

## FREQUENTY ASKED QUESTIONS

Top

- [What are the requirements for obtaining a building permit?](#)
- [How can I successfully observe the traffic and parking regulations?](#)
- [What are the steps for obtaining information using the Freedom of Information Act?](#)
- [Are there regulations when owning an animal?](#)
- [What are the rules or regulations when landscaping or burning property?](#)
- [Who is required to have fire inspections and what is required to pass an inspection?](#)
- [Is anyone allowed to solicit or peddle merchandise in Effingham?](#)
- [What are the guidelines to connecting to a water system?](#)
- [What services does Helen Matthes Library have to offer Effingham residents?](#)
- [Who supplies gas and electricity services to residents of Effingham?](#)
- [What companies supply phone and television services in Effingham?](#)
- [Are garbage pickup services provided to Effingham residences?](#)

Q. What are the requirements for obtaining a building permit?

**Answer: Before starting any project, please call the Building Official's office to determine whether or not a permit is required. In general, a permit is required for an installment, erection, alteration, conversion, structural repair, or demolition of any building or structure. On the contrary, a building permit is not required for most remodeling project or fences. A permit is required for installing a pool. If a building permit is required, an application must be signed by the owner or the owner's authorized agent. Building permit forms are available in the Building Official's Office.**

**Along with submitting an application for a building permit, the applicant also needs to submit plans signed by an architect or engineer and a copy of the plat of survey for the building site. After work has begun, any changed must be submitted to the Building Official before the changes are made. In addition to the normal fees to be paid in connection with the issuance of a building permit, if the City needs to use outside professional and technical consulting services during its review and processing of an application to assure ordinance requirements are met, the applicant is responsible for reimbursing the city for these costs. No refunds are issues by the City of Effingham for permits obtained in error. There include, but are not limited to building permits, electric permits, plumbing permits, and sewer taps. To reach the Building Official's Office please call (217)342-5300.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. How can I successfully observe the traffic and parking regulations?

**Answer: The traffic and parking regulations in Effingham are easy to follow and ensure traveling to be more pleasant and safe for everyone. Speed limits are clearly posted throughout the City to reflect school zones, residential areas, and the business district. Trucks and commercial vehicles weighing over 20,000 pounds are prohibited from traveling on weight restricted streets except when picking up or delivering people or packages, emergency vehicles, maintenance vehicles, garbage trucks, and school busses. It is illegal to park a vehicle on a municipal lot for the purpose of selling the vehicle or peddling merchandise from the vehicle. Inoperable and/or unlicensed vehicles may not be parked on a driveway in a residential area. They must be parked in an enclosed structure. No more than five vehicles may be permanently parked on any parcel of property. As a courtesy to everyone, please do not park in front of any mailbox as this might interfere with mail delivery.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. What are the steps for obtaining information using the Freedom of Information Act?

**Answer: If you need records from the City of Effingham, you can obtain them by completing a "Freedom of Information Request Form" from the City Clerk's Office located in City Hall or from our website (www.effinghamil.com). The records requested can be sent to the address provided or they can be picked up in the City Clerk's Office. In order to obtain records, the requestor must provide full name, address, phone number, description of public records sought, whether it is a request for inspection or copies, and whether or not it is for a commercial purpose. The City shall respond to a written request within five business days of**

the receipt of the request. Commercial request will have a response within twenty-one days after the date of the receipt. The City can respond to a request in one of four ways: approve the request, give in part and redact in part, grant in part and deny in part, or deny the request. A list of records and information that are exempt under the Freedom of Information Act is available upon request in the City Clerk's Office. The fees for the records are set forth in the schedule of duplication on the FOIA request form. Some documents, such as Ordinances, Resolutions, City Council Minutes, and the Municipal Code are available online at <http://www.effinghamil.com>.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. Are there regulations when owning an animal?

**Answer: Yes, there are certain regulations a citizen must observe when owning an animal. Any animal running in public places without a leash shall be impounded by the City or other appropriate public agency. It is illegal to keep, maintain, or harbor more than four cats and four dogs of four months of age or older in any residential building within the City. It is illegal to cruelly treat any animal by way of overworking, cruelly beating, torturing, cruelly killing, working any lame or sick animal, failing to provide proper nourishment and shelter, or abandoning an old or sick animal. It is illegal to keep any animal which disturbs the peace by loud noises at any time of the day or night. It is illegal to let any animal under your control go upon City cemetery ground. If you have any further questions about animal control, please call the Animal Control office at (217)347-5695.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. What are the rules or regulations when landscaping or burning property?

**Answer: It is illegal to burn garbage of any kind at any time in the City. On site burning of landscape waste is permitted between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. if it is properly piled and away from any structure. Burning is not permitted on days determined unfit by the Commissioner of Health and Safety. It is illegal to allow landscape waste to smolder at anytime anywhere in the City. You may not burn off landscape waste without a permit obtained from the Fire Department at least five days before burning activity. Grass is not included by definition and therefore is not allowed to be openly burned. As a courtesy to your neighbors, please keep your lawn neatly mowed. If you should have a concern about a neglected lawn, please call the Effingham County Health Department at (217)342-9237.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. Who is required to have fire inspections and what is required to pass an inspection?

**Answer: Every business within City limits is required to have a fire inspection conducted annually under the Life Safety Code. Some of the issues involved in a fire inspection include exit access, obstructed access, signage, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, related annual inspections, fire alarm, sprinkler systems annually tested, electrical system properly marked**

electrical panels, use of extension cords, general housekeeping to include storage of flammable liquids, storage in furnace/utility rooms, structural condition to include roof or building leaks, and missing ceiling panels. Any existing building being renovated may be required to bring the entire building up to current Fire Code. More specific questions may be directed to the Fire Prevention Bureau at Fire Station #1 (Central Fire Station) on Fayette Avenue or by calling (217)342-2555 Ext. 50. Fire Safety House and Public Education tours, appearances, and programs to include Fire Extinguisher training, can be arranged by calling the Public Education Division at (217)342-2555 Ext. 56.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. Is anyone allowed to solicit or peddle merchandise in Effingham?

**Answer: Anyone who desires to engage in peddling or soliciting must apply for a certificate of registration which is available at the Police Department located at 206 E. Section. No certificate of registration will be issued to any person who has been convicted of a felony within five years of the date of application, or to anyone who has been convicted of a violation dealing with peddling or soliciting. Citizens may place signs refusing peddlers and/or solicitors near the main entrance to the residence. These cards may be purchased at the Police Department. Peddlers and Solicitors must immediately and peacefully depart from the premises upon seeing these cards, or upon the request of the resident. Peddling and soliciting are only allowed between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. There shall be no peddling or soliciting on Sundays, or any holiday.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. What are the guidelines to connecting to a water system?

**Answer: Whether you are preparing to move to Effingham, or are currently a resident, the following guidelines can be used to ensure that the process of connection to the water system is done as smoothly as possible. No connections with a water main shall be made without a permit being issued and 24 hour notice having been given to the water department. Applications for these permits may be obtained at the Water Department located on the first floor of City Hall and may be reached by telephone at (217)342-2366. All customers are required to install shut-off valves on their main service line where it enters the building. Water bills shall be due and payable no later than the twenty-fifth day after the billing date. If any such bill is not paid within said twenty-five day period, a ten percent service charge for late payment will be added to the amount due. There will be a \$25.00 charge to reconnect water service. There is no disconnecting fee because of underground leaks, or final disconnection.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. What services does Helen Matthes Library have to offer Effingham residents?

**Answer: Helen Matthes Library is the public library in Effingham. They offer more than 65,000 books, magazines, and audio-visual materials to Effingham residents. Those who live within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City pay for library services through their property taxes and can receive a library card at no charge with proof of residency. However, the fee to replace a lost card is \$3.00. Those living outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the library may purchase a non-resident family card for \$58.00 a year. You may also see the latest happenings, use the online card catalog, and collect other information from the library's website <http://www.effinghamlibrary.org>. The library is located at: 100 E. Market Ave. Effingham, IL 62401. The library's operating hours are Monday-Thursday 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., Friday 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m.-4 p.m., and are closed on Sunday.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. Who supplies gas and electricity services to residents of Effingham?

**Answer: Ameren CIPS (1-888-789-2477) and Norris Electric (1-877-783-8765) supply electric and gas to residents of Effingham. Please contact these companies to determine which supplies to your area.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. What companies supply phone and television services in Effingham?

**Answer: Illinois Consolidated (1-800-553-9981) is the phone company serving Effingham. Cable Television Service in Effingham is provided by Mediacom (217-342-6656) and Illinois Consolidated.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Q. Does the City provide garbage pickup services to Effingham residences?

**Answer: No, garbage pickup services are not provided by the City to Effingham residents. Garbage pickup services are done by private businesses.**

[BACK TO TOP](#)