

## **Addressing Frequently Asked Questions St Mary's County, Maryland**

### **How do I contact the County GIS & Addressing Division?**

Questions about addresses or road names may be emailed to the Addressing Division at [addressing@stmarysmd.com](mailto:addressing@stmarysmd.com). Sending an email first allows us to adequately research your address and issue before responding to you. There are no fees associated with any addressing actions.

Please include the following in your email:

- Name
- Phone Number and best time to reach you.
- The Tax account IDs and addresses of any property involved in your question.
- Explanation of your issue or question.

### **Why do I need an address?**

The primary purpose of 911 addressing is to help reduce the time it takes police departments and fire & rescue services to respond to an emergency. In addition, addresses are used by private citizens, the postal service, delivery services, and utility companies to locate specific places. A community's safety and welfare depend on the ability of emergency services to quickly locate every property, thereby necessitating uniform address assignment throughout the County.

### **I receive my mail through a Post Office Box. Do I still need an address?**

Yes, addresses are still important to allow emergency services to quickly find your location. Additionally, other delivery services which cannot deliver to PO boxes will need your address for deliveries.

### **What are the requirements for posting an address?**

Please view our [Display Guidelines Document](#).

### **What is my ZIP Code?**

ZIP Codes are assigned and controlled exclusively by the United States Postal Service (USPS) for the sole purpose of mail routing. The USPS may change ZIP Code boundaries at any time, and they are not required to notify the county, nor do they publish official ZIP Code maps. The County has no part in assigning a ZIP Code and we do not include them on Address Confirmation letters. The only official online source for ZIP Codes is the [USPS ZIP Code Lookup tool](#).

The [St Mary's County Public GIS Map](#) does contain an unofficial Zip Code layer. This layer is provided for general countywide informational purposes but should not be relied upon to identify the zip code for a specific location.

### **Why does my address show up incorrectly on the mapping services or GPS units?**

Most companies that provide online map searches can be many years behind on the address and road information in their commercial mapping systems. The county has no control over addresses shown by these commercial data providers and there is no central location to submit our data. The county makes

address data freely available on our website for download by any individual or company. We also submit our data to several of the larger commercial mapping and GPS providers, including Google. However, we are not responsible for if or how quickly that information is incorporated.

Most commercial mapping companies provide a way for users to give feedback or report a specific problem. We suggest you take advantage of this if you spot an error on a commercial site.

### **How is addressing handled if I live in Leonardtown, or on Patuxent River NAS?**

The Town of Leonardtown is responsible for assigning addresses within its jurisdiction, and should be [contacted](#) about any addressing issues. Leonardtown will notify the county of any new or changed addresses, which will be added to the 911 system and public GIS map.

St Mary's county has no jurisdiction on Federal property within the county, and thus does not assign or record addresses on PAX River NAS or Webster Field Annex. 911 calls from the bases are not routed to local 911 dispatchers. Addresses within the Glen Forest housing neighborhood off Willows Rd, although not assigned by the county, are recorded in county data for 911 purposes.

### **How do I find out my address?**

In general, any property with an existing structure or a lot that has been created through the subdivision process in the last 30 years will already have an address assigned to it. In the [St Mary's County Public GIS Map](#), you can search by using your property tax ID or navigate to the location, in order to view the address(es). Your tax bill will also show the premise address. You may also contact the GIS & Addressing Division to receive a Confirmation of Address letter.

### **How do I apply for an address?**

If your property is currently going through the development review process, or you have submitted a permit to LUGM, an address will be assigned as part of this process.

If you have an existing and legally constructed detached accessory structure, accessory apartment, or other legally allowed structure, you may request an additional address for that structure or unit.

You may also request an address for a vacant piece of property. However, you identify the access point to the property. If it is necessary to cross one or more adjacent properties to reach the property you want addressed, you will need to provide documentation of any access easements. This may be desirable if activities such as hunting are taking place, and easy 911 response is desired. Keep in mind that the requirement to post an address still applies to vacant property.

### **Can I change my address number?**

Yes, property owners may request a change of their existing address number, if the new number meets addressing standards. A new number will typically be limited to a small range, never exceeding the addresses of adjacent structures. Reasons to change and address include, but are not limited to, the following: they believe their address to be in error or the current address causes confusion with other nearby addresses. Please also see the FAQ sections on what to do if your address changes.

Citizens should also request a new address if vehicle access to the property has changed location due to a new driveway alignment.

### **Can I name my driveway?**

For a shared driveway to be named the road must provide legal access to a combination of four or more addressed structures or vacant properties (properties without addressed structures). For shared driveways that meet these criteria, please view the [Road Name Petition Form](#). Keep in mind that your address and all the properties that use the shared driveway will be required to change their address. Please also see the FAQ sections on what to do if your address changes.

### **Can I change my road name?**

Private roads may have their names changed via a Road Name Petition. Keep in mind that after changing a private road name, all the properties that use that private road will also be required to change their address. Further details regarding this process can be found in the [Road Name Petition Form](#). Please also see the FAQ sections on what to do if your address changes.

County owned roads may only be changed at the direction of the Board of Commissioners of St. Mary's County. Citizens desiring a change must directly petition the Commission. Citizens should first contact the GIS & Addressing Division to ensure the proposed change conforms to applicable rules and to receive guidance on the process.

State road name changes must be granted through the [Maryland Transportation Authority](#). Roads owned by the [Town of Leonardtown](#) would require town approval.

You can use the [St. Mary's County Public GIS Map](#) to determine if a road is private, or owned by the County, State, or Town of Leonardtown. Turn on the *Road Centerlines – By Ownership* layer and click on a road segment to view the ownership.

### **Who maintains street signs? What if one is damaged?**

**New signs:** The initial placement of road signs for any new road created in the county, public or private, is the responsibility of the developer. This includes private roads which have been newly named via a Road Name Petition.

**Existing Signs:** Maintenance/replacement of all public signs is handled by the County Department of Public Works (DPW). Private signs that intersect a county or state-owned road are also maintained/replaced by DPW. Private signs which intersect another private road must be maintained/replaced by the citizens served by that road.

If you see a street sign that is damaged, faded, or missing, please use the county [311 system](#) to report the problem.

### **Can I put up my own unofficial street sign?**

No, you should never put up a sign that mimics the look of an official street sign, sometimes known as vanity signs. These can confuse Emergency Services drivers who are looking for specific roads or addresses. There are past examples in St Mary's County of ambulances looking for a main road address which repeatedly passed by the correct house because a vanity street sign made it appear to be on a different road.

### **Who is responsible for maintaining my private road?**

Some private roads in subdivisions are owned or maintained by homeowners' associations. Other private roads are governed by a road maintenance agreement, which is a binding legal document recorded with the Clerk of the Circuit Court in the county land records. This document lays out the responsibilities of the landowners served by the road for its proper upkeep. However, many private roads in the county have no formal agreements in place and depend instead on the informal efforts of property owners to dialog with each other and coordinate maintenance.

Unless your road is a platted parcel with its own tax account (with accompanying tax bill), the county has no record of who owns a private road, or if a maintenance agreement exists. These are considered private matters and not subject to county regulation.

### **What if the address I am using does not match the address the county has on record?**

If you have discovered a discrepancy between the address you use and the address the county has on record, please contact the GIS & Addressing Division. This discrepancy may affect 911 response time and needs to be corrected quickly. In some instances, the county will simply adjust the address on record to match the one you are already using. Sometimes, though, the address may be for the incorrect street, or use a premise number that is out of range. This may require you to change your address to one that conforms to uniform 911 addressing regulations.

### **My address changed, what do I need to do?**

The county has already notified the Tax Assessment office, the US Postal Service Regional Office, and the 911 Dispatch Center of the change on your behalf. You should still call or visit your local post office branch yourself to ensure delivery personnel are aware of the address change. You can also easily find general lists online which will help you determine other entities such as your mortgage, insurance, and utility providers to contact. You will have received a Confirmation of Address Letter from the county, which you can provide to these entities as needed for proof of the change.

There is no need to record a new deed for your property. Although an address may be included in your deed, it is only as supplementary information. Your property is legally identified by the description of your property boundaries, and these are not altered by a change of address.

### **Is there a meaning to my five-digit address?**

Yes, the county's initial system for assigning standardized 911 addresses resulted in five-digit premise addresses that follow a prescribed pattern across the county. North-South roads have premise numbers which span from 13600 on the south end of the county to 30800 on the north end. East-West roads have premise numbers which span from 35000 on the west side of the county to 50700 on the east side. View a visualization of this [here](#).

### **Can the county confirm what my past address was?**

The Board of Commissioners of St. Mary's County, realizing the need for a comprehensive addressing program in the unincorporated parts of the county, appointed a countywide Task Force on July 2, 1991, and charged it with developing a uniform property addressing system. Prior to this addressing system, addresses schemes varied throughout the county and many times followed subdivision lot numbers. The

county did not record these previous addresses, and therefore has no way of providing a past address. Should a bank or mortgage company be requesting this, the county can provide a letter which explains the change to uniform addressing and confirm the current assigned address for a piece of property. Please contact the GIS & Addressing Division to request a letter.

#### **What if I am experiencing package delivery problems?**

You can call your local delivery companies and ask them to use the St. Mary's County Public GIS map to search for addresses they deliver to, instead of using search engines like Google Maps, Map Quest, Bing Maps or navigation devices. The [St. Mary's County Public GIS Map](#) is the most up-to-date address source for St. Mary's County addresses (not including NAS Patuxent River).

#### **The United States Postal Service does not have my address on record.**

If you cannot find your address in the [USPS ZIP Code Lookup tool](#), please contact the GIS & Addressing Division. We will research your address, ensure that it is on record with the county, notify the USPS Regional Office, and send you a confirmation of address letter you will need to show your local post office.

#### **The premise address on my tax bill has the wrong ZIP Code.**

ZIP Code boundaries change from time to time, and the State Department of Assessment and Taxation is often not notified. This can result in the ZIP Code becoming out of date. Please [contact the St Mary's SDAT office directly](#). If the other parts of the premise address, such as the number or street name are incorrect, please first contact the County GIS & Addressing Division.

#### **The mailing address for my tax bill is incorrect.**

Use the [Address Change Request](#) form located on the County Treasurer webpage.

#### **The MVA does not have my address in their system.**

Contact the GIS & Addressing Division to receive a Confirmation of Address letter by mail or email you will need to show to the MVA.

#### **My bank wants a letter of address verification.**

Contact the GIS & Addressing Division to receive a Confirmation of Address letter by mail or email to show to your institution.

#### **How can I be sure that the address location 911 dispatchers see is correct?**

While St. Mary's County 911 dispatchers use a special internal map when taking calls, the address locations they see are the same as the public can see in the [St. Mary's County Public GIS map](#). Search for your address to see where it is placed; if it is in the incorrect location, please contact the GIS & Addressing Division to have it corrected.