

# RESIDENT'S GUIDE

Services, Resources, and Regulations



Borough  Mountain Lakes

## Borough Services

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### **Mountain Lakes Borough Hall** **973-334-3131**

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400 Boulevard Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm  
website: [www.mtnlakes.org](http://www.mtnlakes.org) email: [borohall@mtnlakes.org](mailto:borohall@mtnlakes.org)

### **Police Department** **973-334-1413**

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400 Boulevard (lower level) **Emergency: dial '911'**  
Records bureau/administrative services 973-334-1507  
Monday-Friday, 8:00am-1:00pm

### **Volunteer Fire Department** **973-394-1094**

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400 Boulevard **Emergency: dial '911'**

### **Department of Public Works** **973-334-1577**

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55 Pocono Road Monday-Friday, 7:00am-4:00pm

### **Recycling Center**

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55 Pocono Road Monday-Friday, 7:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday, 7:00am-2:00pm

### **Construction Department** **973-334-8219**

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400 Boulevard (lower level)  
Construction Officer Monday-Thursday, 2:00-4:30pm  
Zoning Officer Monday, 2:00-4:00pm

### **Municipal Court** **973-625-8300 ext. 214**

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1 St. Mary's Place, Denville

### **Health Officer** **973-331-3316**

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### **Borough Council**

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[www.mtnlakes.org/Borough/BoroCouncil](http://www.mtnlakes.org/Borough/BoroCouncil)

## A Letter FROM the Borough Council

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Dear Mountain Lakes Resident,

Mountain Lakes was developed over 100 years ago, as a planned residential park, designed to embrace family and community life amid natural surroundings and a harmonious blend of residences and landscape. In 2005, the special character of our town was recognized and honored with inclusion in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Over the years, successive borough councils, with help from citizen advisory groups, have crafted regulations, ordinances, and procedures intended to ensure the health, safety, and quality of life for current residents and to preserve the unique character of the community for future generations.

This *Resident's Guide* provides an overview of services, resources, and regulations. It is a digest of essential information pertaining to residents' rights and responsibilities as members of the community.

We invite you to explore the borough website, where you will find contact information, service hours, and details on all aspects of borough operations, as well as links to additional resources. The homepage ([www.mtnlakes.org](http://www.mtnlakes.org)) features the 'Mountain Lakes Notice Board' — a running list of current community events.

In addition, we encourage you to sign up for the borough's email alert program, to receive timely notices from Borough Hall about important community affairs.

*To register for email alerts, send an email to:*

**[borohall@mtnlakes.org](mailto:borohall@mtnlakes.org)**

The Borough Council welcomes resident participation in community affairs. Indeed, hundreds of Mountain Lakes residents volunteer their time and talents serving on borough committees, commissions, and advisory groups. It's a great way to get involved, stay informed, and contribute to the community.

The Mountain Lakes Borough Council

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# **Borough Government and Operations**

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## **Form of Government**

On January 1, 1975, Mountain Lakes adopted a form of municipal government in which the Borough Council retains legislative power, but delegates administrative duties to a salaried, full-time Manager.

## **Borough Council**

The Borough Council's role is purely legislative; it establishes policy and passes ordinances and resolutions. The seven Borough Council members are elected at large, to serve with no compensation, for overlapping four-year terms. Elections are partisan and are held every two years in November, with three or four seats alternately falling vacant. The new Council takes office at the reorganization meeting, which must take place during the first seven days of January. At this time, the Council elects the Mayor and Deputy Mayor by majority vote from among its own members. These officials serve for one year and may be re-elected. The Mayor presides at Council meetings, represents the Borough on ceremonial occasions, signs contracts, deeds, resolutions, ordinances, and other documents for the borough, and may perform marriages.

## **Borough Council Meetings**

Council meetings are held the second and fourth Monday evening of each month, except July, August and December, when only one meeting is held. The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law) requires that notices of meetings be provided in advance, and meetings be open to the public. Some topics are discussed only in closed session. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the borough website.

## **Borough Manager**

The Borough Manager is appointed by the Council for an indefinite term and serves at the discretion of the Council. He or she is the chief administrative officer of the borough, responsible for overseeing all municipal departments, coordinating day-to-day

operations, and implementing the policies set by the Borough Council. The Manager serves as Treasurer of borough finances, and acts as a general liaison and ombudsman for the residents, responding to citizens' questions and concerns about borough operations.

The Borough Manager's office is located at Borough Hall, and all business related to borough operations is conducted at this location.

### **Borough Clerk and Registrar**

The Borough Clerk serves as secretary to the Governing Body, secretary to the Municipal Corporation, Election Official, Licensing Official, Records Manager, Registrar of Vital Statistics, and Administrative Official at the municipal government level.

The following are under the purview of the Borough Clerk:

- Birth and death certificates
- Marriage/Civil Union licensing
- **Animal licensing**
- **Raffle licensing**
- **Soliciting**

### **Department of Public Works**

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the public infrastructure. This includes the borough's roads, curbs, and sidewalks; the water distribution system and interconnections with neighboring towns; the sanitary sewer collection and storm water management systems; and the borough's recreation venues and public parks. The department, in conjunction with the police and fire departments, is an integral part of the emergency management team, and is responsible for implementation of any necessary emergency response. Through a shared services agreement, the Director of Public Works also serves as Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds for the Mountain Lakes Board of Education.

## **Police Department**

The Police Department provides police services on a 24-hour basis. All police dispatching services are provided by the Morris County Division of Law and Public Safety. Calls for police service are received by a central dispatch and relayed to the officers in the field. All residents are encouraged to contact the police immediately whenever they witness any activity that seems suspicious or which causes concern. Prompt notification enables the police to prevent crimes, apprehend violators, and keep the community safe.

**Commonly used forms** and informative brochures are available in the police lobby at all times, as well as on the borough website.

## **Volunteer Fire Department**

The Mountain Lakes Volunteer Fire Department provides fire, rescue, and hazardous materials services to the residents and businesses of Mountain Lakes. It is staffed exclusively by volunteers, and includes a Junior Fire Department, made up of Mountain Lakes High School students age 16 and older. All members complete regular training to maintain competency in the latest fire fighting tactics and technology. The Department welcomes dedicated volunteers, who are crucial to its viability.

## **Municipal Court**

The shared Municipal Court of Denville and Mountain Lakes is one of limited jurisdiction, holding weekly sessions to hear cases involving minor criminal offenses, motor vehicle violations, parking summons, and local ordinance offenses. The Municipal Court has the authority to impose fines and incarcerate offenders up to one year in the Morris County Correctional Facility.

## **Health Commission**

The borough has a contract for health services with the Township of Montville. Health screenings and education programs, advertised on the borough website, are provided periodically for the well-being of the community.

# Residential Construction

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## Construction Department

The Construction Department issues and processes permits for all construction in the borough. The Construction Officer can provide specific information about permit requirements, turnaround time, and supporting documentation required.

Detailed construction regulations are documented in the General Code, a database of borough ordinances, available online via the borough website. All new construction, alterations, and landscaping structures are regulated by the Borough Land Use Ordinances and International Residential Building Code.

## Construction Permits

Any construction, alteration, demolition, or property improvement, except minor repairs, requires a permit from the Construction Department. Permit applications are submitted to the Construction Department along with construction plans and a property survey. All open permits must be closed out before a home or building can be sold. Some of the more common items for which permits are required include:

- Additions
- Enclosing a porch
- Replacing stucco, siding, and roofing
- Outdoor fireplaces
- Adding/replacing a fence, deck, pool, or shed
- Remodeling a kitchen or bathroom
- Installing a water heater or air conditioner
- Electrical work such as adding outlets or service upgrade
- Plumbing work such as adding a hose bib, installing a gas line or installing a sprinkler system
- Removing an oil tank
- Significant ground disturbance (e.g., clearing, grading, fill, tree removal)

No permit is required for

- Painting or wallpapering
- Replacing gutters and windows
- Installation of trees and shrubs

Landscaping hardscape (e.g., patios, walkways, driveways) must receive approval from the Zoning and/or Construction official(s) prior to installation.

### **Planning Board/Zoning Board of Adjustment**

The Planning Board hears all applications pertaining to lot subdivision and planned development. The **Zoning Board of Adjustment** reviews any project that does not conform to the Borough Land Use Ordinances, and has the authority to grant or deny a variance.

## **General Regulations**

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### **Property Maintenance**

The property maintenance code was established to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the borough residents. It sets minimum standards for maintenance of your home and grounds, emphasizing safety and cleanliness.

- Property must be free of garbage and debris, dead or dying tree limbs, icy conditions, rodent or insect infestation, and fire hazards.
- Structures must be free of excessive peeling paint, loose roof shingles, broken glass, or crumbling stone.
- Equipment or materials related to commercial or industrial uses may not be stored in public view unless a permit has been granted.

### **House Numbers**

To ensure that emergency vehicles can easily find specific homes, the borough requires house numbers be clearly visible from the road and measure between 4 and 8 inches in height.

## Hedges, Shrubbery, and Right-of-Way

For sight line safety reasons, hedges, shrubbery, and other plantings within 10 feet of a roadway and 25 feet of an intersection must be

- maintained by the homeowner at a height of no more than 2.5 feet, including those in the right-of-way.

The right-of-way is borough-owned property, and includes the paved road surface and that portion of property adjacent to the pavement where underground or overhead utilities and/or fire hydrants may be located.

- Any new planting in the right-of-way requires permission from the borough.
- To avoid damage to vehicles and allow for proper snow removal, **no large rocks or boulders are permitted in the right-of-way.**
- The width of the right-of-way varies depending on the street; **street-specific right-of-way information** is posted on the borough website, under the Shade Tree Commission.

## Accessory Structures and Fences

Accessory structures are subordinate-use structures such as pergolas, sheds, pools, fences, play equipment, and exterior air conditioning units. In general, accessory structures are subject to the same setback requirements as primary structures, and may not be located in the front yard.

- Play equipment must be located at least 10 feet from the rear or side property line, be less than 12 feet in height, and may not be located closer to any street right-of-way than the primary structure (i.e., the house).
- Fencing is permitted only within the building envelope, except in the case of lake front property, where owners may erect a 2- to 3-foot chicken wire fence to discourage geese from coming ashore.
- Stone walls are in keeping with the Hapgood tradition, and so, fall into a special category. Consult the Borough

Zoning Officer for direction before installing any type of stone wall.

- For docks and rafts, see Lakes Regulations.

### **Temporary Signs**

Excessive signage can be unsightly, distracting to motorists, and diminish property values. Therefore,

- No signs are allowed on public property.
- Any sign on private property advertising a business or event must be removed upon completion of the advertised service or event.
- Any sign except property identification must be located at least 10 feet from any front lot line or any residence lot line, and is size restricted.

### **Noise and Alarm Nuisances**

Borough regulations aim for respect for your neighbors. Excessive noise (e.g., parties, music) is prohibited, as follows:

- Sunday through Thursday between 10:00pm and 8:00am
- Friday and Saturday between 11:00pm and 9:00am
- Construction noise is prohibited every day between 8:00pm and 8:00am.

False alarms from electronic alarm systems are considered a nuisance, as they unnecessarily consume police resources.

- Frequent false alarms are subject to a fine schedule.
- Homeowners should maintain current alarm service registrations with the police department, to ensure proper notification in the event of alarm activation.

### **Explosives and Fireworks**

It is illegal to discharge any firearm or explosive device within borough limits.

### **Animal Control**

All dogs and cats 7 months of age and older are required to be licensed, with current rabies vaccination on file with the borough.

### *Dogs are not permitted*

- on beaches, playgrounds, playing fields or non-wooded portions of school property **at any time**.
- to bark incessantly.
- to damage or destroy the property of others.

### *Owners must*

- have control of their dogs at all times.
- clean up after their pets on all public property.

### **Blocking Sidewalks and Roadways**

Blockage puts motorists and pedestrians at risk and is prohibited by both borough regulations and State statutes. It is illegal to

- obstruct the passage of vehicles and pedestrians on streets and sidewalks.
- deposit snow, ice, or yard waste in the street.

### **Parking Regulations**

#### **On-Street Parking**

- Parking is prohibited from November 15 to April 1 between 1:00am and 6:00am to facilitate snow removal.
- Parking is permitted on **one side of the street only**; homeowners who are entertaining should remind their guests of this restriction.

#### **Train Station Parking**

- Parking permits are required for parking exceeding 3 hours; annual permits are sold at Borough Hall.

#### **Abandoned, Commercial, and Recreational Vehicles**

- All vehicles on public or private property must be legally registered with the Motor Vehicle Commission.
- Vehicles may not remain inoperable for more than 30 days.
- Commercial vehicles in excess of 6,000 pounds may be parked only in the normal course of business. Boats, trailers, and other recreational vehicles under 20 feet in length may be parked in the rear or side yard upon

approval by the Planning Board. Those over 20 feet in length may be parked in a driveway for no more than 48 hours.

## **Speed Limits**

Speed limits are strictly enforced for the safety of all those who travel within the borough. Adherence to posted speed limits is especially important for pedestrian safety, because many borough streets do not have sidewalks. Speed limits are as follows:

- Route 46: 45 mph
- Boulevard: 35 mph
- All other borough streets: 25 mph

## **Lakes Regulations**

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The borough's nine lakes are for the use and enjoyment of all Mountain Lakes residents, and all residents are collectively responsible for protecting the quality of water entering the lakes, whether by streams or by runoff. Borough regulations are designed to maintain water quality, reduce algae growth, and prevent eutrophication (filling in of the lakes).

### **Lake Waters**

Introduction of the following into lake waters is prohibited:

- Chemicals
- Fish
- Polluted water
- Organic materials (leaves and grass)
- Refuse

### **Encroachments**

Lake front property owners have the responsibility to maintain our lakes by not creating any encroachments on the lakes, and not altering the shorelines or diminishing the views of the lakes for others.

Both docks and rafts require a permit and must be 25 feet from the side property line extended into the lake. Each lake front owner is allowed one dock and one raft.

### ***Docks***

- May be no larger than 20 feet long by 6 feet wide by 3 feet high.
- May have nothing affixed to the top.
- Must be readily removable.

### ***Rafts***

- May be no larger than 50 square feet in size; must be flat and no more than 3 feet high.
- May not extend into the lake more than 50 feet from the owner's property.
- Must be permanently marked with the owner's name.
- Must be free floating.

### ***Ropes***

- May not be strung from the shore to a raft.
- May not be used to enclose any part of a lake surface.

### **Riparian Buffers and Wetlands**

- Properties with a river, stream, pond, or wetlands are subject to regulations of the State Department of Environmental Protection and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency.
- Waterway (lake, river, or stream) riparian buffer zone regulations limit the area of vegetation that can be disturbed, and may affect where and whether a property owner can build or develop within that zone.
- Property owners should familiarize themselves with these state and federal regulations before planning any development in a riparian buffer zone.
- Lake front and stream front property owners are encouraged to plant riparian buffers to leach nutrients and sediment from runoff water before it reaches the lakes.

## **Environmental Regulations**

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The Mountain Lakes environment is critical to maintaining the lifestyles of residents and the character of the borough. Protection of our natural resources is the focus of many borough regulations.

### **Fertilizers and Pesticides**

Borough regulations restrict the application of fertilizers and pesticides as noted below.

#### **Fertilizers**

Runoff of fertilizer containing phosphorous and nitrogen into waterways stimulates excessive algae and weed growth in the lakes. Borough regulations restrict the application of phosphorous fertilizers. In addition, New Jersey State law prohibits fertilizer application

- During winter months, or when the ground remains frozen.
- Before or during heavy rainfall.
- Within 25 feet of any body of water, or 10 feet when using a limited spread applicator.

#### ***Pesticides***

Only a property owner may apply pesticides on their own property without a license. All others must have a New Jersey Pesticide Applicator license. Landscapers must display their license number clearly on their truck in 4-inch high letters.

### **Feeding of Wildlife**

Feeding of wildlife is prohibited in any public park or public space. Feeding of waterfowl is prohibited anywhere in the borough, including private property.

## Water Conservation

Mountain Lakes has incorporated a water management plan into the daily life of all property owners. During the months of June, July, August, or September, lawn watering may be done

- On odd or even days coinciding with the house number of the property.
- Only between the hours of 12:01-6:00am or between 6:00pm and 12:00 midnight on the appropriate day.

Exemptions are made for new lawns, shrubs, trees, and for hand watering. Restrictions may vary depending on rainfall.

## Preservation and Protection of Trees

The borough's tree canopy is a defining environmental characteristic of the community. Trees are protected by borough regulations, and removal requires a permit.

### *Borough Shade Trees*

Trees located on any street right-of-way, highway, public place, or park are the property of the borough.

- Destroying, trimming, or attaching any item to a tree is prohibited and punishable by fines and replanting requirements.
- Borough trees must be protected during construction projects; a **Street Tree Management Plan** must be filed with the Construction Department.

### *Trees on Residential Lots*

Because trees on residential lots have a direct benefit to neighbors and all residents of the community, trees located within the setback areas of residential lots are protected by law.

- A **Tree Removal Permit** is required for removal of trees measuring more than 8 inches in diameter.
- Only a certain number of trees may be removed per year without cost. Additional removals will incur fees, and require neighbor notification.

- Trees must be protected during construction projects; a **Setback Tree Management Plan** must be filed with the Construction Department.

## Litter and Yard Waste

No litter or yard waste may be deposited on any borough-owned property or in any body of water. All litter must be placed in designated receptacles in parks and public places. Yard waste, except grass clippings, may be deposited at the Recycling Center.

## Trash Collection and Recycling

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Trash collection and recycling rules are subject to the terms of the borough's contract with the sanitation contractor. Visit the borough website for the most current information, or contact the DPW with any questions. Presently:

- The cost of the collection of trash and recyclables is included in residents' property taxes.
- Tipping fees (the amount charged at the transfer station per ton of garbage dumped) are not included in property taxes. This cost is paid through the sale of green bags and, as such, is a "user fee" controlled by each household through the amount of garbage generated.

### Collection

- Household trash and recycling is picked up once a week; scheduled by residential voting district.
- Bins must be placed for "back door" pickup, i.e., adjacent to the garage or within 6 feet of the house.
- By NJ State law, recycling must be separated from trash.
- *Only trash placed in tied green Mountain Lakes garbage bags will be collected.*
- Green bags may be purchased at Borough Hall and some local businesses.
- No yard waste, leaves, or brush collection is provided.

## Recycling Center

- Recycling areas for household recyclables and organic waste are clearly marked.
- Residents only (no contractors) may deposit organic waste in the form of leaves and brush (**no grass clippings**) in the designated areas. **It is illegal to dump yard waste on borough property.**
- Voluntary residential recycling is strongly encouraged for items that can be donated, reused, or refurbished.

## Bulky Trash

- Any trash that cannot be placed inside a green Mountain Lakes trash bag for collection is considered ‘bulky’ trash.
- The borough holds two bulky trash collection programs each year (Friday and Saturday) in April and October. Dates, times, fees, and acceptable items are posted on the borough website.
- Bulky trash can be brought to the **County Transfer Station** on Edwards Road in Parsippany at any time.

## Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous waste can be disposed of through the **Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority**.

- Household alkaline batteries are not considered hazardous waste and should be thrown in the trash.
- Small rechargeable batteries and cell phones are accepted in the DPW office.
- Automotive batteries, used motor oil, and anti-freeze are accepted at the Recycling Center in designated areas.
- Electronic waste is accepted only on designated days.

## Recreation

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### Residency Requirements

- Use of any recreational special-use facility owned by the borough, and developed and maintained with borough

funds is restricted to borough residents only. Residents using special-use facilities must have proof of residency at all times, and tags when required for facility use.

- Borough-owned parks and open spaces are accessible to all regardless of residency.

## **General Rules**

- Use of any borough recreational facility is limited to residents and any guests accompanying them.
- Use of the tennis courts and beaches requires seasonal tags, available at Borough Hall.
- Beaches and parks are closed to the public from dusk until dawn.
- All activities are at individual's own risk.
- Use of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited at beaches, parks, and playing fields, as are glass containers.
- Animals are **strictly prohibited** from all beaches and playing fields **at all times**.
- Use of borough facilities for special events requires submission of a **Facility Use Form**, to be approved by the Recreation Director.

## **Public Beaches, Lakes, and Docks**

### ***Swimming***

- Swimming is at individual's own risk except in designated swim areas at Birchwood Beach and Island Beach when lifeguards are on duty.
- Beach rules are posted at both swimming beaches.
- Swimming is prohibited at all dams.

### ***Boating***

- Only non-power boats are allowed on the lakes.
- All boats must be registered with the police and all boaters must have a personal flotation device as per United States Coast Guard regulations.

- Canoe racks and boat rings can be rented seasonally on a first come, first served basis beginning April 1 at Borough Hall. Only one rack and one ring is permitted per household.

### **Parks, Playing Fields, and Playgrounds**

- Group use of **parks, playing fields, and playgrounds requires application** to and approval by the Recreation Director.
- Group use of **school fields and facilities requires application** to and approval by the Board of Education.

### **Trails**

A network of hiking trails is accessible throughout the borough, some of which connect with the Tourne County Park trail system. Trail use guidelines:

- Use only open trails. Stay on trails to protect the surrounding environment.
- Bikers are allowed only on designated trails, must wear helmets, and must respect other trail users.
- No motorized vehicles are permitted.
- Leave no trace—pack out all garbage, and avoid damaging the natural resources.
- Residents are encouraged to take action to correct any trail-use related problem, and/or to contact the Borough Manager as appropriate.

### **Recreation Programs**

The Recreation Commission organizes a variety of activities, programs, and events throughout the year.

- Seasonal and holiday programs, summer day camp, sports camps, swimming lessons, and other sports instruction are offered.
- Programs vary in response to residents' interests and demand.
- Current program and registration information is posted on the borough website.

## Borough of Mountain Lakes Website

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Detailed information is maintained on the Borough of Mountain Lakes website relating to borough functions, the schools, community organizations, local houses of worship, the public library, and local businesses.

Many items referenced in this guide can be accessed from the borough website home page.

- The online **Forms Center** provides access to the forms referenced in this guide, grouped by borough department.
- Sections of the **General Code of the Borough of Mountain Lakes** pertaining to the topics discussed in this guide can be accessed online via a fully searchable database.

