

Rural Addressing: Where is your sign?

Imagine this scenario: Late one night, your kitchen starts on fire in rural Mountain View County. You evacuate the house and dial 911 from your cell phone requesting help from the fire department. The 911 dispatcher asks you for your rural address as your cell phone is not linked to your rural address the same way your land line phone is. “I don’t know it” you say “but here’s my legal land location”.

The fire department heads out but it’s dark and there is a blizzard making it difficult for them to see. Your driveway is long and the house cannot be seen from the roadway because of all trees. The fire department cannot find your driveway as the rural address sign hasn’t been put up yet. It’s still in the barn where it’s been for the past 6 months since you picked it up from town. It was on the list of things to do, but you haven’t taken the few minutes to put it up yet.

The fire department phones you asking for directions. “We live next to Mr. Smith, our driveway is just past his red barn. It’s hard to see because of all the trees.” The firefighter on the end of the line says: “We don’t know Mr. Smith. It’s so dark and it’s snowing so hard we can’t tell what color the barns are at this time of night.” You try your best to guide them but can’t even remember which road your driveway is on.

As the fire rages out of control, you start to panic. If only you had put up that sign and knew your rural address, the fire department could have found your driveway already. Finally you can see the red lights of the trucks reflecting off the snow and tell the fire department they must be nearby and to look for a driveway. It takes a few more minutes to see the access, but finally the fire department makes it to your location. The fire is put out quickly, but because of the delay, the fire spreads causing you to not only lose your kitchen, but your living room and bedroom too. The next day you put up your rural address sign, but it’s 12 hours too late.....

But what is rural addressing? Rural addressing is sometimes called a 911 address or a civic address. Despite the name, it all means the same. Rural addresses apply to County residents only and are assigned to residences by Mountain View County staff. Your rural

address is not your mailing address or your legal land location; it is a specific number assigned separately from everything else. Because these numbers are assigned to residences (like a street address in town), if you move, you must leave the address behind. The address is attached to that parcel of land, not to the person living there. All rural addresses increase in number from south to north and east to west.

What should a rural address sign look like? All rural address signs in the County should be reflective blue with white reflective numbers so we can see it at night. The numbers should be at least 3 inches in height and the sign itself should be no less than 8 inches high and 12 inches wide. We also recommend that you put your entire address on the sign, not just the first set of numbers.



Once you have your sign, post it on the right side of your driveway, at least one foot inside your driveway on the right side and have it at a 45 to 90 degree angle. Make sure it's visible from the road, can be seen when traveling both directions on the roadway (this may require you to have both sides of your sign visible) and not blocked by long grass, trees or fences and do not pile snow in front of it. Be sure to attach it to something permanent like a post or a fence. Posting your rural address in a prominent place ensures emergency responders can find your household quickly – when time is of the essence.

If you are new to Mountain View County and in the process of building a house, once your approach is in, please contact Therese Morris (403-335-3311 ext. 164)

and let her know. She will GPS the driveway and provide you with your rural address. Please don't wait until your house is built. Therese only collects GPS information once per month. You should also be aware that Telus is often 18 months behind in installations so you need to plan ahead.

Remember, posting your rural address in a prominent place ensures emergency responders can find your household quickly – when time is of the essence. So where is your sign?

For more information on this topic, please contact Therese Morris at 403-335-3311 ext. 164 or Mountain View County Patrol at 403-335-3311.



A blue rectangular sign with white text that reads "33217 Rg Rd 283" is mounted on a wooden post. The sign is positioned in a grassy field with a wooden fence and barbed wire in the foreground. The background shows a rolling green landscape under a clear blue sky.