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# Questions & Answers



Your Guide  
to Frequently Asked Questions

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# Q & A Getting Started



Understanding county government shouldn't be hard. Neither should finding the answer to a quick question. That's why we developed this Question and Answer Guide – to serve as a handy tool for residents looking for information about county services like [marriage licenses](#), [voter registration](#), [how property assessments are calculated](#) or even how to [appeal that assessment](#). Succinct and accurate answers to these and more than 100 other questions are found within these pages.

This publication is intended to become a valuable resource for residents with questions about a county service they may need to access. More than that, we hope you'll explore this guide and learn more about the diversity of services and programs Ada County provides.

Programs and services aside, this publication outlines ways to get involved in Ada County government, either by keeping up on the Board of Ada County Commissioners' public hearing agendas (see below), [commenting on Ada County's budget](#), [volunteering to help during an election](#), [helping crime victims](#), or [assisting those less fortunate](#).

The information presented in this guide is a comprehensive resource you can use to help us continue to shape a strong county government today for the generations of tomorrow.



### Quick Question:

#### How Can I Apply For A Job With Ada County?

Subscribe to receive e-mails about all new positions in Ada County by clicking the ["E-Mail Updates"](#) link just to the right of the Ada County Spotlight on the county's home page. You can also see any listed Ada County job opening by visiting the Human Resources Current Job Openings Webpage [here](#).

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## Q: What Holidays Are Ada County Offices Closed?

**A:** The county recognizes the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the county will recognize the day on Friday. Similarly, county offices will be closed Monday should the holiday fall on a Sunday.



## Q: How Can I Get Involved In Ada County Government?

**A:** The Board of Ada County Commissioners meets daily and has regular public hearings held the second Wednesday of each month to hear and decide on major land-use applications proposed in unincorporated Ada County. Each meeting has an agenda, which is conveniently published on the Internet to help county residents stay informed on current issues. [Click here](#) to view a listing of all agendas. Residents with further questions about business before the Board of Ada County Commissioners should call (208) 287-7000 or email [boccl@adaweb.net](mailto:boccl@adaweb.net). Anyone wanting copies of Ada County Commission meeting minutes can contact the Ada County Clerk's Office located on the first floor of the Courthouse building. Recorded copies of the Commission's meetings are available by completing a [public record request](#). There is a charge of \$1.25 for each CD.

# Q & A Budget

## Q: What is Ada County's Budgeting Timeline?

**A:** Ada County's budget cycle runs on a fiscal year from October 1 through September 30 of the following year, so the county's budget must be developed accordingly. In early spring, the Board of Ada County Commissioners holds meetings with elected offices and departments to begin developing budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. After months of careful planning, the Board and the Ada County Clerk set the tentative budget, which is published in local newspapers and on the county's [Web site](#) for public review and comment.

County leaders present the proposed budget during a series of public hearings in late summer. Residents are encouraged to attend these hearings to learn about the proposed budget and provide their comments and input to the Board of Commissioners. After a thorough public-involvement process, the final budget is approved in September.



## Q: How Can I Comment on Ada County's Budget?

**A:** All residents are encouraged to attend the public hearings where Ada County leaders present the proposed budget. There, citizens can provide comments about the county's spending priorities. Those who cannot attend the public hearings can access the county's proposed budget online at [www.adaweb.net](http://www.adaweb.net). Residents may submit written comments, emailed directly to the Board of Ada County Commissioners at [boccl@adaweb.net](mailto:boccl@adaweb.net) or mailed to their office at 200 W. Front Street, Boise, Idaho 83702.

## Q: What Services Does Ada County's Budget Fund?

**A:** Ada County is required by Idaho law to provide residents specific services including:

- Elections Oversight
- Ambulance Services
- Property Assessments
- Tax Collection
- Law Enforcement & Patrol
- Weed & Pest Control
- Magistrate Court Services
- Indigent Medical Care
- Jail Operations
- Planning & Zoning
- Adult & Juvenile Corrections
- Emergency Services
- Solid Waste Management
- Emergency Management
- Operations
- Public Health Care
- Court Operations
- Land Records

Counties can also choose to provide specific services to its residents such as:

- Parks & Waterways
- Veterans Services
- Mosquito Abatement
- Senior Citizens Services
- Airports
- Fairs
- Agriculture Extension
- Soil Conservation
- Economic Development
- Historical Society/museums

## Q: How Are These Services Paid For?

**A:** Many, but not all, of those services listed above are funded entirely through property taxes. Some of these services are funded through user-fees – meaning residents who use the services pay for those departments to operate. Fee-for-Service departments include: Solid Waste Management and Recreation and Event Services (Barber Park, Expo Idaho, and the Western Idaho Fair). Some divisions within departments or offices are funded through service fees including motor vehicle registrations, licensing, and records divisions. Additionally user-fees support services provided by the Ada County Paramedics and the Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department.





# Q & A Assessments & Taxes

## Q: How is my Property Assessed?

**A:** Idaho law requires that all non-exempt property be assessed at market value each year. All property must be physically inspected every five years. In those in-between years, the Assessor uses actual sales data from comparable properties to estimate your property's market value. The assessment reflects what your home would sell for on the open market. Remember: by law, assessments **must accurately reflect the subject property's market value AS OF January 1 on the year you receive your notice.** Current year assessment notices are typically mailed out in May so assessment notices do not account for market changes after January 1.

**Quick Question:**  
**When Are Assessment Notices Mailed?**

Your assessment notice must be mailed by the first Monday in June. When you get it, look at it carefully to make sure all the information is accurate. If you see information that needs to be corrected, contact your appraiser at the phone number listed on your notice, or call the Assessor's Office at 287-7200.

## Q: How Can I Dispute My Assessed Value?

**A:** Property owners who feel their assessment unfairly reflects the value of their home, as of January 1 of the assessment year, are encouraged to talk with the appraiser who assessed the property. That appraiser will consider market sales information and other evidence to adjust values accordingly. Property owners may appeal the final assessment of value to the Ada County Board of Equalization, which consists of your elected county commissioners. You must appeal to the BOE by the fourth Monday in June. Be prepared to document your reasons for requesting a change in your property's assessed value. You must prove the assessor's value is not the market value for your property as of January 1.

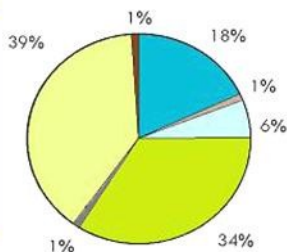
## Q: How is my Property Tax Bill Determined?

**A:** The taxing districts' total budget determines what your tax bill will be. Public hearings are held annually by each taxing district to present a proposed budget and gather public input. Upon budget approval, the district's budget is divided by the total taxable value of all property within the district boundaries. The result is the levy for that taxing district. The property tax levy rate then becomes a multiplier that, when applied in the property tax calculation formula, translates back to dollars to ensure that each property owner pays a proportionate share of taxes to the district in which the property is located.

**Property tax calculation: Taxable Value x Levy Rate = Property Tax Amount Billed**

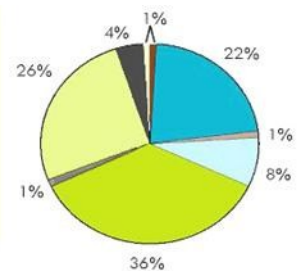
Below are two homes of comparable value, both receive the Homeowners Exemption. You can see the differences in taxes based on the districts that levy from the property.

North End Boise  
 Value: \$189,000  
 Property Taxes:  
 \$1,290.00  
 (Has Homeowners Exemption)



- Mosquito Abatement - 1%
- School District - 34%
- Ada County - 18%
- NW Boise Sewer District - 1%
- Emergency Medical - 1%
- City Of Boise - 39%
- Ada County Highway District - 6%

Meridian  
 Value: \$186,000  
 Property Taxes:  
 \$985.00  
 (Has Homeowners Exemption)



- Mosquito Abatement - 1%
- School District - 36%
- Ada County - 22%
- Meridian Cemetery - 1%
- Emergency Medical - 1%
- Meridian City - 26%
- Ada County Highway Dist. - 8%
- Meridian Library - 4%
- Western Ada Recreation - 1%

# Q & A Property Taxes

## Q: How do I read my Property Tax Bill?

PRIOR YEAR TAX VALUE	PRIOR YEAR TAX	CURRENT ASSESSED VALUE	HOMEOWNERS EXEMPTION	CURRENT YEAR TAXABLE VALUE	
119,800	1,679.92	140,500	0	140,500	
THIS IS A LISTING OF THE TOTAL AMOUNT YOU PAY EACH TAXING DISTRICT, INCLUDING BONDS, OVERRIDES AND CERTIFICATIONS IF APPLICABLE. CALL THE NUMBER LISTED BELOW WITH QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TAXING DISTRICT OR AMOUNT CHARGED.					IF YOU HAVE SOLD THIS PROPERTY OR A MORTGAGE COMPANY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING YOUR TAXES, PLEASE FORWARD THIS BILL IMMEDIATELY.
NAME OF TAXING DISTRICT	TAXING DISTRICT PHONE NUMBER	TAXING DISTRICT TOTAL LEVY AMOUNT	TAX AMOUNT BY TAXING DISTRICT		
BOISE CITY	384-3725	.005032745	707.05		<b>QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ASSESSED VALUE? CALL THE ASSESSOR AT: (208)287-7200</b>  IF ANY PORTION OF THE TAX BECOMES DELINQUENT, A 2% LATE CHARGE WILL BE APPLIED. INTEREST ON THE DELINQUENT BALANCE WILL ACCRUE AT 1% PER MONTH, DATING FROM JANUARY 1ST, WHEN PAYING DELINQUENT BALANCES. PLEASE CALL (208)287-6800 FOR THE CORRECT AMOUNT DUE INCLUDING LATE CHARGE AND INTEREST.  MONTHLY PAYMENTS ARE ACCEPTED.  <b>***IMPORTANT*** PLEASE READ BOTH FRONT AND BACK OF THIS NOTICE.</b>  TO AVOID LATE CHARGE AND INTEREST, FULL OR FIRST HALF TAXES MUST BE PAID IN PERSON OR BE U.S. POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN:  <b>DECEMBER 20, 2007</b>
SCHOOL #1 M&O	854-4029	.003188942	448.05		
SCHOOL #1 BOND	854-4029	.000620000	87.11		
SCH #1 SUPPLMNT	854-4029	.000605090	85.02		
SCHOOL #1 OTHER	854-4029	.000012655	1.78		
ADA COUNTY	287-7000	.002275097	319.65		
ADA COUNTY HIGHWAY	387-6120	.000872920	122.65		
NW BOISE SEWER	344-5991	.000123412	17.34		
EMERGENCY MEDICAL	287-2950	.000103684	14.57		
MOSQUITO ABATEMENT	577-4646	.000025186	3.54		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		.012859731	1,806.76		
<b>Certifications &amp; Special Assessments:</b>					
DRAINAGE DIST #2	342-4591		5.50		

**A:** Shown here is the tax charge detail from the property tax notice received by an Ada County resident. The property lies within the taxing district boundaries of Boise City, School District #1, Ada County Highway District, Northwest Boise Sewer District and Ada County. Idaho law requires that the various components of the school levy be itemized on the bill, so you see four levy entries for School District #1. Ada County also itemizes certain portions of its district levy for information purposes - Ada County, Emergency Medical and Mosquito Abatement. Just \$337.76, or 19 percent of the total bill goes to Ada County. The remaining tax is allocated to other taxing districts.

The Ada County Treasurer collects for all taxing districts, so you just receive one "consolidated" tax bill. The County Treasurer issues a monthly distribution of taxes paid to each district.

## Q: What Is A Taxing District?

**A:** Ada County is just one of approximately 46 taxing districts that use your property tax dollars to fund their budgets. Taxing districts range from school districts, the Ada County Highway District or a city or county itself. Where you live determines which districts can tax your property. If you live in Meridian, for example, the City of Boise can't charge you property taxes to fund its budget.

## More Questions:

**When Are Property Taxes Due:** Property Taxes billed on the primary tax roll are due on December 20<sup>th</sup> each year. The first half of the taxes must be paid by December 20 to avoid a late charge and interest. The second half must be paid by June 20<sup>th</sup> of the following year. *If the 20<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, the due date is extended to the next business day following the 20<sup>th</sup>.*

**Can I Make Partial Payments On Owed Or Future Property Taxes?** Partial payments of any amount are accepted on real property taxes. Pre-payments of \$25 or more are accepted as payment toward future taxes on real and personal property. When any portion of a manufactured home or personal property tax billing becomes delinquent, Idaho law requires the Treasurer demand payment in full.

**How Can I Get Help On My Property Taxes?** Property tax relief is available through the Homeowner's Exemption, the State Circuit Breaker Program, State Property Tax Deferral Program and the Hardship Exemption. For more information, visit the Treasurer's Office Web page at [www.adaweb.net/treasurer.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/treasurer.aspx) or call (208) 287-6800.

**What If My Payment Is Late?** A late charge equal to 2 percent of any unpaid portion of the first half of the tax is added at 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Interest accrues daily, at 1 percent per month, beginning January 1st of the year following the December 20th first half due date. When any portion of a manufactured home or personal property tax becomes delinquent, a Warrant of Dstraint is issued to the County Sheriff for collection. Full payment of all tax, late charge, fees and interest is required to release the warrant.

# Q & A



## County Services: Motor Vehicles

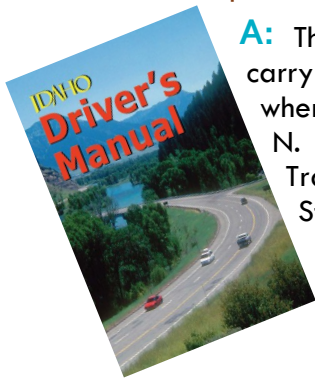
### Q: Can I Renew My Vehicle Registration Over The Internet Or By Phone?

**A: INTERNET:** Visit the Idaho Transportation Department's Web site at [www.itd.idaho.gov/dmv](http://www.itd.idaho.gov/dmv) and click "vehicle registration renewal." You will need your renewal postcard, a credit or debit card and billing address. You must verify all information for your vehicle. You have the option to renew for one or two years, and a full fee schedule is available. After renewing online you should print the receipt and place it in your glove compartment until you get official paperwork in the mail. Expect new paperwork and decals within 10 days (21 days for special plate that require a new plate fee).

**PHONE:** Call either the Benjamin Lane Motor Vehicle Licensing branch at (208) 577-3131 or the Chinden Boulevard branch at (208) 577-4666. Have your credit or debit card information ready. You will receive a processed registration in the mail or you can choose to pick the paperwork up at the Chinden Boulevard DMV. Typically it takes up to 10 business days to receive your paperwork by mail.

**\*\*All credit card transactions will be charged a 3 percent fee. \*\***

### Q: Can I Pick Up A Driver's Manual At The Courthouse?



**A:** The Ada County Courthouse does not carry driver's manuals. You can pick one up where driver's licenses are issued at 400 N. Benjamin Ln., or at the Idaho Transportation Department at 3311 W. State Street in Boise.

### Q: Where do I Get A Driver's License?

**A:** All driver's licenses will be issued at 400 N. Benjamin Lane in Boise. The facility - located near the Boise Towne Square Mall just behind the Milwaukee Street Target store - is conveniently located in a well-traveled area of western Ada County and offers ample free parking to customers.

### Q: When Are The Best Times To Visit The Ada County DMV?

**A:** If you are in a hurry the day you're planning to visit Ada County's DMV, note that the first and end of the month are typically very busy. Likewise, Mondays and Fridays historically see the longest wait times. The least-busy times are Tuesday through Thursday, first thing in the morning. Offices open at 8 a.m., and typically that time of the morning is the slowest period.

### Quick Question:

#### How Many Recreation Vehicles Are Registered in Ada County?

Approximately 17,500 camp trailers, motor homes, and campers are registered in Ada County. Roughly 38,000 ATVs, boats, motorcycles, and other off-road recreational vehicles are also registered in the county.



### Q: How Often Do I Need To Register My Recreation Vehicle?

**A:** Idaho law requires owners to renew registrations on trailers, horse trailers, motor homes, boats, motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles every year. Unlike automobile registrations, these registrations expire December 31<sup>st</sup> each year, regardless of when they were purchased. Owners may register utility or boat trailers for up to 10 years and motorcycles for two years.





# Q & A Elections



## Quick Question:

### Who Is Eligible To Vote?

To vote in Ada County, you must be a resident for at least 30 days, be 18 years old, have no legal disqualifications, and be a U.S. Citizen.

## Q: Where Do I Vote?

**A:** Registered voters needing to find their polling location should log onto the Secretary of State's Web site – [www.idahovotes.gov](http://www.idahovotes.gov). Non-registered voters should either visit Ada County's Election home page at [www.adaweb.net/clerk/elections.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/clerk/elections.aspx) or call the Election office at 208-287-6840.



## Q: Can I Vote Early In An Election?

**A:** Any registered voter looking to vote early or avoid lines at the polls on Election Day should consider voting absentee. Voting absentee is a secure way of voting. You simply request an absentee ballot from the Ada County Clerk's office at least six days before an election, but remember your ballot must be returned to the Ada County Election Office by 8 p.m. on the Election Day, or else your vote won't be counted. Ada County Clerk's officials recommend you request and return your ballot as early as possible.

Eligible voters can also vote early at a designated early voting location. These early voting sites are open for about a month before an election up to the Monday before Election Day. To find an early voting location near you, just log onto Ada County's Election Web page at [www.adaweb.net/clerk/elections.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/clerk/elections.aspx).

## Q: Where Can I Get A Sample Ballot?

**A:** Ada County lists a sample ballot on the [Elections Division Web page](#), so you can research the candidates before you vote.

## Q: Am I Registered To Vote?

**A:** Any eligible voter who has never voted in Idaho, who has recently moved or who has changed their name since last voting must re-register to vote. Registration stays current so long as you vote at least once every four years and do not move. Visit [www.idahovotes.gov](http://www.idahovotes.gov) to download a registration card.

## Q: Can I Register At The Polls?

**A:** Yes, Idaho allows same-day voter registration. To register at the polls you must bring a valid photo ID and a current piece of mail (like a utility bill) that verifies your address.

## Q: Can I Work For Ada County On Election Day?

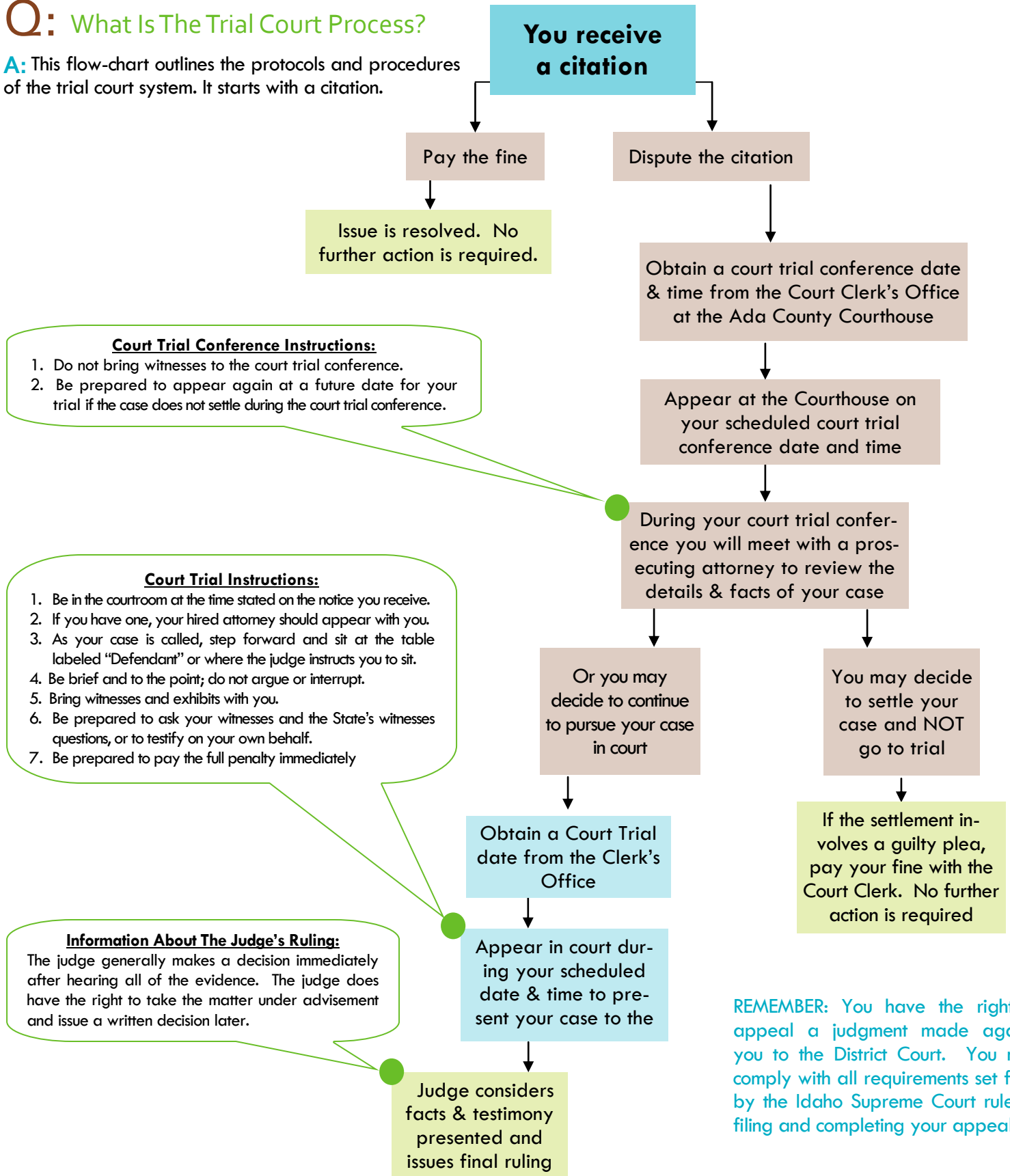
**A:** Up to 1,000 election workers must be recruited to staff the more than 140 precincts, early voting sites and ballot processing center on an Election Day. You can apply to become a poll worker for Ada County online from the Elections' [Web site](#). More information about the various paid positions is posted there as well. For more information, call (208) 287-6860.



# Q & A Courts: Process

## Q: What Is The Trial Court Process?

A: This flow-chart outlines the protocols and procedures of the trial court system. It starts with a citation.



# Q & A



## Courts: General Information

### Q: I Was Cited And Released By The Police. Do I Have Charges Filed Against Me?

**A:** If you were cited and released, the charges are very likely to be filed, but they may be amended by a prosecutor prior to filing. After about a week you can track the status of your case online at [www.idcourts.us](http://www.idcourts.us) and click on "Name Search." If you still have questions after the case has been filed, you may call the Prosecutor's Office located in the city where the crime occurred. In Boise City call (208) 384-3870, in Garden City call (208) 472-2900 and in Meridian call (208) 466-9272. All other citations issued in unincorporated areas of Ada County, including those issued in Kuna, Eagle, Star, Port of Entry, Fish and Game or by the Idaho State Police, call the Ada County Prosecutor's Office at (208) 287-7700.



### Quick Question:

#### Who Can I Talk To About My Court Date?

Call the District Court Clerks Office at (208) 287-6900.



### Q: I Was The Victim Of A Crime When Is The Defendant's Next Court Date?

**A:** The Prosecutor's Office can provide you with court information if they have filed charges against the defendant. Call (208) 287-7700 for more information.

### Q: What's The Difference Between A No-Contact Order, A Restraining Order And A Protection Order?

**A:** A protective order is criminally enforceable, meaning the offender can be arrested and charged with a criminal offense for violating the order. Police cannot arrest someone for violating a restraining order. You must go back to the judge who issued the restraining order to enforce it.

A No Contact Order is issued pursuant to a criminal case and limits the offender's ability to contact the victim. If you have questions about a No Contact Order or its terms, please contact your Victim Witness Coordinator at (208) 287-7700.

A Civil Protection Order is not related to a criminal case, and can be obtained by petitioning a judge directly. It can limit both the petitioner's and respondent's ability to contact the other party. If you have questions or would like to fill out an application, you may receive assistance at Family Advocacy Center & Education Services (FACES). Both No Contact Orders and Civil Protection Orders are enforceable as a criminal offense and law enforcement officers will arrest anyone they find violating the order.

### Q: Where Is Bankruptcy Court?

**A:** Ada County does not deal with bankruptcy court. You'll need to call (208) 334-1074 – the federal bankruptcy court office is located at 720 Park Center.

### Q: What Is The Public Defender's Role?


**A:** The court can appoint an Ada County Public Defender to represent people who cannot afford to hire an attorney in criminal proceedings and in cases where appointed counsel is mandated by statute. The public defender handles all aspects of a case at the trial level and in certain appeals. The office is also appointed in post-conviction petitions, habeas corpus proceedings, child protection matters, juvenile cases, involuntary mental commitments and criminal contempt actions where the court has determined the client qualifies for counsel at public expense.



# Q & A

## Courts: Assistance & Victims Services

### Q: Where Can I Go For Help With The Court System?



**A:** Ada County's Court Assistance Office is a convenient, friendly one-stop-shop for anyone seeking help finding their way through the legal system. The office is located on the first floor of the Ada County Courthouse in room 1158, and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Anyone seeking help with legal services including family law cases and non-criminal civil court matters can find a clearing-house of information at the office and online at [www.adaweb.net/courtassistanceoffice.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/courtassistanceoffice.aspx). Residents can find quick access to informational brochures, forms, links to city, county and state codes, a glossary of legal terminology, local court rules, specialized assistance and much more. The Court Assistance Office is not a substitute for legal advice, and residents should always consult an attorney.

### Q: What Help Is Available To Crime Victims?

**A:** Staff from Ada County's Victim-Witness Unit are on hand to guide vulnerable individuals through the court system and assist them in understanding what resources are available to them. The Ada County Prosecutor's Office has a special Domestic Violence Unit in the office, and victims can receive immediate legal assistance following the arrest of a perpetrator through the prosecutor's DV CORP, or Domestic Violence Case Orientation and Resource Program. More information is available online at [www.adaweb.net/prosecutor.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/prosecutor.aspx). Additionally, we have a specialized Restitution Unit that can work with you to collect and prepare a detailed summary of the out-of-pocket expenses you incur as a victim of crime.



#### Quick Question:

##### When Did Ada County's Crime Victim-Witness Unit Form?

The Ada County Prosecutor's Office established the first Victim-Witness Unit in Idaho in 1985 to make sure a victim's constitutional rights are met and that victims receive assistance through the court process.

### Q: Where Can Victims Receive Additional Help?

**A:** Ada County is unique in that it offers a comprehensive service center housing more than a dozen legal, social and health-service agencies available to victims of family violence. Victims can come to the Family Advocacy Center and Education Services (FACES) facility – located at 417 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Boise, (208) 577-4400 – to talk to an advocate, plan for their safety, meet with a prosecutor or law enforcement official, or receive emergency medical attention. In the two years after FACES opened in 2006, FACES has helped 2,635 victims of child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence.



### Q: As A Crime Victim, Can I Request Charges Be Dropped?

**A:** The Ada County Prosecuting Attorney's Office does not charge crimes on behalf of an individual, but rather on behalf of the people of the State of Idaho. The decision whether to file criminal charges can only be made by a prosecuting attorney, however the Prosecutor's Office will consider a victim's wishes carefully while making that determination.

# Q & A Juvenile Court



**Q:** What Programs Does Ada County Juvenile Court Services Offer For Young Offenders?

**A:** As one of the finest juvenile courts in the country, Ada County Juvenile Court (ACJCS) provides a broad range of services for juvenile offenders and victims of juvenile crime including: Victim-offender mediation, restitution collection, work crew, specialty drug court, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, and probation and detention supervision.

**Q:** My child was involved in a law violation. What happens next?

**A:** If the investigating law enforcement agency determines a crime or status offense (such as Curfew or Runaway) has been committed, a police report will be forwarded to the Prosecuting Attorney. If this is your child's first offense then, depending on the seriousness of the charge, your child may be allowed to participate in Diversion to keep the charge out of court. The Prosecuting Attorney may also decline to pursue the charge. If formal charges (a petition) are filed, you and your child will be summoned to appear for a formal juvenile court process.

**Q:** What Are My Responsibilities As A Parent If My Child Comes Under A Court's Jurisdiction?

**A:** A court investigations officer or probation officer will be assigned to your case to ensure you clearly understand the court process. If your child is found guilty of an offense, you may be required to pay restitution to the victims of your child's crime, and the court may order you to participate in certain programs, such as parenting classes.

**Q:** What Resources Are Available To Victims Of Juvenile Crime?



**A:** The ACJCS Victim Impact Program guides victims through the criminal justice system to ensure they have as much access to court proceedings as possible. A victim advocate can make sure victims of misdemeanor crimes have a voice in all court proceedings and are updated of the progress of the pending case. Additional support is offered through victim-offender mediation – a voluntary program that provides a personal forum for victims to have a meaningful and restorative dialogue with the offender.

Victims of felony offenses (such as rape, aggravated assault or witness intimidation) are assigned a victim-witness coordinator in the Ada County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Similar to misdemeanor cases, the coordinator helps victims through the criminal justice system and offers on-site crisis intervention and referrals to both counselors and community social service agencies.

The Victim Impact Program also coordinates restitution for all juvenile crimes.

**Q:** How Can I Learn More About The Juvenile Court Process?

**A:** Please call our offices at (208) 577-4800, or visit our Web site, which includes many more frequently asked questions, at [www.adaweb.net/JuvenileCourt.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/JuvenileCourt.aspx)

# Q & A Specialty Courts

## Q: What Are Ada County's Specialty Courts?

**A:** Ada County's specialty courts are typically more successful in rehabilitating offenders than the traditional court process. These courts are designed for specific cases, offering treatment alternatives to incarceration. Ada County remains committed to working with the courts to provide innovative programs that continue to provide an effective, fair, and balanced justice system.



### Quick Question:

#### What Happens If Someone Fails To Complete The Specialty Court Program?

Any participant who fails to complete the specialty court program can be sentenced for the crime to which they plead guilty.

## Q: What Specialty Court Programs Are Available?

**A:** Here is a brief description of two specialty court programs offered as alternatives to sentencing in Ada County:

**MENTAL HEALTH COURT:** Ada County's Mental Health Court provides comprehensive rehabilitation and continued support for eligible offenders suffering from specific psychiatric illnesses. Felony offenders who plead guilty to an offense are given alternative sentencing as a diversionary and beneficial alternative to incarceration. Three primary issues are addressed: mental health treatment and support, substance abuse treatment when needed, and training to convert criminal thinking and behavior into pro-social thinking and behavior. Many state and local assistance agencies are involved with the recovery process to stop the criminal cycle and provide a comprehensive recovery program.



**DRUG COURT:** Ada County oversees the largest felony Drug Court and drug treatment program in Idaho. The Drug Court program is voluntary and emphasizes treatment and rehabilitation instead of incarceration. Participants plead guilty to a felony drug charge before entering the four-phased treatment program that usually lasts about 16 months. Participants attend counseling sessions and recovery meetings, are randomly drug tested and must appear in court frequently to update their judge on their status. Of the 550 individuals who have graduated from the Ada County Drug Court since 1998, most have been on drugs for 17 years, and only 41 percent were employed at the time they entered the program. Upon graduation, 97 percent of the graduates were employed. An evaluation of the Ada County Drug Court program showed a 44 percent reduction in relapse in comparison to a control group.



# Q & A



## Public Safety: Sheriff's Services

### Q: What Are The Ada County Sheriff's Responsibilities?

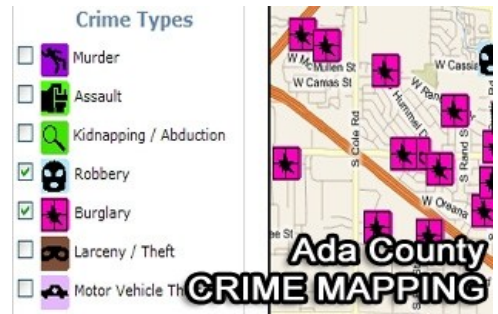
**A:** As the largest local law enforcement agency in the State of Idaho, the Ada County Sheriff's Office provides police services to all unincorporated areas of Ada County. Deputies patrol and protect nearly 1,200 square miles of land and more than 22,125 miles of road. They are responsible for traffic enforcement, criminal investigations, and civil services. The ACSO also oversees several specialized teams including the S.W.A.T. Team and Ada Metro Narcotics Unit.

The Ada County Sheriff is also responsible for running the county's jail. Built in 1977 and later expanded, the Ada County Jail is able to house 1,144 inmates but has been nationally recognized as a model for effectively managing the jail population to avoid overcrowding.



### Q: What Communities Does Ada County Sheriff Serve?

**A:** The Ada County Sheriff's Office provides police services to all unincorporated areas of Ada County. The cities of Eagle, Kuna and Star also contract with the ACSO to provide police services within their communities, which allows them to have a dedicated police force without administrative costs of running a fully-independent police department. The ACSO runs the Emergency Communications Center and contracts to dispatch all of the local law enforcement, emergency medical and fire agencies.



### Q: How Safe Is My Neighborhood?

**A:** Whether you are moving to a new neighborhood and want to know if it is safe or you want to know what crimes have been reported in your area, you can find helpful information with just a few clicks of a mouse. The Ada County Sheriff's Office partnered with Ada County's Information Technology Department to create an online map that allows you to find out more about crimes reported in Ada County in the last three months. You can search by address or type of crime. Each incident will be represented by a pinpoint on a map that will tell you more about the crime, when it was reported and where. The map combines data from four local law enforcement agencies making it a convenient stop for valuable information. Link to the crime map from the Ada County Sheriff's Office homepage at [www.adasheriff.org](http://www.adasheriff.org).

### Q: How Can I Protect My Home?

**A:** Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood alertness, and common sense go a long way toward preventing most property crimes. Improve safety around your house by installing quality doors and use the locks you install! Prune bushes and shrubs that hide windows. Trim any trees that would enable a would-be intruder to climb to a second-story window. Don't hide house keys in mailboxes, planters or under doormats.

Inside your home, install a wide-angle peephole or viewer in all entry doors. Don't open the door to anyone you don't know. When you are answering the phone, avoid giving any information to "wrong number" callers. Check references of any person calling about a survey or solicitation. DO NOT give any personal information to callers you do not know.



# Q & A

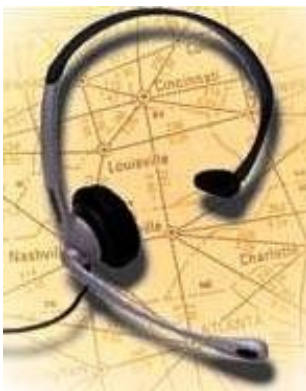


## Public Safety: Sheriff's Services

### Q: What Can I Do To Make My Neighborhood Safer?

**A:** We know that deputies cannot be in all places at all times, so we rely on neighbors to be our partners in the fight against crime. You are the best person to know when something in your area doesn't seem quite right. Take a stand! Join a neighborhood watch group – it is one of the most effective ways to prevent crime and promote safety in your community.

It is easy to get started! Organize a small planning committee of concerned, dedicated neighbors to discuss needs, possible community problems and levels of interest. Contact your local police department or sheriff's office for help in training your neighborhood watch members in home security and reporting skills. Log on to the Ada County Crime Mapping tool for information on local crime patterns. For additional information, call Robin Wagner at (208) 577-3775.



### Q: What Agencies Does Ada County Provide Dispatch For?

**A:** In 2008, Ada County Dispatch answered 441,020 calls – 126,686 of which were 911 calls. The Ada County 911 Communications Center dispatches for: Ada County Paramedics, Ada County Sheriff's Office (which includes Kuna, Eagle and Star police), and the Boise, Garden City and Meridian police departments. Additionally, the center dispatches for all seven fire agencies in Ada County, the Bureau of Land Management, National Interagency Fire Center and the Forest Service if needed.



## More Questions:



**Where Do I Pay A Traffic Ticket?** Traffic citations can be paid at the Ada County Clerk's Office in the Courthouse at 200 W. Front Street in downtown Boise, or online by visiting <http://www.adaweb.net/citepay>. Questions? Call (208) 287-6900.



**How Do I Get A Copy Of An Accident Or Incident Report?** You may file a request for public records on the ACSO Web site, [www.adasheriff.org](http://www.adasheriff.org). Be specific about the information you are requesting and include complete names and birth dates to ensure you receive the correct record.



**How Do I Request A Background Check On Someone?** The Ada County Sheriff's Office does not provide background checks for the public. To request a statewide background check contact the Bureau of Criminal Identification at the Idaho State Police Headquarters, 700 S. Stratford Drive in Meridian or call (208) 884-7135.



**Can I See If Someone Has Been Arrested or Has a Warrant?** Information on everyone who has been booked into the Ada County Jail in the last five days, and all inmates housed in the Ada County Jail is available on our [Web site](#). We also provide a list of outstanding Ada County warrants.



**How Do I Claim Lost Or Stolen Property?** The Ada County Sheriff's Office will return property once the owner is identified. You must show photo ID to reclaim property. Retrieve lost or stolen property at the Public Safety Building – 7200 Barrister Drive in Boise. For more information call (208) 577-3050.



# Q & A

## Public Safety: Ada County Paramedics

**Q:** What Is The Ada County Paramedics' Mission?



AdaCountyParamedics

**A:** To Provide an innovative, effective and efficient Emergency Medical Services System to safeguard and enhance the health and quality of life of those we serve.



**Q:** What Training Does The Ada County Paramedics Department Provide Employees?

**A: PARAMEDICS:** Ada County Paramedics must complete a comprehensive training course designed to test their knowledge and skills. The work covers three primary areas: classroom training, clinical training and paramedic field training. Students must pass a rigorous national exam before they are given a state license and can begin their careers as paramedics. Those who graduate from Ada County's Paramedics Training Course are required to work for the department for at least two years upon graduation.

**EMT:** The Ada County EMT Reserve Program allows volunteers to learn from licensed Ada County Paramedics while they volunteer. The program also involves classroom learning and hands-on patient care. After completing the Reserve Academy, volunteers must attend monthly training and are expected to volunteer at least 36 hours a month for the county. After completing the program, reserves can qualify for paid EMT positions with Ada County Paramedics.

**Q:** Why Does Ada County Have A Reserve EMT Program?

**A:** The primary purpose of this Reserve Program is to provide an auxiliary unit of trained EMTs. These volunteers augment our regular personnel on a daily basis and can be used in an emergency situation when more manpower is critical.

**Quick Question:**  
On Average, How Many Calls-For-Service Do Ada County Paramedics Respond To?  
Each year, Ada County Paramedics respond to more than 21,000 calls from 14 paramedic stations, covering all 1,060 square miles of Ada County and its six cities.

**Q:** How Can I Plan For The Unexpected?

**A:** Enroll in Ada County Paramedics' VitalRide membership program today! For just \$60, you and your family will have the peace of mind knowing you're prepared for any emergency. If you or a family member requires emergency transport by Ada County Paramedics, you or your insurance company will be billed for services. Unfortunately most health insurances don't cover the entire cost – leaving you to pay the balance. But if you are a VitalRide member and have insurance, you would owe nothing for the emergency ambulance transport. If you lack insurance, you would only be responsible for the first \$100 of emergency medical transport services per incident. For more information about the VitalRide program, call (208) 287-2950 or [click here](#) for the Web site!




# Q & A

## Public Safety: Emergency Response & Coroner

### Q: What County Agency Handles Emergencies?

**A:** Ada City-County Emergency Management (ACCEM) is the local government agency responsible for emergency preparedness. ACCEM is directed by the county Emergency Coordinator; one of 44 local coordinators in Idaho responsible for helping our community mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and major emergencies. ACCEM represents Ada County, all six cities within the county, and the Ada County Highway District in matters regarding emergency/disaster preparation, response and recovery. The agency also identifies risks and hazards that could affect Ada County residents and develops localized emergency response plans so area agencies can effectively work together when faced with a threat. The ACCEM Director maintains and manages the county Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which serves as a centralized management facility for responding to disasters and major planned events. In the EOC police, fire, emergency medical services, elected officials, and others coordinate information and resources to support emergency operations in the field during a disaster.



 **Quick Question:**  
**What Hazards Do We Face In Ada County?**

Ada County is at risk for drought and extreme heat, wildfires, floods and flash floods, electrical storms and hazardous materials incidents, including agricultural chemicals. Idaho is ranked fifth in the country for earthquake risk.

### Q: How Can My Family Prepare For An Emergen-

**A:** The ACCEM Web site hosts a wealth of information to help citizens prepare should disaster strike. Visit [www.accem.org](http://www.accem.org) for more information about:

- Emergency management and disasters
- Local natural and technological hazards
- Information about emergency preparedness for families, individuals, business and animals
- Resources for developing family and business emergency response plans
- Training opportunities for emergency responders
- Homeland security status updates
- Information for volunteers
- Information on local weather and road conditions



### Q: How Real is Crime TV?

**A:** Television shows such as CSI or Law & Order, are limited to solving cases in the one-hour time format. In reality, death investigations take an extensive amount of time. For example, Ada County sends toxicology samples for testing to a forensic certified lab out of state. Test results may take several weeks to complete. An exact time of death cannot be exactly determined. Only approximations can be made after a thorough examination of the body and all facts related to the case are considered.

### Q: Who Prepares Death Certificates?

**A:** Funeral homes gather information and prepare death certificates. Death certificates, regarding coroner-investigated deaths, are certified by the Coroner's office with the cause and manner of death. The certificate is then sent to the State of Idaho Department of Vital Statistics. That agency is solely responsible for issuing certified copies of the death certificate to the general public. For more information call (208) 334-5988.

### Q: Who Performs An Autopsy?

**A:** Ada County is one of a handful of Idaho Counties with a morgue and is staffed by a Board Certified Forensic Pathologist and Forensic Assistants to perform autopsies. A forensic autopsy includes a detailed external examination, surgical examination, x-rays, and the collection and analysis of tissue and bodily fluids. Ada County performs autopsies for several Idaho counties for a fee.



# Q & A

## Public Health & Welfare: Indigent Services

### Q: How Does Someone Qualify For County Indigent Assistance?

**A:** Ada County is legally responsible for assisting residents who can't afford to pay their medical bills and who cannot qualify for state or federal help. This service is only a last resort for residents who would otherwise face destitution. All applicants must be Ada County residents. Additionally, the applicant must prove they cannot pay off a medical bill within a set period of time. The medical services must be necessary (and not elective) and the services rendered must be the least expensive available. For more information, call (208) 287-7960 or visit [www.adaweb.net/indigentservices.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/indigentservices.aspx).



### Q: How Are Indigent Cases Accepted?

**A:** Once the applicant has been found to meet all requirements for a claim, the county Indigent Department investigates the claimant's medical history and financial records. Ada County staff subpoena the claimant and interview him or her under oath to ensure county indigent funds are absolutely that person's last resort. Based on this investigation, the Board of Ada County Commissioners will accept or deny the application.

### Quick Question:

#### Who Reviews Medical Indigency Claims?

Ada County is one of just a few Idaho counties with a certified physician on hand to review the medical aspects of each indigency claim.

### Q: How Can I Volunteer To Help?

**A:** Ada County has a program where volunteers care for an individual the courts declare a "ward" – someone who cannot reasonably care for themselves, who cannot afford proper medical care and/or who lacks support from family members and has no outlet for help. Volunteers assist in one of two ways. **Community Guardians** oversee the ward's quality of medical care and other personal matters while **conservators** monitor and report the ward's financial matters. In short, these guardians and conservators are the "eyes and ears" of the court and monitor the care received by Idaho's most vulnerable populations. For more information or to volunteer to help, call (208) 287-7977.



### Q: Who Oversees Community Guardians?

**A:** Ada County has a Guardian Monitoring Program supervising the guardians or conservators to prevent physical and financial abuse of vulnerable populations in Ada County.

The program was the first guardianship-monitoring program formed in Idaho. Monitoring includes reporting compliance, financial audits and home visits associated with roughly 1,500 cases in Ada County.

Call (208) 287-7960 for more information.



# Q & A

## Public Health: Weed & Pest Control

### Ada County's 5 Top ob-NOXIOUS WEEDS



Canada Thistle isn't Ada County's most common noxious weed, but the "Creeping Perennial" uses its extensive root system to reproduce and spread to new areas. Its roots have been found as deep as **27 feet** below the surface!

Bicyclists and bare feet hate this noxious weed with a passion. Puncturevine reproduces by seed—those painful, annoying spiny "goat heads" that stick in your shoes or bicycle tires. Seeds from puncturevine plants can stay dormant for up to 5 years.



This purple plant, Scotch Thistle, looks innocuous but don't let that fool you! The plants can grow 14 feet tall with leaves a foot wide. Scotch Thistle is a very prolific seed producer. That bulge underneath the flower head holds as many as 100 seeds!

Whitetop, or Hoary Cress, is so invasive it can out-compete healthy grasses for essential water and soil nutrients! The perennial noxious weed is so persistent in some areas in the Southwest Boise area that there's little else in the fields!



Poison Hemlock is the county's most common noxious weed. The plant is toxic to people and all classes of livestock. It's important to control the weed since it can be accidentally ingested by animals while they're grazing. The weed grows best in poorly drained soils along rivers and ditches.

If you see these obNOXIOUS weeds in your area, call the Ada County Noxious Weed Control Office: (208) 577-4646

### Q: What Is A Noxious Weed?

**A:** Noxious weeds invade a specific area and kill off local vegetation. As of 2012, there were 64 noxious weed species identified in Idaho. The spreading of these weeds and the damage they can cause to the environment, waterways, agriculture, and general public can be minimized through proper identification and control. To learn more, visit the Idaho State Department of Agriculture – [www.agri.state.id.us](http://www.agri.state.id.us) – to view a list of the state's classified noxious weeds or to order Idaho's Official Noxious Weeds booklet.

### Q: Who Is Responsible For Treating Noxious Weeds?

**A:** According to state law, property owners must control noxious weeds on their land. The Ada County Weed and Pest Control department is required to treat noxious weeds on private property only if the landowner fails to control the weeds. The property owner is then charged a fee for herbicide applications. However, department staff are on-hand to assist land owners with noxious weed treatment recommendations. Residents with questions about controlling noxious weeds should call the Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement department at (208) 577-4646.

### Q: How Can I Find Quick And Easy Information About Pests In Ada County?

**A:** The Ada County Weed, Pest, and Mosquito Abatement Department is making pest control easy with an online "Pest of the Month" guide to address frequently asked questions about common pests found in the county. Each month, staff posts a new, informative Pest of the Month publication to the department's Web site. As each new publication is added to the Pest of the Month library, department officials will build an extensive resource the public can use to instantly access information about problem plants, animals or insects. Additionally the publication provides expert tips on various control measures and how department staff can help residents when dealing with the seasonal pests.

# Q & A


## Public Health: Fight The Bite!



### Q: How Can I Protect Myself From West Nile?

**A:** Treating West Nile as a dangerous threat is VERY important for all Ada County residents. Here are suggestions to Fight the Bite and protect against the West Nile virus.

- **USE AN EPA-REGISTERED INSECT REPELLANT.** Spray yourself and your clothing, too. Mosquitoes can bite through thin fabrics. If you prefer organic prevention, use Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus – the only plant-based insect repellent recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- **COVER UP** and wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when outside especially between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- **DRAIN STANDING WATER.** Mosquitoes breed in standing water so remove potential breeding sites from your property. Empty water from tires, watering cans, buckets, flowerpots, etc. from around your property.
- **CLEAN OR DRAIN** birdbaths or decorative ponds weekly. You can purchase small, inexpensive biological mosquito control “bricks” if you cannot clean your pond frequently.
- **AVOID OVERWATERING** your landscape or lawn.

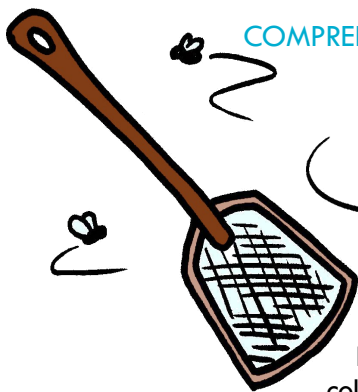
 **Quick Question:**  
**How Does Technology Help The Mosquito Abatement District?**  
Abatement workers monitor several thousand bodies of water currently or historically known to foster breeding mosquitoes. Crews use global positioning technology to locate, monitor and treat the more than 2,700 sites and 50 trapping locations!

### Q: Can I Request A Mosquito Inspection Online?

**A:** [Click here](#) to request a mosquito inspection online. When filling out the online form, ensure all information is correct and that you have completely described the location you want inspected. Please indicate whether you live in a gated community or a neighborhood that is otherwise fenced in. Workers will need to contact you prior to the inspection to secure access.

### Q: How Does Ada County Protect Me From West Nile?

**A:** The Ada County Mosquito Abatement District has multiple tools and programs to control mosquito populations and to prevent the spread of the West Nile virus. Some of the services provided include:



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:** The Ada County Mosquito Abatement District revisits and improves a comprehensive plan every year to determine how to responsibly control mosquito populations at the more than 2,700 known mosquito breeding grounds throughout Ada County. The Mosquito Abatement District’s priority is to reduce the number of mosquito larva that are able to hatch into flying adults. Since not all mosquitoes can be controlled in the larva stage, the county has an aggressive adulticiding control plan that targets adult mosquito populations.

**ADA COUNTY MOSQUITO TRACKER:** Ada County residents can [click here](#) to visit the Mosquito Tracker Web site to see if West Nile has been found in a trapping location near their home. Ada County has about 50 distinct sites where mosquitoes are trapped and tested for West Nile. Results are posted to the Mosquito Tracker Web site along with the number of mosquitoes collected and the percent of Culex mosquitoes found at that site. The Culex species of mosquito primary carrier of the West Nile virus in Ada County.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Ada County has several public-outreach programs like the Fight The Bite campaign and the “I’m One” awareness campaign that demonstrates how it takes just one mosquito bite to contract West Nile. These announcements are posted online and distributed to local media for distribution to television and newspaper audiences.

# Q & A



## Public Health: Solid Waste & Recycling

### Q: How Is Ada County Planning For Future Solid Waste Disposal Needs?

**A:** In August 2007, Ada County Commissioners officially opened the 261-acre North Ravine Landfill designed to accommodate the county's solid waste disposal needs for the next century. The long-range project calls for 14 landfill storage "cells" to be built every two years or as needed. The cells are constructed with the best-available technology to ensure contaminants don't leech into surrounding soil or underlying groundwater. Each cell will include technology that collects landfill gas that accumulates as a byproduct of decomposing trash. To read more about how Ada County profits from that landfill gas, [click here](#) or see page 30 of this document.



**Quick Question:**  
What Does It Cost To Use The Landfill?

The fee is determined by measured volume of waste, not by waste. Additionally, the material you bring to the landfill has a different disposal rate. For a full fee schedule, [click here](#).

### Q: What Recycling Programs Are Offered in Ada County?

**A: DIVERSION PROGRAMS:** Recycling not only makes sense for the environment, but it also saves money by conserving landfill space. Wood waste recycling is a popular program at the landfill. During fiscal year 2008, the county recycled more than 139,278 cubic yards of wood waste. Along with wood recycling, Ada County offers free leaf and Christmas tree recycling.

**CURBSIDE RECYCLING:** Cities throughout Ada County offer curbside recycling. In FY 2008, residents recycled more than 12,000 tons of newspaper, cardboard, plastics, metal cans and paper. Glass is not included in a curbside recycling program.



**TV RECYCLING:** Ada County has a unique recycling program for old computer monitors and television sets. On average a cathode ray tube found in these electronics contains up to eight pounds of lead – a hazardous waste that can contaminate the environment if buried. Ada County recycles old TV sets and computer monitors free of charge to safely destroy these harmful elements.

### Q: Where Can I Safely Dispose Of Household Hazardous Materials?

**A:** County residents can properly dispose of unused fertilizer, paints, cleansers, solvents and automotive products at no charge either at the landfill or at several household hazardous waste collection sites throughout Ada County. [Click here](#) for more information about the household hazardous material collection program and to find a collection site near you.






# Q & A Planning & Zoning

## Q: How Does Ada County Protect My Quality Of Life?

**A:** County residents appreciate the economic, geographic and demographic diversity experienced in Ada County and its six cities. Because Ada County leaders know we live in such a great place to live, work and play, they have developed ordinances and policies to preserve that quality of life for generations to come.

To protect residents' quality of life, Ada County provides regulations to safeguard the general health and wellbeing of residents living in unincorporated Ada County. Read more about how Ada County code protects your quality of life in the county's [Comprehensive Plan](#).



 **Quick Question:**  
**How Can I File A Zoning Violation Complaint?**  
When filing a zoning ordinance complaint, all information is strictly confidential. [Click here](#) to submit the form online.

## Q: How Does Ada County Guide Growth?

**A:** All Idaho counties must implement a Comprehensive Plan to guide future development. Idaho law requires that plan be updated every 10 years. In late 2007, Ada County Commissioners adopted the county's new Comprehensive Plan guides growth by:

- Protecting private property rights
- Encouraging the protection of parks, open space, historic and culturally significant sites
- Incorporating the needs of infrastructure including school facilities, transportation capabilities and county-provided public services
- Including beautification and sustainable practices and goals
- Improving housing standards and supports current housing needs including affordable housing

## Q: Are There Other Land-Use Guidelines That Ada County Follows?

**A:** The Local Land Use Planning Act, enacted by the Idaho Legislature in 1975, mandates all city and county governments follow a strict set of statutory guidelines when making land-use decisions. Briefly, the act protects:

- Private property rights
- Local economies
- Agricultural, forestry, and mining lands
- Environmental features of the land
- Fish, wildlife, and recreation resources
- Air and water quality
- Citizens in areas subject to natural hazards and disasters.



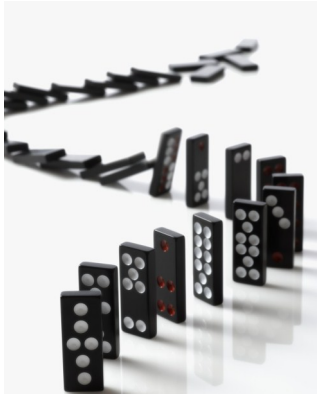


# Q & A Planning & Zoning



## Q: How Does The County Make Land-Use Decisions?

**A:** Major land-use decisions proposed in unincorporated Ada County are not made lightly. An application goes through a rigorous review process that begins with Ada County Development Services staff, and eventually to public hearings held by the county's Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the Board of Ada County Commissioners. Most land-use applications require several public hearings when commissioners will gather public input regarding the proposed application.



## Q: What Is The Role Of Development Services Staff?

**A:** The Ada County Planning and Zoning division is the first stop for a land-use application. Staff ensures the application is compliant with the Ada County Comprehensive Plan and Ada County Code and ultimately makes a recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the Board of Ada County Commissioners who are scheduled to hear the application in a public hearing. Those staff reports that recommend to approve or reject a land-use application are available on Development Services' Web site. [Click here](#) for more information.

## Q: What Is The Role Of The Planning & Zoning Commission?

**A:** The Planning and Zoning Commission meets during public hearings to decide on small-level applications. The commission's role is also to make recommendations on larger level hearings such as city impact amendments, land-use applications that would need changes to the county's comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance amendments, development agreements and planned communities. The Board of Ada County Commissioners has the ultimate say on these applications.

The seven-member Planning and Zoning Commission holds public hearings on the second Thursday of each month and on the fourth Thursday as needed. During these hearings, the commission hears public testimony regarding proposed land-use plans.

## Q: What Is The Role Of The Board Of County Commissioners?

**A:** In all major land-use decisions, the Board of Ada County Commissioners completes the public hearing process when considering the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendations. Applications like Comprehensive Plan amendments or a planned community must be scrutinized at every level of public hearings before ultimately the BOCC makes the final decision on whether to approve or reject an application.

The Board of Ada County Commissioners meets on the second Wednesday of each month to hear public testimony regarding these applications. You can see meeting agendas and other information by [clicking here](#).



# Q & A Quality of Life: Preservation

## Q: How Is Ada County Preserving Open Space?

**A:** In 2007 a special task force was convened to examine critical areas of open space preservation and to suggest funding mechanisms of securing land for future preservation priorities. That Open Space Advisory Task Force met a year later, on Earth Day 2008, to release its findings. The group identified five key preservation areas in Ada County including:

- The north foothills
- The Boise River Greenbelt and connectivity to parks along the river
- Open space at Hubbard, Blacks Creek, and Indian Creek reservoirs in south Ada County
- The Snake River Birds of Prey land in south Ada County
- A countywide trail system.



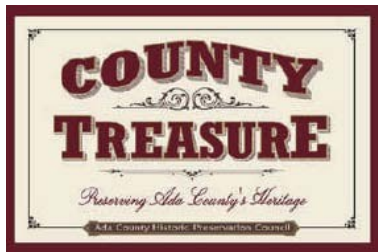
Ada County Development Services incorporated these priorities into the county's Comprehensive Plan, and formed a permanent volunteer advisory board to continue working on preservation issues. The seven-member Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board offers recommendations to the Board of Commissioners in issues relating to county parks and recreation opportunities, public recreation trails, and open space identification and preservation.

## Q: How Can Ada County Secure Open Space Areas?

**A:** The Open Space Advisory Task Force identified several mechanisms to secure property within designated preservation areas, including using federal programs to acquire public lands, entering into cooperative management agreements with local jurisdictions to jointly fund and manage open spaces and also requiring developers to preserve open spaces and trails within their developments.

## Q: How does Ada County Preserve Its History?

**A:** The Ada County Historic Preservation Council – a group of nine volunteers – coordinates the county's efforts to identify and preserve historic landmarks in Ada County. The council takes on multiple preservation and identification projects each year, including a recent survey of 33 historic structures built in Ada County before 1920. Additionally, the volunteer council aims to educate residents about the significance of historic locations in Ada County.



## Q: What Endangered Species Are Found In Ada County?

**A:** Ada County is home to a diverse range of wildlife and some threatened or endangered species including:

- Bull Trout
- Gray Wolf
- Slickspot Peppergrass
- Yellow-Billed Cuckoo
- Aase's Onion

These species—even if they are listed as “candidate species” and have no protection under the Environmental Protection Act—must be included in environmental impact studies for any proposed development. The Fish and Wildlife Service recommends evaluation of potential effects on candidate species for any projects that might occur in the habitat area. Before a land-use application is approved or denied, all effects to Ada County's endangered species must be fully considered.

# Q & A



## Fun & Recreation: Western Idaho Fair

### Quick Question:

How Many People Attend the Western Idaho Fair?

More than 260,000 guests pass through the gates of the Western Idaho Fair each year!



### Q: What Is The Single Largest Event In All Of Idaho?

**A:** The Western Idaho Fair runs each year for ten days beginning the third Friday in August. The event, held at Expo Idaho, is the largest single gathering of Idahoans, visitors and exhibitors from all across the U.S.

Fairgoers can enjoy concerts of all music tastes, taste food from vendors offering everything from deep-fried Snickers to the ice cream potato and see livestock and small animal shows. There's also Butler Carnival with adrenaline pumping rides, high class grounds acts such as hypnotists and comedians and art exhibits including quilts, woodworking and fine art. Additional information can be found at [www.idahofair.com](http://www.idahofair.com).

### Q: What Is The History Of The Western Idaho Fair?

**A:** The first Idaho Intermountain Fair opened in October, 1897, attracting droves of visitors from neighboring states. While the fair served mainly as an agricultural exposition, mining companies, farmers and ranchers showcased their products from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. In 1902, the fair established a location on 84 acres of land at the intersection of present-day Fairview Avenue and Orchard Street. In 1936, the Ada County Board of Commissioners appointed the first fair board to organize a new Western Idaho Fair; and in 1967, the much-revived fair was moved to its current location at the corner of Chinden Boulevard and Glenwood Street in Garden City.



### Q: What Other Events Are Held At Expo Idaho?

**A:** Ada County owns the 240-acre Expo Idaho facility, which books year-round events such as trade shows, car shows, flea markets, livestock shows, and equine events and horseracing. Additionally, Expo Idaho holds business meetings, auctions, baseball games and sports car events. Approximately one million people walk through its gates annually. Boise Hawks Baseball, On the River RV Park, Ada County Paramedics and the University of Idaho Extension Service are also located on the Expo Idaho grounds. A full calendar of events is available on the Web at [www.expoidaho.com](http://www.expoidaho.com).

### Q: How Does Expo Idaho And The Western Idaho Fair Receive Funding?

**A:** As an enterprise fund, no taxpayer dollars are used for any grounds improvements, capital outlays, maintenance, supplies, or salaries. This department is fully funded by fees charged for service.



# Q & A



## Fun & Recreation: Barber Park

### Q: How Do I Rent The Event Center At Barber Park?

**A:** The 9,700 square-foot multi-purpose Environmental Education and Special Events Center at Barber Park has become a popular spot for large gatherings like family reunions, picnics, wedding receptions and other special events. The beautiful facility nestled near the Boise River can hold up to 250 guests inside; an outdoor patio can accommodate an additional 100 people. You must make your reservation at least 30 days before your event. The facility is available by reservation daily from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. with an additional hour provided for cleanup. For more information call (208) 577-4577 or visit our [Web site](#).



### Quick Question:

How Many Miles Of The Boise River Greenbelt Are Under The County's Jurisdiction?

Ada County is responsible for about 7.5 miles of the bicycle and pedestrian path.

### Q: I've Never Floated The Boise River What Do I Do?

**A:** Each year, area residents beat the summer heat with one of the most treasured pastimes in Ada County – a six-mile, two-hour float down the Boise River. Typically river flows are safe enough to float starting early June through September. Floaters can rent tubes and rafts at Barber Park, or inflate their own at free air stations adjacent to the water access ramp. All river floaters must get out of the river at the footbridge in Ann Morrison Park. From Ann Morrison, an hourly shuttle bus takes floaters and their equipment back to Barber Park for a small fee. The shuttle bus arrives at the park hourly between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekends and holidays and from 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. during the week.



### Q: How Do I Get More Information About Floating The Boise River?

**A:** To get more information about floating the river, including equipment rental information and hours of shuttle operation, call (208) 577-4584 or [click here](#) to be directed to Epley's Boise River Rentals.

### Q: How Do I Stay Safe While Floating The Boise River?

**A:** Even if the river levels become safe enough to float, remember to always use extreme caution when floating the Boise River.

#### Boise River floaters should ALWAYS:

- Make sure everyone in your party can swim
- Wear life vests, appropriate clothing and shoes
- Be aware of your surroundings and where the river is taking you
- Be alert of dangers ahead
- Use the buddy system if floating in a group
- Guard against the sun - wear sunscreen and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- Notify family and friends when you're leaving and when you expect to return from floating

#### Boise River floaters should NEVER:

- Drink alcohol or use drugs while floating
- Bring small children, infants or pets along
- Bring glass containers

**Remember: Leave The River Cleaner Than You Found It!**



# Q & A Fun & Recreation



## Q: What Trail System Does Ada County Have?

**A:** The Ada County Recreation and Event Services Department provides over 20 miles of the more than 120 mile Ridge to Rivers trail system connecting 80,000 acres in the Boise Foothills. The Ridge to Rivers Partnership includes the City of Boise, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, Ada County and the Idaho Fish and Game Department. For more information, visit the Ridge To Rivers Web site at: [www.ridgetorivers.org](http://www.ridgetorivers.org).

## Q: How Is The County Helping To Enhance The Greenbelt?

**A:** In addition to maintaining more than seven miles of riverside trail, Ada County co-chairs a coalition of nine cities and two counties planning a system of land and water trails along the Boise River from Lucky Peak dam to the Boise River confluence with the Snake River. Expanding a County-wide trail system was championed by the Ada County Open Space Advisory Task Force and will be a principal task for the incoming Ada County Park, Open Space, and Waterway Advisory Board.

## Q: How Does The County's Commitment To Space Preservation Secure Recreation Opportunities?

**A:** Ada County holds and manages over 1,000 acres of Conservation Easements to ensure these lands are never developed and natural features are preserved. Ada County also works with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and other city and non-governmental agency partners to preserve recreation and wildlife connectivity, particularly across roads and highways. Ada County's Barber Park and Hubbard Recreation Area provide important wildlife habitat and viewing opportunities.

## Q: Where Can I Go Cycling In Ada County?

**A:** Extensive city and county trails systems offer wonderful cycling opportunities. Also, the Idaho Velodrome and Cycling Park in Eagle is a world class cycling park on Ada County land leased by the City of Eagle with trails, tracks, ramps and other attractions. The adjacent 85-acre Eagle Sports Complex also has a skateboard park, parking lot and picnic area.



## Q: Who Builds And Maintains The Lucky Peak Boat Docks?

**A:** Ada County is responsible for building and maintaining the boat docks along the shores at Lucky Peak. There are around 475 across the reservoir spanning three counties. In 2009 the county replaced 70 outdated docks. Docks are constructed with boat registration money and Waterways Improvement Fund grants through Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Ada County Waterways operates with no Ada County tax dollars it is funded entirely through Ada County's portion of boat registration dollars.

# Q & A Green Government

## Q: What Are LEED Green Building Standards?

**A:** The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) developed a checklist of sustainable building standards for its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System that serves as a guide for “green” building projects. The USGBC provides third party certification that the building truly meets the definition of a “green building”. Throughout the building process, there are ways to earn credits toward LEED certification. Examples include using local building products, recycling construction waste, and using construction materials that are sustainable and do not emit odors or toxins that could damage indoor air quality. Once a project is complete, the credits are tallied and the total determines a building’s certification level. Projects are awarded a “Certified”, “Silver”, “Gold”, or “Platinum” certification depending on the number of credits they acquire. The more credits, the higher the certification. [Click here](#) for more information about Ada County’s LEED-Certified buildings.



*Pictured here are a few of Ada County’s LEED-Certified buildings - From the top, Ada County Parks & Waterways Headquarters at Barber Park, the Courthouse Building, The Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Building, and Ada County Paramedics Station in Star.*

## Q: What Is Ada County’s Commitment To Green Building?

**A:** In 2003 Ada County adopted a resolution requiring all construction or remodeling projects over 10,000 square feet be built to the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. The county has since served as a local leader in LEED building. The Courthouse and Administration Building in downtown Boise became Idaho’s first LEED-certified building in 2005. As of 2009, Ada County owns the most commercial LEED-certified buildings in the state! Building sustainable facilities means Ada County pays less in energy, operation and maintenance costs, while having a positive affect on environmental quality. Savings are quickly realized. The Ada County Courthouse, for example, saves about \$150,000 a year in energy costs due to its efficient design.



## Q: How Does Ada County Turn Landfill Gas Into Energy?

**A:** Municipal solid waste landfills are one of the largest human-generated sources of methane emissions in the nation. Decomposing waste buried in landfills produces a gas mixture of methane and carbon dioxide, and when trapped beneath the earth can explode if not properly handled. Most municipal landfill operators burn the gas in flares to reduce this risk to the environment. But instead of torching this flammable gas, Ada County has turned the massive amounts of methane into cash by generating electricity. Ada County started the landfill gas-to-energy project in 2006, and the county earned \$600,000 in the just first two years of energy production. Ada County’s decomposing trash can power on average 2,400 homes a year!