

Subdivision FAQs

1. Can I sell off a portion of my land and can the buyer get a septic system permitted?

Answer: Yes and no, but check with a real estate attorney first (we are not attorneys and this is not legal advice). The legal process of subdividing land or creating a plat differs slightly, based upon its location. If the land was not legally subdivided, we are not able to permit a septic system.

If the property is located outside of the City of Odessa and their Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) limit (3.5 miles from the city limits), the review process occurs with David Peck, Project Manager, Ector County Public Works Department (DAVID.PECK@ectorcountytexas.gov, 432-498-4041).

If the property is located within the city of Odessa's ETJ, the review process begins with Randy Brinlee, City of Odessa's Director of Planning and Zoning (pz@odessa-texas.gov, 432-335-3211).

For both jurisdictions, the process is similar. It begins with the owner hiring a licensed land surveyor or professional engineer to survey the property and prepare it as a preliminary plat. You would complete a plat application and bring it and the preliminary plat to either the Ector County Public Works Department or, the City of Odessa's Planning and Development Department and pay a review fee.

At the county, the review process would begin and a dialog would occur on deficient areas of the preliminary plat. When the preliminary plat has been agreed upon, it is finalized and it is set as an agenda item for the Ector County Commissioner's Court, for approval. When the final plat has been approved, the surveyor/engineer produces a Mylar (plastic sheet) of the final plat for signatures. It is then filed with the County Clerk's office. At that point, it is an approved, legal Plat.

2. Can I subdivide my property into any sized tracts of land that I want?

Answer: There is no maximum-sized tract of land. The Texas minimum residential lot size depends on the source for potable water (drinking water) for the land. If a Public Water Supply (PWS) is available, such as provided by the Ector County Utility District or the Greater Gardendale Water Supply Corporation, then the minimum lot size is at least 0.5 acres. If no PWS is available and private water wells are used, the minimum lot size is at least 1.0 acres.

3. What happens if I already sold off a portion of my land, last year, and now the new owner wants to build a house and get a septic system permitted?

Answer: Both you and the new land owner would need to complete the legal subdivision (platting) process, before the Ector County Water Quality Program could process a septic application. The lot size would need to meet that described in Answer 2, above.

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4. Are there any exemptions or exceptions to the subdivision rules?

Answer: Sure, an owner may create up to 4 divisions of land for family members (3rd degree of consanguinity), as long as the lot sizes met those described in Answer 2, above. Also, platting is not required, if tracts of land greater than 10 acres are created, so long as infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc.) is not also created. Each tract must have legal access to a public road. Land sold solely for agricultural or ranching use is not required to be platted.

5. If I am a licensed septic installer and am approached to complete a septic installation, do I need to be concerned about unapproved subdivisions of land?

Answer: Yes, if you are aware that your customer has just purchased a recently divided tract of land, be cautious. Ask them if the property was recently subdivided and approved by Ector County. Once approved, the plat still needs to be filed with the County Clerk.

Please contact David Peck with questions regarding the county's subdivision rules at, DAVID.PECK@ectorcountytexas.gov or 432-498-4041.