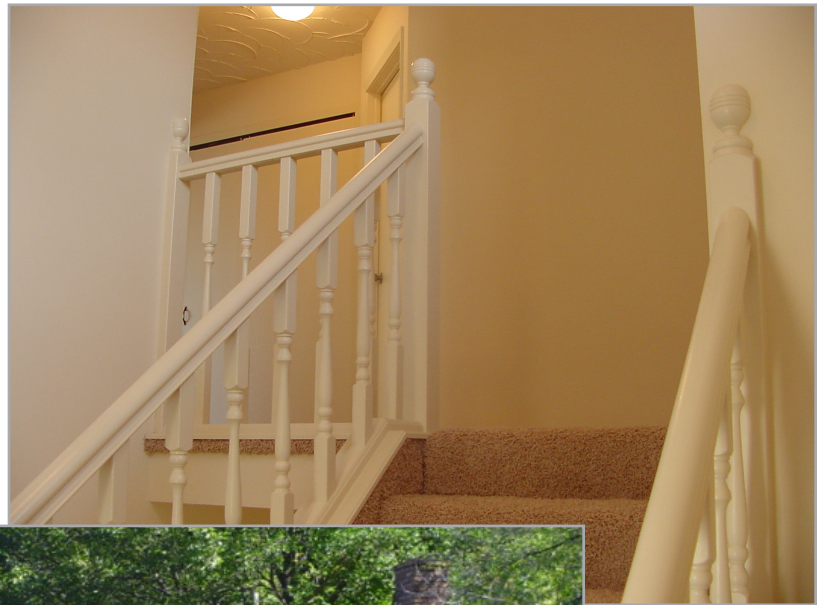
# *Exterior & Interior Building Maintenance*

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The City Council approved Article II of the Property Maintenance Code in 2008. This Ordinance requires building owners to maintain the exterior and interior of their buildings. It requires items on the exterior such as doors, windows, walls, roofs and structural members to be maintained.

It also requires items on the interior of the building such as structural members, stairs, handrails, guards, walking surfaces, smoke detectors, emergency escape windows, plumbing systems, mechanical systems and electrical systems to be maintained.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding exterior or interior maintenance requirements, please contact the Building Department at 248-656-4615.





# Fences

The installation of a fence does not require a permit in residential districts but is subject to the following standards.

1. **Location** - Fences shall be located entirely on the owner's property unless it is owned in common by adjoining property owners. In such case the fence may be located on the property line. A dispute regarding the location of placement of a fence is a civil matter and will not be enforced by ordinance compliance staff.
2. **Height** - Fences shall not exceed eight feet in height, measured from the ground surface to the highest portion of the fence.
3. **Materials** -
  - Fences may be constructed of any natural or synthetic material that is all-weather resistant and is engineered and designed to be used for permanent installation as a fence or screening material.
  - No fabric material is allowed to be used for fencing.
  - Chain link fences may have insertable slats.
  - No used materials, not including rock or brick, shall be used as fence material unless approved by the Building Department.
4. **Barbed wire** - Barbed wire may not be installed on fences in the residential district.
5. **Proper installation and maintenance** - Fences shall be installed and maintained free from defects, safety hazards and collapse, and shall be kept in good repair. No signs, words, letters, images, or illustrations shall be installed on any fence. There is no regulation regarding which way the "good side" of the fence should be showing.
6. **Electric fences** - Electric fences are prohibited in the residential districts except for retaining animals. Contact the Building Department for permission and other limitations.
7. **Corner clearance** - Homeowners who have a corner lot must maintain a corner clearance. The corner clearance for intersecting streets is 25 feet. The corner clearance of intersecting sidewalks is 15 feet. Fences are not allowed in the public road right of way and must terminate 15 feet away from a bike path or sidewalk so as not to create a vision obstruction for motorist exiting driveways.

For a complete reading of the ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 84-6.





# *Firewood Storage*

Homeowners that keep firewood on their property either for home heating or recreational purposes need to be aware of the following conditions.

- All firewood shall be stacked in a neat, orderly manner and must be at least six (6) inches from any building or structure.
- Firewood is not to be stored in the front yard.

In the event of a storm that knocks down trees and branches, or any other activity related to tree removal, homeowners have fifteen (15) days to cut up and remove any branches and wood that will not remain on site. Wood that will remain shall be neatly stacked as described above. Please check with the Forestry Department prior to cutting down any trees that have a diameter of six (6) inches, measured at chest height, to ensure that a tree removal permit is not required.

Note: Current Ordinance prohibits the burning of leaves and brush. These items must be removed from the property by the homeowner or a contracted waste hauler. Recreational fires are allowed by permit from the Fire Department. Only seasoned firewood is to be used. Contact the Fire Department to obtain a burning permit. Burning guidelines will be provided when the permit is issued.

For a complete reading of the Firewood Ordinance, see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com), Chapter 84-4, (a)(7).





# *Garage Sales*

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Garage sales are a great way to empty the house of unused items and make a little cash, and it is a great way for folks to save some money. Here are a few guidelines outlined in the Property Maintenance Ordinance regarding garage sales.

- Only four garage sales are allowed per year.
- The garage sale may only be held for a seventy-two (72) hour period.
- Only items contained in the home may be sold. Items may not be brought in from off the premise, except from neighboring homes participating in a joint garage sale.
- The garage sale times are from 9:00 a.m. to sunset.
- One sign is allowed on the site of the sale and one sign off premise at the entrance of the subdivision as long as it is located on private property, with permission of the owner, and not located in the public road right-of-way.
- Homeowners holding a garage sale should be alert to traffic obstructions caused by those shopping at the sale.

A complete reading of the Garage Sale ordinance at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com), Chapter 84-7.





# *Home Business*

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In the ordinance, this is also known as “ancillary uses”. This section would cover both occupations that are carried on in the home as well as a Bed and Breakfast establishment. Home businesses are allowed in districts R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 with the following conditions.

The business:

- Does not create a nuisance to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Does not become more than an incidental function of the use of the dwelling for residential purposes.
- Does not draw truck traffic other than a delivery by a truck no more frequently than an average of once a week.
- Does not employ paid assistants or employees other than those living at the premises.
- Does not cause more than a nominal increase of traffic
- Does not cause the erection or maintenance of any signs other than signs allowed on vehicles under subsection Chapter 84-16 2e.
- Does not take place outside of the dwelling and/or accessory buildings, so as to be a nuisance or not be in keeping with the residential nature of the surrounding residential area.

***The general rule for home businesses...keep them invisible to the rest of the neighborhood.***

You can find a complete copy of the home business ordinance at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Article IV, Section 138-4.414.





# *Itinerant Merchant/Solicitors*

An itinerant merchant is any person going house-to-house selling items or services for profit.

Itinerant merchants must obtain a license from the City Clerk and must display it so that it is visible to any person dealing with the merchant.

Farmers or truck gardeners who sell products grown or produced on their own property are exempt from licensing, but shall be subject to other sections of the article.

Itinerant merchants shall not obstruct traffic, interfere with the public, or disturb the peace and quiet of the city. No amplified bells or music is allowed.

Itinerant merchants shall not be in one place longer that it takes to make a sale to a customer. For a complete reading of the ordinance go to [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) and see Chapter 78, Article 3.

## **Solicitors**

Solicitors are individuals associated with non-profit charitable, religious, or political organizations seeking donations or selling items for the purpose of raising funds for the organization. Organizations that are located in the City of Rochester Hills are exempt from this ordinance.

All non-resident solicitors and organizations not located in the City of Rochester Hills are required to obtain a license at the Clerks office. The following operation regulations apply.

- The non-resident organization shall obtain a license for each representative operating in the City of Rochester Hills.
- Each non-resident solicitor shall have the license assigned to them in their possession and must display it upon request to any homeowner, city ordinance officer, or sheriff deputy that requests it.
- Door-to-door solicitation shall only be done between the hours 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM.



- Each license to solicit in the city shall expire after 30 days.
- Solicitors are not allowed to block, obstruct, impede or otherwise interfere with the normal flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- Solicitors are not allowed to shout out or use any mechanical means of amplification to draw attention.
- Solicitors shall not approach homes and businesses displaying “no soliciting” or “no trespassing” signs, and shall cease the solicitation and leave when asked.

For a complete reading of the ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Section 78, Article 2.

# *Public Property Homeowner Responsibility*

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## **Sidewalks**

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the sidewalks located in front of their property. Replacing or repairing a public sidewalk requires a right-of-way permit from the Department of Public Services Engineering Division. If you have any questions regarding the repair or replacement requirements of a sidewalk located in front of your property, please contact the DPS-Engineering department at 248-656-4640.

## **Snow & Ice Removal**

Any snow or ice shall be removed from the sidewalk in front of your house within 48 hours after the snow or ice event.

## **Street Trees/Lawns**

Trees on the local road right-of-way are the property of the City of Rochester Hills. Permission must be obtained from the Parks and Forestry Division at 248-656-4673 before removing or planting trees. The maintenance of the grass and other planting in this area is the responsibility of the homeowner.

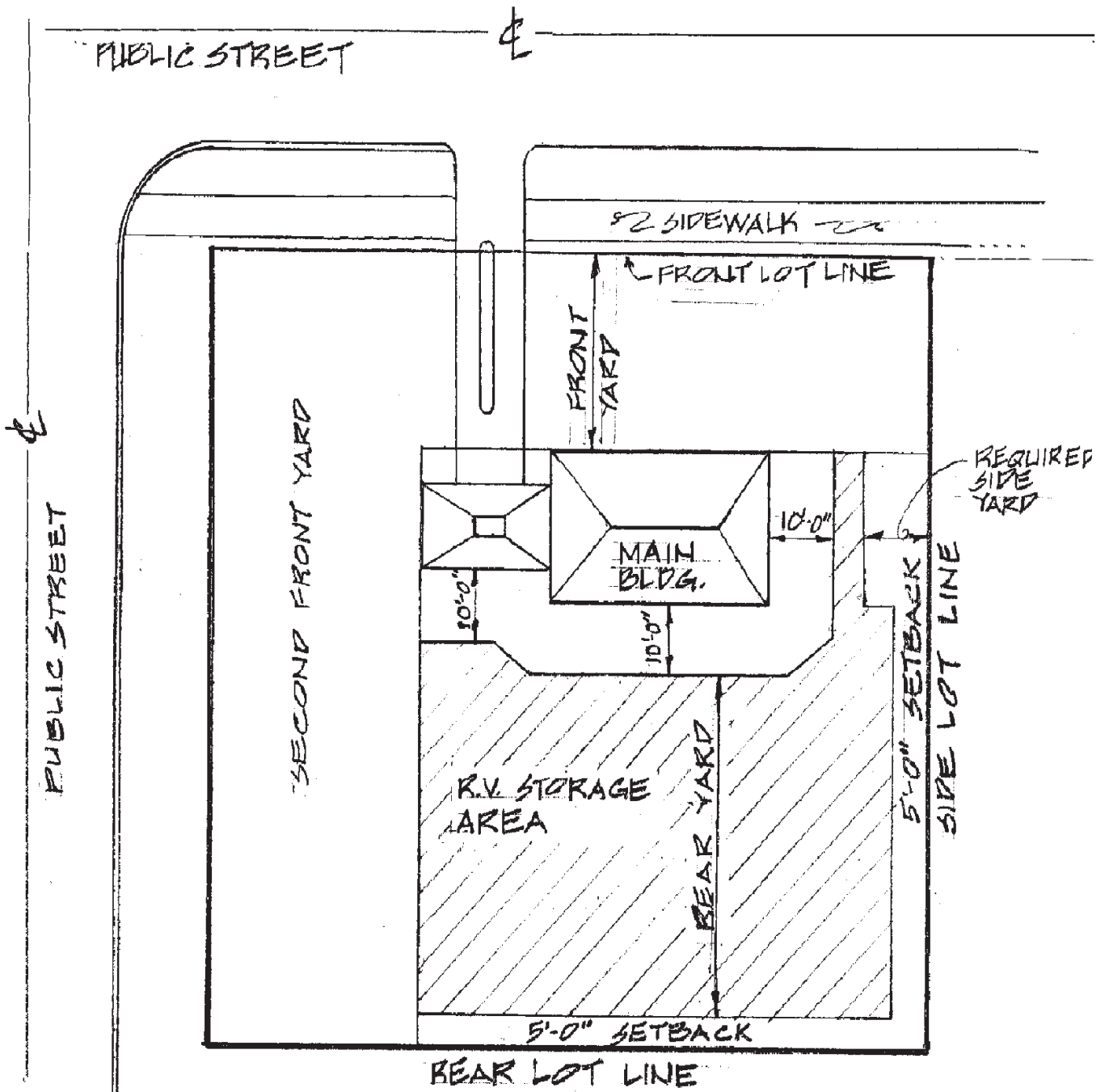
## **Landscaping Supplies**

Homeowners who have hired a landscaping company to make improvements that involve the delivery of topsoil, mulch, stone or gravel, please take note of this important information. These companies have made it a practice to have these materials deposited on the city street and use the city right-of-way for a staging area while the project is underway. This is a violation of city ordinance and will be strictly enforced. The property owner will be given a two-hour notice to have the materials removed from the city's right-of-way. If it is not removed, the city DPS supervisor will assign equipment and crew to remove the materials at the property owner's expense. If this happens after normal business hours, it will include overtime. So advise the contractor before the arrival of the materials to avoid a substantial expense.

## **Basketball Hoops**

Though not encouraged by the city due to safety concerns, many children have turned their subdivision street into a full basketball court by setting up temporary and sometimes permanent basketball poles in the street or by the curb. After the game is done, the hoops stay put in the street, or along the curb over-hanging the street, causing a vehicle hazard and liability to the City of Rochester Hills. The compliance staff will affix a 24-hour notice to any basketball hoop that is in the right-of-way advising the owner that the hoop will be removed by the city at the owner's expense. If the hoop is not removed from the right-of-way within the time period, the DPS supervisor will assign a crew to remove the hoop and the owner will be responsible to pick up their property at the DPS yard after paying a \$75.00 fee.

# CORNER LOT



## REQUIRED SIDE YARD

R1	-	15 FEET
R2	-	15 FEET
R3	-	10 FEET
R4	-	10 FEET

# *Recreational Vehicles*

Residents of Rochester Hills are hard working people, but hard working people need some down time to relax and play, and there are all sorts of “toys” to help us do that. But for some, these units take away from the neighborhood because of their size or number, so the city has some rules regarding the storage of these units.

The city ordinance defines a recreational vehicle as a motor home, travel trailer, boat, snowmobile, camper enclosure, utility trailer, ATV or similar type vehicle. Only recreational vehicles owned by the property owner are allowed to be stored on property in Rochester Hills. The following restrictions apply.

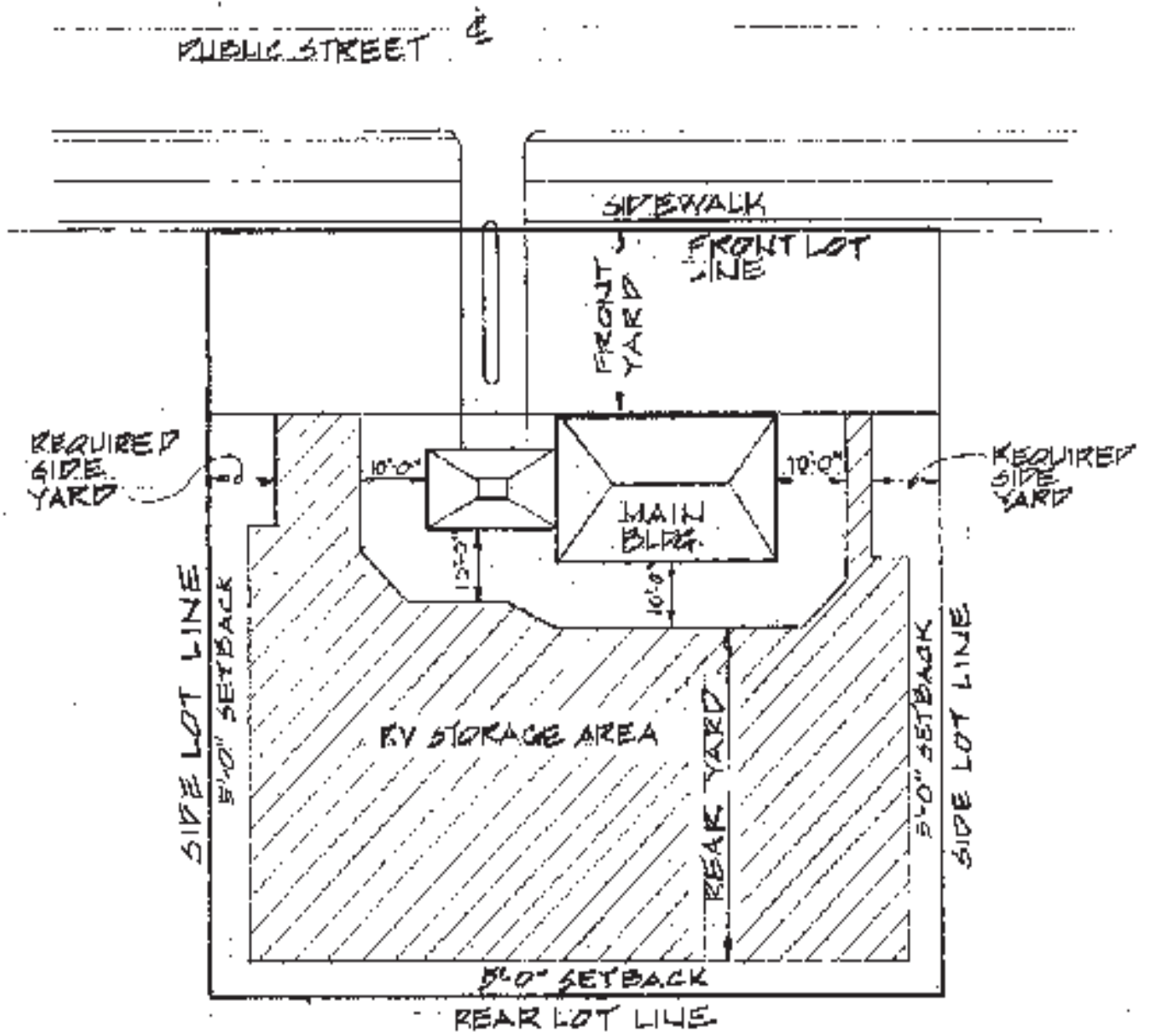
- No recreational vehicle shall be parked or stored in the front yard setback except for a period of time up to 72 hours for the purpose of minor maintenance or preparing for or returning from a trip.
- Recreational vehicles are not allowed to be stored in any required side yard setback. Recreational vehicles may be stored in the rear yard but must be at least five feet from the side and rear property lines. (see attached diagrams)
- All recreational vehicles stored outside must be kept in good repair and secure to prevent unauthorized entry.
- No recreational vehicle shall be connected to electricity, gas, water or sanitary sewer facilities, except that a temporary electrical connection may be made for the purpose of recharging batteries.
- No recreational vehicle shall be used for living or housekeeping purposes while on the premises.
- Recreational vehicles are not allowed to be parked on public property or in the public right-of-way for more than 72 hours when loading or unloading or preparing for or returning from a trip.

For a complete reading of the ordinance please see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 84-16 (d).

***Please see the drawings on the opposite and following pages for further clarification on the permitted locations for RV storage.***



# INTERIOR LOT



## REQUIRED SIDE YARD

R1	5	FEET
R2	5	FEET
R3	10	FEET
R4	10	FEET



# Sidewalks

Here in Michigan, one thing you can be sure of is the arrival of snow in winter. While it is beautiful and fun for children to play in, property owners or occupants who have a sidewalk adjoining their property need to be aware of their responsibility to keep and maintain the sidewalk.

Rochester Hills ordinance requires that all interior subdivision sidewalks be cleared of snow and ice within 48 hours after the snow event, and remain clear from accumulations of snow, sleet, ice, and water at all times. This ordinance was designed with pedestrian safety in mind as it will help to prevent slip-and-fall accidents from occurring, and will allow for safe travel for neighborhood children to walk to and from school or the bus stop.

Wintertime is not the only time property owners with sidewalks need to be diligent. Overgrown landscaping and low hanging trees must be maintained so as to not block the sidewalk (Please see *Bike Pathway and Sidewalk Vegetation Maintenance*, page 60.) Local ordinance also requires homeowners to repair severely cracked or deformed sidewalks. Deformities that present a trip hazard must be repaired. If you have a sidewalk that is damaged and you need help in determining if it needs repair, contact the Engineering Department at 248-656-4640.



For a complete reading of property owner responsibilities related to sidewalks, go to [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com), Chap 94-141-143.



*Properly and  
improperly  
cleared sidewalk*



# Signs

## Community Activity/Event Sign

Community activity/event signs may be erected on private property with the permission of the property owner, to advertise community activities or events sponsored by non-profit community service organizations. These organizations must have received permission from the Rochester Hills Building Department at least 14 days prior to the event. The signs may be displayed 10 days prior to the event and be removed within two days after the event. These signs are not to be larger than six square feet and are limited to no more than 25 individual off-premise signs.

## Real Estate Signs

Homeowners are allowed one six square foot “For Sale” sign located on the property for sale. Off premise real estate signs are not allowed. Signs advertising an “Open House” are allowed to be located off premise. These signs may not be larger than six square feet, no taller than five feet, and may be displayed on private property at the intersections only between the hours of 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM. The ordinance compliance staff will remove any real estate sign placed in the right-of-way.

For a complete reading of the sign ordinance, see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 134.





# *Solid Waste and Recycling*

The City of Rochester Hills has a Single Hauler Solid Waste program that serves all single family homes in the city. The City has a contract with Allied Waste/Republic Services Inc. that features fixed prices and dependable customer service. Each home receives two carts, one for trash and one for recycling. The contractor provides unlimited refuse, recycling, yard waste (April to November), and one bulk pick up per month. The program features a four-day per week pick up schedule, with residents being assigned one of the days, Monday through Thursday. All owners of a single family home are required to participate in this program.

The City of Rochester Hills is the first community in Michigan to offer rewards for recycling through a company called Recycle Bank. Homeowners accumulate points each week by loading recycling items in the cart provided and placing the cart at the roadside to be scanned during pick up. Homeowners may then receive money saving coupons to local and national business partners. It is important to note that in our area of the country the recycling carts are not weighed individually to determine the awarding of points. Instead, residential homes are in groups of 1000 to 1200 homes who participate together. When the trucks on their assigned route are weighed at the end of the day, the points are evenly divided between all those who participated on that day.

Each year, all of the waste hauling trucks that service residential and commercial properties, are inspected and licensed by the Ordinance Compliance staff and the Oakland County Sheriff's Office. Allied Waste/Republic Services Inc. will be the only company licensed to service single-family homes and single-family site condominiums. Below are ordinance regulations that homeowners should know:

Waste hauling units are allowed to operate in the single-family residential areas between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. (Friday will be reserved for Holiday and snow emergencies). Residents are to store any refuse or garbage in plastic bags or containers with lids.



## Owner Responsibilities:

- At no time shall refuse or garbage be stored on site for more than 10 days.
- Garbage, recycling, or compost material may not be placed at the roadside sooner than 24 hours prior to pick up.
- Trash and recycling must be placed at curb by 7:00 AM on the day of pick up.
- Empty trash containers shall be removed from the roadside the day of pick up and shall be stored in a side or rear yard.
- To help in the quick and efficient removal of trash and recycling, remember to place the refuse cart and the recycling cart with the handles toward the house and at least 4 feet apart to accommodate the automatic lift arm and the chip reader for Recycle Bank.

To contact Allied Waste/Republic Services Inc. for service requests or complaints, call the customer service line at 800-858-0089.

To contact Recycle Bank, go to their website at [www.recyclebank.com](http://www.recyclebank.com) or call 888-727-2978.

If after contacting either company, your concern is not handled to your satisfaction, you may contact the City Program Administrator, by calling the Building Department at 248-656-4615.

For a complete reading of the ordinance, please see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com), Chapter 86.



# *Swimming Pool Maintenance*

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There is nothing like coming home on a hot summer day and diving into cool water, or just sitting with a cold drink and soaking tired feet. It's a place that will occupy the kids for hours and offer great exercise for them, instead of sitting in front of the television or a video game. Yes swimming pools are a lot of fun but they are a lot of work to keep clean and safe.

- Swimming pools are regulated when the pool holds a minimum depth of twenty-four (24) inches of water. This definition would include in-ground, above-ground, hot tubs and spas.
- Homeowners are required to properly maintain the pool, making sure the water is clear and not allowed to stagnate. The water is clear enough when the bottom of the pool in the deepest end is clearly visible by an adult standing on the pool deck.
- The pool is required to be protected by a fence or barrier at least forty-eight (48) inches high. Gates and doors in the fence or barrier shall be self-closing and self-latching, with the latch on the inside of the fence or barrier.

For a complete reading of the ordinance go to [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 84, Article I.







# *Tree Regulations*

The Forestry Division administers the City's Street Tree Ordinance, and in conjunction with the Planning and Building Departments, the Tree Conservation Ordinance.

Under the Street Tree Ordinance, a permit is required for planting or removing street right-of-way trees, and for any activity (e.g. construction) which may affect right-of-way trees. Planting permits are free. Right-of-way permits for removal or other activities are \$50.00.

The Tree Conservation Ordinance applies to certain undeveloped properties having any trees six inches in diameter or larger. Requirements vary depending on the nature of the development. For single-family residential developments, a minimum percentage for trees on site must be preserved. On individual lots, builders are encouraged to preserve as many trees as possible outside the building envelope. In general, developers and builders are responsible to replace any trees that are removed or damaged by construction activities. Remaining trees must be protected from construction activities.

The goal of these ordinances is to preserve and enhance the quality of life within the city by protecting existing trees and woodlands, while at the same time permitting economic growth and development.

## **When is a Tree Permit required?**

### **Trees in the public street right-of-way**

- All trees located between the property line and the street are regulated by the Street Tree Ordinance and require a removal permit.
- Application Fee is \$50.00.

### **Trees on private property**

- All property platted prior to August 3, 1988 is not regulated by the Tree Conservation Ordinance and does not require a removal permit
- All property platted after August 3, 1988, and all unplatted property with trees 6 inches in diameter and larger at 4-1/2' above the ground,



is regulated by the Tree Conservation Ordinance and requires a removal permit.

- Application fee is \$90.00.

For further information regarding the need for a Tree Removal Permit, contact the Forestry Division at 248-656-4673 or see their website at [www.rochesterhills.org](http://www.rochesterhills.org).

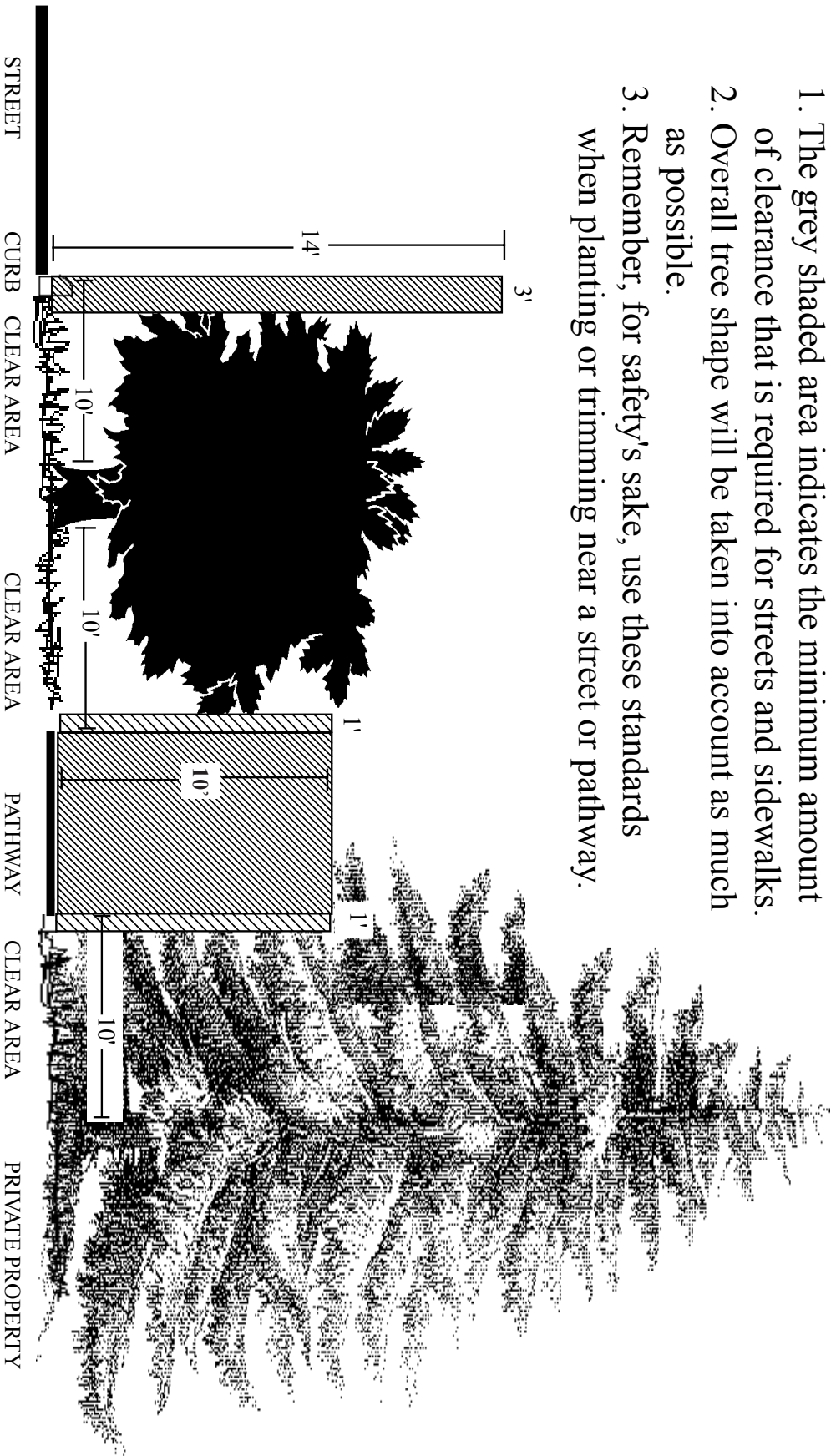
# City of Rochester Hills

## PRUNING SPECIFICATIONS FOR CLEARANCE

*for Ornamental Trees (Crabapple, etc.) and Evergreens*

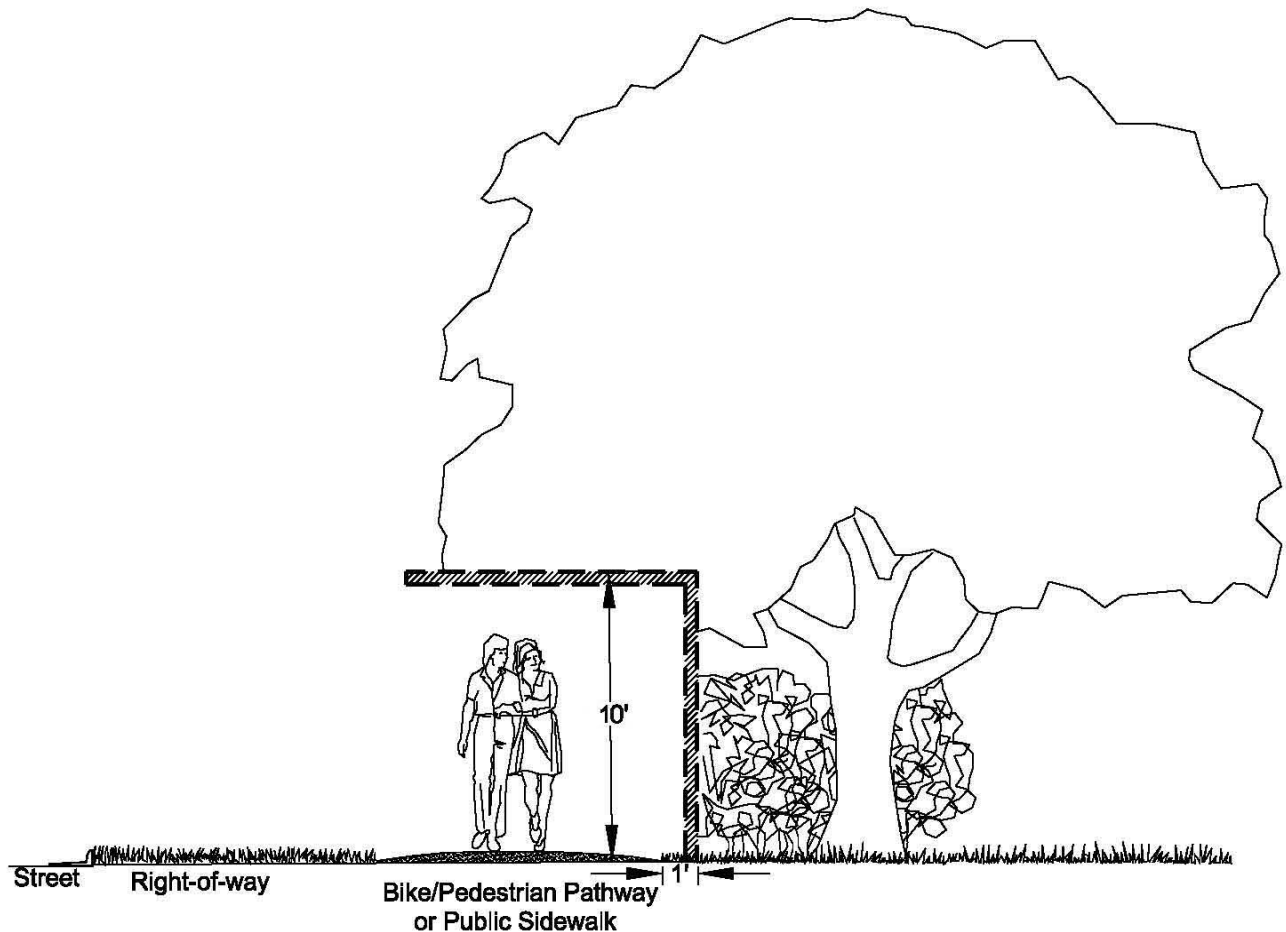
### NOTES:

1. The grey shaded area indicates the minimum amount of clearance that is required for streets and sidewalks.
2. Overall tree shape will be taken into account as much as possible.
3. Remember, for safety's sake, use these standards when planting or trimming near a street or pathway.



*drawing not to scale*

# City of Rochester Hills Bike Pathway and Sidewalk Vegetation Maintenance



- Property owners must maintain vegetation at least 1' off the edge of the pathway or sidewalk to a height of 10'. If vegetation is not maintained by the property owner, City crews are authorized to trim to a distance of 3' off the edge and 10' in height. The City may assess the cost of the work to the property owner.
- **New plantings** can be no closer to a pathway or sidewalk than the following distances:
  - 5' for high-branched trees (shade trees) and shrubs.
  - 10' for low-branched trees (evergreens and ornamentals).
- A permit is required for planting in the City right-of-way (available free from the Forestry Division).

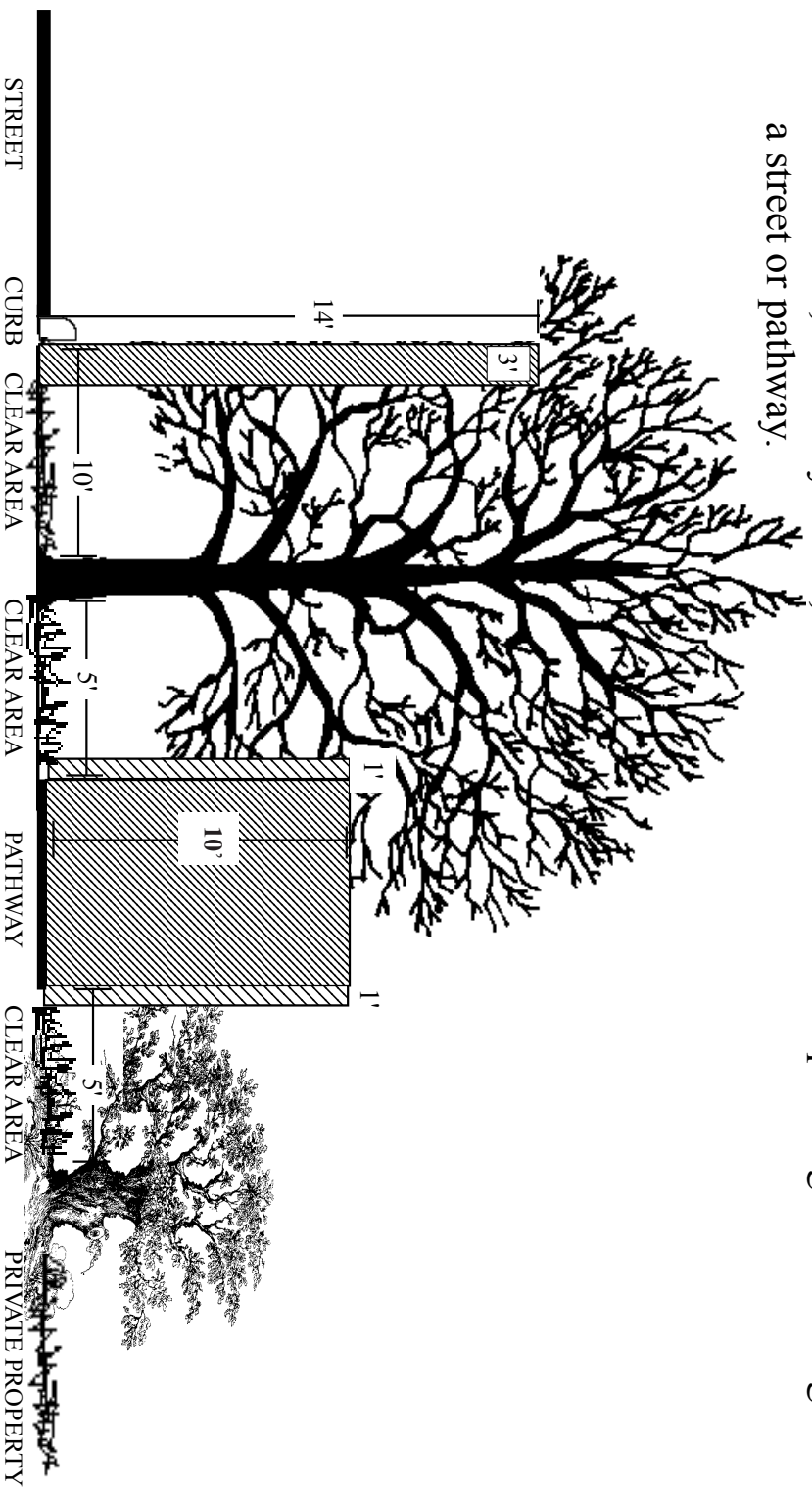
# City of Rochester Hills

## PRUNING SPECIFICATIONS FOR CLEARANCE

*for Shade Trees and Shrubs*

### NOTES:

1. The grey shaded area indicates the minimum amount of clearance that is required for streets and sidewalks.
2. Overall tree shape will be taken into account as much as possible.
3. Remember, for safety's sake, use these standards when planting or trimming near a street or pathway.



*drawing not to scale*



# *Unlicensed and Inoperable Vehicles and Junk*

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There is currently no limit to the number of vehicles that may be parked on a residential property in the city, but there are conditions. The conditions are:

- All vehicles that are parked or stored on residential property must be operable, meaning the vehicle is capable of performing the transportation function for which it was manufactured. The vehicle must be currently licensed and operable at all times.
- In addition to vehicle storage, city regulations prohibit the storage or accumulation of old, rusty, wrecked, damaged, deteriorated or discarded machinery, appliances, scrap metals, materials or parts not suited for use upon the property. Old and used building materials outside of a completely enclosed building are prohibited. Building materials that are to be used to improve the premises in which a valid building permit exists may be kept if piled off the ground to prevent becoming a home for rodents.
- If a vehicle is being stored for a long period of time because a family member is in the military, contact the Building Department Ordinance Compliance division and arrangements will be made to make a note to file.

For a complete reading of the ordinance please see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Chapter 138, Article 8, Division 3.







# Weeds

## Vacant Lots

The owners of vacant property are required by ordinance to cut grass and weeds that have grown over eight inches in height. All lots in the city are to be cut 100 feet back from the edge of the road. All lots must be cut back 100 feet from the side and rear property line when adjacent to any school, park, subdivision, or occupied dwelling.

## Occupied Lots

All occupied lots must be cut back 100 feet from the edge of the road. If the lot is located in a subdivision where 60% of the lots contain houses, then the entire lot must be cut.

The city ordinance gives the city the authority to enter any property to cut the grass and weeds when they exceed 8 inches in height. This authority begins on May 1 of each year and continues through the entire year until all the offending lots are brought into compliance. A notice of such authority is posted in the local newspaper on three different dates in March and April notifying property owners in the City of Rochester Hills of the ordinance requirements.

A local newspaper posting serves as legal notice for the owners of vacant and occupied lots. As a convenience to the owners of a lot with a dwelling on it, the Ordinance compliance staff will place a warning sticker on the premise, advising the owner of a 72-hour notice to cut the grass or weeds. If the owner fails to comply, the city directs a contractor to cut the grass and weeds at the property owner's expense.

For a complete reading of the ordinance see [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) Section 106, Article 3.





# *Water Quality Protection*

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Maintaining the detention pond in your neighborhood can have a big impact on the quality of the storm water leaving your area and flowing into the near by stream or river. Your detention basin is an important component of the storm water collection system and serves to minimize the impact of flooding, helps to slow the rate of water runoff from the neighborhood, and improves the quality of the storm water leaving the detention pond. When properly maintained, your basin collects and traps sediment from storm water that would otherwise end up clogging our rivers and streams and degrading the environment for fish, birds, and other wildlife.

Your Homeowner's Association is responsible for properly maintaining the detention basin in your neighborhood.

In an effort to help your association understand this responsibility, the City of Rochester Hills has provided a guidebook to educate your subdivision and condominium Homeowner's Associations about their storm water detention basins. The guidebook explains why basins are needed, types of different basins and suggested maintenance work to ensure that the basin continues to function properly.

The Public Involvement and Education Committee of the Assembly of Rouge Communities prepared the *Maintaining Your Detention Basin Guidebook*, and we hope homeowner groups find it a useful reference tool. Please access this guidebook at [www.rougeriver.com](http://www.rougeriver.com).

