



Utility vaults

809 N. Broadway / Milwaukee, WI 53202-3617 / 414-286-8211

The installation of an underground utility vault requires a building permit. Permits are issued only after a full plan review of both the structure and its HVAC system. The following items must be provided for plan review:

- Four sets of construction documents. Plans must indicate compliance with OSHA standards.
- Seven copies of the Plat of Survey. The survey must show the proposed vault and have an original stamp and signature of the registered land surveyor who prepared it.
- One copy specifications
- One copy structural calculations, stamped and signed by the design professional who prepared them, OR State approval number
- Four sets of HVAC plans
- One copy HVAC specifications
- One copy COMM 63 energy worksheet
- Four sets landscape drawings may be required (see below)
- Erosion control plans per Ch. 290 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, if scope of work includes access roads, dedicated parking areas, etc.

Because the Department of Public Works needs to review the plans to ensure the vault does not encroach on the public way, permits cannot be issued the same day plans are submitted.

Zoning requirements

Zoning regulations regulating the placement of underground utility vaults are intended to minimize the visual impact of such structures, particularly in residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.

Vaults are generally permitted in **manufacturing and industrial districts**. If the property is adjacent to a residential

neighborhood, the vault must be screened with landscaping. Otherwise, landscaping is not required.

Vaults are generally permitted in **commercial districts**, as long as they are installed in the rear yard. The vault must be screened with landscaping if it is visible from the street.

Vaults are generally permitted in residential districts **only** if approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Typically, BOZA will require placement of the vault in a rear yard and require that the vault be screened with landscaping.

Landscaping requirements

Landscaping plans will be judged by the following standards:

- Plant material should surround the vault, creating a hedgerow effect.
- Evergreen plant material should be used to ensure the vault is screened year-round.

Plan submission appointment

To make an appointment to submit plans for a utility vault, call the Milwaukee Development Center, (414) 286-8210. The plan examination fee, which must be paid at the time plans are submitted, is \$300 (\$150 for construction plan review and \$150 for HVAC plan review).

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