



Buying Land With a Shop, Barn or Slab in Polk County

polktx.com/real-estate/rural/shops-slabs-and-driveways/



GENERAL INFORMATION, NOT ADVICE

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What it is and why it matters when buying

Rural listings here often include a metal shop, a barn, a carport, a bare slab or a long driveway. Each one only adds value if it was allowed where it stands and is still in usable shape.

Outside city limits, Polk County requires a development permit before a structure is built or added onto. The same permit is needed to get electric service to a new structure. A building in the floodplain needs an elevation certificate before the permit is issued.

Living space changes the picture. If someone lives in a shop or barn, ask about septic. The county requires a separate septic permit for each additional home on a tract.

What to check before you buy

- Ask which outbuildings were permitted, and when. Inside city limits, ask City Hall. Outside, ask the Permit Department.
- Look at slabs, shop floors and driveways for wide cracks, sunken areas or standing water.
- Check the appraisal district record. It lists the improvements the district has on file for the property.
- If any building has living space, ask how it gets water and septic, and whether that was permitted.
- Compare the buildings to the survey. Look for structures sitting on an easement or over a property line.
- Look up the flood zone for each building site, not just the house.

Questions to ask the seller or listing agent

- When was each building put up, and was it permitted?
- Does anyone live in, or has anyone lived in, the shop or barn?
- Do you have drawings or engineering for the larger buildings?
- What was the bare slab built for? Was it permitted?
- Who maintains the driveway and the road it connects to?

Who handles it in Polk County

Polk County Permit Department

Septic (OSSF) permits, development permits, 911 addresses and floodplain questions outside city limits. For floodplain, ask for the Floodplain Administrator.

PHONE (936) 327-6820 ext. 1
EMAIL permits@co.polk.tx.us
ADDRESS 602 E. Church St., Suite 141,
Livingston, TX 77351
HOURS Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
WEB polktx.gov (polktx.gov/325/Permits)

Source: Polk County Permits page

Polk Central Appraisal District

Property records: owner, acreage, improvements, exemptions, special (agricultural or timber) appraisal and taxing units.

PHONE (936) 327-2174
EMAIL support@polkcad.org
ADDRESS 114 Matthews St., Livingston, TX 77351
WEB polkcad.org

Source: polkcad.org; Texas Comptroller county directory

Inside city limits

Inside Livingston, Corrigan, Onalaska or Goodrich, the city handles building and development permits instead of the county.

LIVINGSTON CITY HALL (936) 327-4311
CORRIGAN CITY HALL (936) 398-4126
ONALASKA CITY HALL (936) 646-5000
GOODRICH CITY HALL (936) 365-2228

Source: each city's website and the Polk County Permits page

Look it up yourself

Official sources only.

Polk County Permits page (polktx.gov/325/Permits)
Development, septic and 911 permits, fees and the floodplain contact.

Polk Central Appraisal District (polkcad.org)
Acreage, improvements, exemptions and taxing units.

FEMA Flood Map Service Center (msc.fema.gov/portal/home)
The flood zone for an address.

How to find a licensed professional

PolkTX does not recommend or list contractors. To check that someone holds a current Texas license, use the state's own search:

Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors: engineer search (pels.texas.gov/roster/pesearch.html)

Professional engineers. Search by name or license number.

Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors: surveyor search (pels.texas.gov/roster/rplsearch.html)

Registered professional land surveyors. Search by name or license number.

TREC license holder search (trec.texas.gov/license-search)

Home inspectors. Search under Inspectors.

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Sources for this page:

- Polk County Permit Department (Polk County Permits page) (polktx.gov/325/Permits)
- Polk Central Appraisal District (polkcad.org; Texas Comptroller county directory)
- FEMA Flood Map Service Center (msc.fema.gov/portal/home)
- Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors: engineer search (pels.texas.gov/roster/pesearch.html)
- Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors: surveyor search (pels.texas.gov/roster/rplssearch.html)
- TREC license holder search (trec.texas.gov/license-search)

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