



## Frequently Asked Questions about Water and Sewer for Accessory Structures

### Question #1: What is the purpose of this document?

**Answer:** The purpose of this document is to explain what options exist for providing water or sewer service to an accessory structure that a homeowner may wish to construct on the same parcel as their primary residence. When two houses are located on the same parcel, the City Engineer may classify one house as an accessory structure. An accessory structure could also be another type of structure such as an art studio, a workshop, or a garage. Any future subdivision or townhome creation will also require separate services for each lot or townhome.

### Question #2: Who owns the water and sewer services lines?

**Answer:** In Missoula, the homeowner owns and is responsible to maintain the water and sewer services lines from the point of connection at the main (typically in the street or alley) all the way into the house.

### Question #3: Do I need a separate water service line for my accessory structure?

**Answer:** Missoula's rules allow a primary residence and **one** accessory structure to share a water service line, but **only if** there is adequate capacity as determined by the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC). UPC requires a fixture count to be completed for all fixtures that will receive water from the shared service line (i.e. including the existing primary structure and the accessory structure).

Most existing water service lines in Missoula are  $\frac{3}{4}$ " galvanized pipes and very rarely (if ever) will a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " line meet the total fixture count demand of a house plus an accessory structure. In addition, many existing galvanized service lines are already beyond their expected useful life and should be evaluated for replacement. Anyone planning to build an accessory structure on a property with only a single  $\frac{3}{4}$ " service line should plan to replace the service with a modern 1-inch polyethylene (PE) service.

### Question #4: If my existing house is billed for water as a flat rate, can I add an accessory building to the account?

**Answer:** Accessory structures are not allowed on properties that have flat rate accounts. If you want to add an accessory structure, you will need to install a meter on the service line for the primary residence. You will need to read the other FAQ's on this page which deal with sharing service lines and meters.

### Question #5: Do I need a separate sewer service line for my accessory structure?

**Answer:** Missoula's rules allow a primary residence and **one** accessory structure to share a sewer service line, but **only if** there is adequate capacity as determined by the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC). UPC requires a drainage fixture count to be completed for all fixtures that will contribute drainage to the shared sewer service line (i.e. including the existing primary structure and the accessory structure. The sewer service line would need to be a minimum of 4" in diameter.

**Question #6: Where do I find information about my existing water or sewer service line?**

**Answer:** Missoula Water has electronic ditch cards and sewer connection records available for most addresses. These are being made available over time at the City of Missoula Maps website at: [missoulamaps-cityofmissoula.hub.arcgis.com/apps/22b7d99814454e2990e49b7879f64090/explore](https://missoulamaps-cityofmissoula.hub.arcgis.com/apps/22b7d99814454e2990e49b7879f64090/explore). If you can't find your ditch card or sewer connection records at that website, you can contact Missoula Water dispatch at: [dispatchw@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:dispatchw@ci.missoula.mt.us).

**Question #7: How do I complete a fixture count?**

**Answer:** The City of Missoula has required a tool to assist with calculating water supply fixture counts for residential properties, which can be found at: [ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/50360/Water-Meter-Sizing-Worksheet](https://ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/50360/Water-Meter-Sizing-Worksheet). Guidance for completing water supply fixture counts for commercial applications and drainage fixture counts for all applications is provided in the UPC. Any questions about fixture counts can be directed to Tony Sauro, the City's plumbing inspector, at (406)239-1385.

**Question #8: Do I need a separate water meter for my accessory structure?**

**Answer:** No, Missoula Water does not require a separate meter for an accessory structure, as long as the accessory structure's water service is connected downstream of the meter for the primary residence.

**Question #9: Do I need separate shutoff valves for each structure?**

**Answer:** Yes. Two curb stops shall be installed such that each building served can be shutoff independently. In this instance the curb stops can be placed inside the private property as long as there is a curb stop near the right-of-way.

**Question #10: Can my accessory structure be billed separately for water?**

**Answer:** Yes, the customer can choose to install a separate water meter in a pit for a new accessory structure. If the customer chooses to install a separate meter, curb boxes must be installed that will allow each meter to be shut off independently, or a separate line to the main can be installed for the accessory structure. The meter pit and curb box should be placed as shown in Typical Residential Water Service Detail (STD-404A) which can be found at: [ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/62648/STD-404A-Typical-Residential-Water-Service-Detail](https://ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/62648/STD-404A-Typical-Residential-Water-Service-Detail).

The customer should be aware of the costs associated with metering the accessory structure separately, including the cost of installing the pit and curb boxes that will allow each account to be shut off separately, the additional monthly fixed charge for the water meter, and the additional sewer development fee that is charged for each meter. In the future Missoula Water is also planning to institute a water development fee that will be charged for each meter.

*Updated: 10/17/2025*