

How Easements Affect Property

Some Facts to Know Before Buying Your Land or Home

Buying a home or land comes with more than just the house itself. Easements — legal rights allowing others to use a portion of your property — can impact how you enjoy and manage your real estate. Understanding easements before you buy helps avoid future surprises and frustrations.

COMMON TYPES OF EASEMENTS

Utility easements are the most common. They give companies the right to access your property for power lines, water pipes, sewer systems or communication cables. Utility companies typically have the right to maintain or repair these systems, even if they need to dig on your land.

Access easements allow someone to cross your property to reach another parcel of land. This is common in rural areas where landlocked properties have no direct road access. A neighbor might have the right to use your driveway or a private road to get to their home.

Shared driveways are another form of easement. Two properties might share the

same driveway, and both owners have the right to use and maintain it. Clear agreements are crucial to avoid disputes over maintenance and repairs.

Other easements may involve conservation (restricting how land is used to protect natural resources) or rights of way for pedestrians.

HOW EASEMENTS AFFECT OWNERSHIP

While easements don't mean you lose ownership of part of your property, they do limit how you can use it. You can't build over an easement area or obstruct access without risking legal issues. That could affect future plans for additions, fencing or landscaping.

Easements can also influence

a property's resale value. Some buyers may be hesitant to purchase a home with a shared driveway or an active access easement, especially if maintenance responsibilities are unclear.

Before closing on a property, it's important to review the title report carefully. Ask your real estate agent or attorney to explain any easements listed

and how they affect the property. If necessary, contact the title company or local authorities for clarification.

Easements are a normal part of property ownership, but understanding them is essential. Knowing the rules — and the rights of others — ensures you can enjoy your property without unexpected complications.



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REAL ESTATE 101



HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Always Review the Title Report

Before buying a home or land, carefully review the title report. It will list any existing easements and show how they could affect your use of the property.

Easement: An easement is a legal right for someone else to use a portion of your property for a specific purpose. Common examples include access roads, utility lines and shared driveways. Easements stay with the property even when ownership changes.

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