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Portage County Online

Property taxes, water bills, court records, dog licenses and voting, on the county's own websites — in plain English

A plain-English guide to Portage County's websites

The official sites, the right buttons, and the look-alikes to avoid

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For Portage County, Ohio residents · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to **Portage County, Ohio online**. Many errands that once meant a drive to the Administration Building in Ravenna can now be done from your kitchen table: looking up your property, paying property taxes and the county water bill, renewing a dog license, checking a court case, and making sure you're registered to vote. This guide shows you the official websites, the buttons to press, and the look-alike sites and scam letters to steer around. Read it in any order; there's no test.

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PART 1

Getting Started

Which county office does what, how to find the real websites, and the words you'll see along the way.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, neighbor, and welcome. Maybe your property tax bill just arrived and you'd rather not drive to Ravenna to pay it. Maybe you want to see what the county thinks your house is worth, renew the dog's license, or check that you're still registered to vote. All of that can be done online now, if you know where to look. This guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill, and I help folks right here in Portage County feel at home with their technology. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it sitting beside you: slowly, in plain English, one button at a time. If I use a word you don't know, I'll stop and explain it.

The one thing to remember

If you take just one idea from these pages, make it this: **start every county errand from the county's own website, portagecounty-oh.gov, or the Auditor's site, portagecountyauditor.org.** Typing a question into a search engine often puts paid ads and look-alike "records" sites at the top. Some charge fees for things the county gives you for free; a few are outright scams. Start from the real site, and you'll always land in the right place.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Fewer trips to the county building, no waiting in line, and the peace of mind of checking your own property, tax bill and voter record whenever you like, day or night.

You can't break anything by looking

Searching the Auditor's property records, reading a court docket or checking your voter registration changes nothing. Look around freely. The only screens that need extra care are the ones where you **pay**, and I'll show you how to check those.

And I'm a phone call away

If you get stuck, or a letter or call about county business doesn't feel right, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. Now, let's get started.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Which County Office Does What

Portage County's government is split among several elected offices and departments, and each keeps its own records. Knowing which one handles your question saves a lot of clicking and phone tag.

Office	What it handles for you
Auditor	Your property's value and record, the homestead exemption, dog licenses, tax rates and the tax estimator.
Treasurer	Collecting property taxes: your bill, payment options, prepayment plans.
Recorder	Deeds, mortgages and other recorded documents, copies of your deed, and the free Property Fraud Alert.
Clerk of Courts	Court records for the Common Pleas and Municipal Courts, paying fines and court costs, and the **Auto Title** office.
Municipal Court	Traffic tickets, small claims and minor cases, with branches in **Kent** and **Ravenna**.
Probate Court	Estates, wills, guardianships and marriage licenses.
Board of Elections	Voter registration, polling places, absentee ballots.
Water Resources	Water and sewer service and billing for county customers.
Engineer	County roads and bridges, and the tax map office.
Sheriff	Concealed carry (CCW) licenses, sheriff's sales, the county jail.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Auditor or Treasurer?

A simple way to keep them straight: the **Auditor** decides what your property is worth; the **Treasurer** collects the tax. If the question is "Why is my value so high?" it's the Auditor. If it's "Did my payment go through?" it's the Treasurer.

Where they all are

Most county offices are in the **Portage County Administration Building, 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna**. The Municipal Court has its own buildings in Kent and Ravenna, the Engineer is on Newton Falls Road, and the Sheriff is at the Justice Center. If you do need to go in person, call ahead; office hours change around holidays.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 3

Finding the Real County Websites

There are two websites you'll use for almost everything in this guide. Write them down, or better yet, save them as bookmarks so you never have to search for them again.

Website	What you'll find there
portagecounty-oh.gov	The county's main website. Every elected office and department has a page here, plus the **Online Payments** links for property tax, water bills, dog licenses and court fines.
portagecountyauditor.org	The Auditor's property site: the **Real Estate Search**, the map, the tax estimator, and dog license and homestead information.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

Getting around the main county site

Along the top of portagecounty-oh.gov you'll see menus such as **About Us**, **Elected Officials**, **Departments**, **Boards & Commissions** and **Quick Links**. The most useful page of all is called **Portage County Services**. It gathers everything in one list: Online Payments, Records, Residents, Senior Citizens and Veterans.

1. Open your web browser and type **portagecounty-oh.gov** in the address bar at the top, then press Enter.
2. Look for the search box or the **Trending Searches** line near the top; "county services" is usually listed.
3. Or open **Quick Links** and choose **Browse Topics A-Z**.
4. On the **Portage County Services** page, tap the heading you need, such as **Online Payments**.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

SCAM ALERT

Watch out for look-alike sites

Search engines often show paid ads and "public records" websites above the county's own pages. They may look official, ask you to pay for a "report", or charge extra to pay a bill for you. The real county addresses end in **portagecounty-oh.gov** or **portagecountyauditor.org**. If the address in the bar is anything else, go back.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some links leave the county site, and that's okay

A few official tools are run for the county by outside companies. For example, the Auditor's Real Estate Search opens on a site run by Schneider Geospatial (beacon.schneidercorp.com), and property tax payments go through a payment company. That's normal, **as long as you got there by clicking a link on the county's own site**.

CHAPTER 4

The Words You'll See

A short glossary. Come back to it whenever a word on a county page puzzles you.

Word	What it means
Parcel	A piece of land with its own record and tax bill. Your house and yard are usually one parcel.
Parcel number	The ID number the county gives your parcel. It's printed on your tax bill and is the fastest way to look up your property.
Appraised / market value	What the Auditor estimates your property would sell for.
Assessed value	In Ohio, 35% of the appraised value. Property tax is figured from this number.
Levy	A tax voters approved for a school, library, fire department or other service.
Mill / millage	How levies are measured: one mill is one-tenth of a cent per dollar of assessed value.
Homestead exemption	A property tax reduction for qualifying seniors and disabled homeowners.
Half / first half / second half	Ohio property taxes are billed in two halves each year.
Deed	The recorded document that shows who owns a property.
Docket	The list of everything filed and scheduled in a court case.
Convenience fee	A charge a payment company adds when you pay by card online. It's shown before you pay.

TIP

Keep your parcel number handy

Your parcel number is on your tax bill. Write it in the cheat-sheet at the end of this guide. You'll use it for the Auditor's search, the Treasurer's payment page, and any call to the county.

PART 2

Your Home & Property

Looking up your property, understanding your value and levies, the homestead exemption, deeds, and protecting your home from title fraud.

CHAPTER 5

Looking Up Your Property on the Auditor's Site

The Auditor's **Real Estate Search** shows the county's record for any property: owner, address, value, sales history, the building's details, and the taxes charged. It's free and public, and it's the first place to look when you have a question about your home.

Find your property

1. Type **portagecountyauditor.org** in your browser's address bar and press Enter.
2. At the top, choose **Search**, then **Real Estate Search**. (You can also use the **QuickSearch** box at the top of the page.)
3. The search opens on the county's property website. If a notice or disclaimer appears, read it and tap to agree.
4. Type your **street address**, your **last name**, or your **parcel number**, then tap **Search**.
5. Tap your property in the list of results to open its record.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

> **TIP**
>
> **Less is more when you search**
>
> If an address search finds nothing, type less: just the house number and street name, without "Road" or "Street". The parcel number from your tax bill is the surest way of all.

Other searches on the same site

- **Manufactured Homes Search**, under the same Search menu, for mobile and manufactured homes.
- **Map**, which shows parcels on an aerial photo so you can see property lines (approximately).
- **Advanced Search**, which lets you look at recent sales by area, handy if you're thinking of selling.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your information is public

Property records are public in Ohio, so anyone can look up who owns a house and what it's worth. That's why the Auditor's site, not some paid website, is the place to check your own record for mistakes.

CHAPTER 6

Reading Your Property Record

A property record has several sections, usually shown as tabs or headings across the page. Here's what to look at, and what to check.

Section	What to check
Owner & address	Is your name spelled right? Is the mailing address where you actually get mail? Tax bills go there.
Valuation	The appraised (market) value and the assessed value (35% of it) for land and building.
Residential / building	Year built, square footage, bedrooms and baths. Errors here can affect your value.
Sales	Past sales of the property, with dates and prices.
Tax / tax history	The taxes charged each half, credits such as homestead, and any amount still owed.
Levy Information	Each levy you pay toward and how much of your bill it is.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Found a mistake?

If the building details are wrong, such as a bathroom you don't have, call the Auditor's office at **(330) 297-3565** and ask for the appraisal department. If your **mailing address** is wrong, ask the Auditor how to change it, so your tax bills reach you.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

Printing or saving a copy

Most record pages have a **printer-friendly** or **report** button. If you don't see one, use your browser's own print command: on a computer, press **Ctrl+P** (Windows) or **Command+P** (Mac). On an iPhone or iPad, tap the **Share** button and choose **Print**.

CHAPTER 7

Levies and the Tax Estimator

Every fall and spring, levies appear on the ballot, and the question is always the same: "What will this cost me?" The Auditor's site can help you answer it.

See which levies you already pay

1. Look up your property as shown in Chapter 5, *Looking Up Your Property on the Auditor's Site*.
2. Open the **Levy Information** tab in the menu bar of your property record.
3. You'll see each levy, such as school, library, fire or parks, and what it costs you each year.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

Estimate a tax bill

The Auditor's home page links to a **Tax Estimator**, which estimates property tax by taxing district and property value. It's useful if you're buying a home, or want a rough idea of how a new value affects your bill. There's a step-by-step walkthrough in the Ways Portage County Online Can Make Life Easier topic.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

An estimate, not a bill

Estimators can't know about every credit or change. Your actual bill from the Treasurer is what counts.

HEADS UP

Levy news comes from the county, not strangers

The Auditor posts plain explanations of ballot levies on the county site. Be wary of texts or flyers claiming your taxes will "double" unless you call a number or pay for a service; check the Auditor's site instead.

CHAPTER 8

The Homestead Exemption and Other Tax Breaks

Ohio offers property tax reductions for some homeowners, and the Auditor's office handles the paperwork. If you're 65 or older, or permanently disabled, it's worth a few minutes to see whether you qualify.

Who may qualify

- **Seniors:** you must be at least **65 by December 31** of the year you're applying for.
- **Disabled homeowners:** permanently and totally disabled as of **January 1** of that year.
- **Surviving spouses** of people who received the exemption may also qualify.
- **Income test:** newer applicants must be under an income limit, based on the owner's and spouse's Ohio adjusted gross income. The Auditor's brochure lists the current year's limit.
- **Disabled veterans:** veterans rated 100% service-connected disabled (and some surviving spouses) can receive a larger credit. The Auditor's 2026 brochure describes it as $56,000 in total.
- It must be the home you live in, as of January 1.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's 2026 homestead application and brochure on November 13, 2026.

How to apply

1. Go to **portagecountyauditor.org**.
2. Open **Information**, then **Homestead Exemption Information**, or open **Forms**.
3. Download the current year's **Homestead Application** (veterans use the separate disabled-veteran form listed there).
4. Fill it in, sign it, and return it to the Auditor's office as the form directs. Call **(330) 297-3565** if you have questions.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Owner occupancy reduction

Separate from homestead, Ohio gives a small reduction on the home you live in, called the **owner occupancy reduction**. Its form is also on the Auditor's **Forms** page. Check your property record's tax section to see whether you already have it.

SCAM ALERT

No one needs to be paid to file this

The homestead application is free from the Auditor. If a company offers to "file your senior tax exemption" for a fee, you don't need it.

CHAPTER 9

Disagreeing With Your Property Value

Every few years the Auditor updates every property's value. If yours looks too high, you have options, and you don't need to hire anyone to use them.

Step one: check your record

First look for simple errors in your property record (see Chapter 6, *Reading Your Property Record*): wrong square footage, a finished basement you don't have, or a garage that was torn down. A quick call to the Auditor can fix those.

Step two: the Board of Revision

If you still disagree, you can file a formal complaint with the **Portage County Board of Revision**. In Ohio, the filing window normally runs from early January through **March 31**. In reappraisal years the Auditor has also offered informal review appointments with an appraiser before the formal process. The Auditor's appraisal department, **(330) 297-3568**, can tell you what's open this year.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Bring evidence

Recent sale prices of similar homes nearby (from the Auditor's own sales search), a recent appraisal, or photos of problems with the house all help your case.

HEADS UP

Beware of "tax appeal" mailers

Companies sometimes mail offers to lower your taxes for a share of the savings. Filing with the Board of Revision is something you can do yourself, for free.

CHAPTER 10

Deeds and Records at the Recorder

The **Recorder** keeps the official copies of deeds, mortgages, mortgage releases, liens, and veterans' discharge papers (DD-214s) that people have recorded for safekeeping.

Find the Recorder online

1. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov**.
2. Open **Elected Officials**, then **Recorder**. (The direct address is **portagecounty-oh.gov/recorder**.)
3. Look for the link to search recorded documents, and the **Property Fraud Alert** sign-up.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

Getting a copy of your deed

You can ask the Recorder's office for a copy of your deed. Its copy desk is reachable at **(330) 297-3553**. Copies cost a small per-page fee, and certified copies a little more. Ask for the current price when you call.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why your deed matters less than you think

Your original deed isn't your proof of ownership; the Recorder's official record is. Losing your paper copy is not an emergency, and you never need to pay a company to "protect" it.

TIP

Veterans

Recording your DD-214 with the Recorder means a certified copy is always available locally when you or your family need it for benefits.

CHAPTER 11

Protect Your Home With the Free Property Fraud Alert

"Deed fraud" or "home title theft" is when a criminal records fake documents to make it look like they own your property, sometimes so they can borrow against it or sell it. It's rare, but frightening. Portage County's Recorder offers a free early-warning service.

What the alert does

Once you sign up, the **Portage County Property Fraud Alert** notifies you when a document such as a deed or mortgage is recorded under the name you registered. If you didn't expect it, you can act right away.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

1. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov/recorder**.
2. Tap **Sign Up for Portage County Property Fraud Alert**.
3. Follow the steps to register your name (and, if asked, your email or phone) for alerts.
4. Keep the confirmation. When an alert arrives, read it carefully.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

HEADS UP

It warns; it doesn't block

An alert tells you something was recorded. It can't stop a document from being filed. If you get an alert you don't recognize, call the Recorder's office right away, then your attorney or the Sheriff.

FROM BILL

Worth five minutes

If you own your home outright, rent out a property, or own land you don't visit often, this free alert is one of the easiest protections there is. I'm happy to help you sign up.

CHAPTER 12

The "Copy of Your Deed" Letter

Many Ohio homeowners, especially after buying or refinancing, get an official-looking letter offering a certified copy of their deed, for a fee far higher than the county charges. It's often styled like a government notice, with a parcel number, a "response due" date and a return envelope.

How to recognize it

- It comes from a private company, usually with a name that sounds like a government office.
- It asks you to pay a large fee for a copy of your deed or a "property profile".
- Somewhere in the fine print, it says it is **not** a government agency.
- It may suggest you're required to have the copy. You aren't.

SCAM ALERT

You don't need it

You never need a private company to get a copy of your deed. If you want one, the Recorder's office provides it for a small per-page fee. Recycle the letter, or, if it seems deceptive, report it to the Ohio Attorney General's office.

Checked against the Ohio Attorney General's "Where to Get a Copy of Your Deed" consumer advice on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Check the sender against the county

Real county mail carries an office name, such as Portage County Treasurer, and a Ravenna address. If in doubt, call the office using the number on portagecounty-oh.gov, not the number on the letter.

CHAPTER 13

Maps, Roads and the County Engineer

The county keeps maps you can use from home, and the **County Engineer** takes care of county roads and bridges.

Property maps

- The Auditor's **Map** (top menu of portagecountyauditor.org) shows parcels on an aerial photo.
- The county's **Tax Maps & GIS** records are listed under **Records** on the Portage County Services page.
- The tax map office is part of the Engineer's office, on the 3rd floor of the Administration Building, **(330) 297-3598**.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

Map lines are approximate

Online parcel maps are a guide, not a survey. Before building a fence or settling a disagreement with a neighbor, a licensed surveyor is the right call.

Roads and the Engineer

The County Engineer maintains county roads and bridges. (State routes belong to ODOT, and city, village and township roads to those communities.) To report a problem on a county road, call the Engineer's office at **(330) 296-6411**, weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or find the Engineer under **Elected Officials** on portagecounty-oh.gov.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

PART 3

Paying County Bills Online

Property taxes, the county water and sewer bill, dog licenses, and traffic tickets and court fines, safely.

CHAPTER 14

Your Property Tax Bill and Due Dates

Ohio property taxes are billed in **two halves** each year. The Portage County Treasurer mails the bills and collects the payments. If you have a mortgage, your lender may pay the taxes for you from an escrow account; your bill or mortgage statement will say so.

When taxes are due

In a usual year, the first half is due in the winter (February in recent years) and the second half in the summer. **The exact date is printed on your bill**, and it's the date that counts.

GOOD TO KNOW

2026 was different

In 2026, Ohio's new **Inflation Cap Credit** (from House Bill 186) meant every second-half bill had to be recalculated. The Treasurer announced that second-half bills would be delayed and that the payment deadline moved from the usual July date to **August 31, 2026**. It's a reminder to go by the date on your bill, and to check the Treasurer's page if a bill seems late.

Checked against the Portage County Treasurer's "Delay in Second Half Collection Billing" alert on November 13, 2026.

If you missed a due date

1. Don't panic. Late property taxes carry a penalty, and interest can follow, but it can be sorted out.
2. Look up your property on the Auditor's site (see Chapter 5, *Looking Up Your Property on the Auditor's Site*) to see the amount owed now, or call the Treasurer's office.
3. Pay as soon as you can; the penalty grows the longer it waits.
4. If you can't pay in full, call the Treasurer's office and ask what payment arrangements are available. It's far better to call early than to let it slide.

TIP

Get a reminder

Put both due dates in your phone's calendar with an alert a week ahead, or sign up for the Treasurer's prepayment plan in Chapter 16, *Prepaying and E-Bills*.

CHAPTER 15

Paying Property Taxes Online

You can pay Portage County property taxes online with a bank account or a card. The Treasurer uses a payment company called **Municipay** to process online payments. Always start from the county's site so you reach the right one.

Pay online, step by step

1. Have your tax bill or parcel number ready.
2. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov** and open the **Portage County Services** page (see Chapter 3, *Finding the Real County Websites*).
3. Under **Online Payments**, choose **Real Estate Tax**. (Or open the Treasurer's **Payment Options** page.)
4. Follow the link to the online payment site. Search for your parcel by number, address or name.
5. Check that the owner name and address match your bill, and choose the amount to pay.
6. Choose to pay by bank account (eCheck) or card, and read any convenience fee shown **before** you confirm.
7. Confirm, and save or print the receipt. Write down the confirmation number.

Checked against the Portage County Treasurer's pages on portagecounty-oh.gov on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

About fees

Card payments made through a payment company usually carry a convenience fee, which goes to the processor, not the county. Paying from your bank account is often cheaper. The payment page shows the fee before you finish.

Other ways to pay

Method	How it works
In person	At the Treasurer's office in the Administration Building, by cash, personal check, credit or debit card, or a cashier's check or money order.
By mail	Send the bill stub and a check to the address printed on your bill. Mail early; it's the postmark rules on your bill that apply.
Through your bank	Your bank's bill pay can mail a check for you. Allow extra days.

Checked against the Portage County Treasurer's pages on portagecounty-oh.gov on November 13, 2026.

SCAM ALERT

Only pay through the county's link

Fake "property tax payment" sites and ads exist. Never pay from a link in an unexpected text or email, and don't trust a search ad. Reach the payment page by clicking through portagecounty-oh.gov.

CHAPTER 16

Prepaying and E-Bills

If a big tax bill twice a year is hard on the budget, the Treasurer's **prepayment program** lets you pay ahead in smaller amounts.

How prepayment works

- There are two cycles each year. The first starts in **October** and goes toward the taxes due in February; the second starts in **March** and goes toward the summer taxes.
- You make payments ahead of time, so the balance is smaller (or zero) when the bill comes.
- Prepayments don't change the due date: anything still owed must be paid by the date on the bill.

Checked against the Portage County Treasurer's pages on portagecounty-oh.gov on November 13, 2026.

1. Go to the Treasurer's pages on **portagecounty-oh.gov** (under **Elected Officials**, **Treasurer**).
2. Look for the prepayment program information and sign-up form.
3. Call the Treasurer's office if you'd like help choosing an amount.

Email bills

The Treasurer has an e-billing policy posted on its pages, so you can ask to receive bills by email. If you choose e-bills, add the Treasurer's email address to your contacts so the bills don't land in your junk folder.

Checked against the Portage County Treasurer's pages on portagecounty-oh.gov on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Moving or traveling when taxes are due?

The Treasurer's FAQ covers paying early if you'll be away. Online payment works from anywhere, too.

CHAPTER 17

Your Water and Sewer Bill

If your water or sewer service comes from **Portage County Water Resources**, you can view and pay your bill online. Many residents in cities and villages get water from their own city or village instead; your bill shows who to pay.

View and pay online

1. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov** and open the **Portage County Services** page.
2. Under **Online Payments**, choose **Water Bill**. (You can also go to **Departments**, **Water Resources**, then **Water / Sewer Billing**.)
3. Choose **Water Resources Online Bill Payment**.
4. The first time, you'll create an account using the account number on your paper bill.
5. View your bill, pay it, and save the confirmation.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

A newer system

Water Resources moved to a new payment system in September 2025. If you saved an old link or account before then, start fresh from the county site.

Other ways to pay

- **By mail:** Portage County Water Resources Department, PO Box 812, Ravenna, OH 44266-0812 (check your bill for the current address).
- **In person:** at the Administration Building, 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Turning service on or off

Moving in or out? The county site has a **Turn Water Service On / Off** link under **Quick Links**.

SCAM ALERT

Shut-off threats by phone

Utility scammers call saying your water will be shut off within the hour unless you pay by gift card or app. Hang up and check your account on the county site or call the number on your bill.

CHAPTER 18

Dog Licenses

Ohio requires a license for every dog three months and older, renewed each year. The deadline is **January 31**, and a penalty applies after that. In Portage County, the Auditor sells dog licenses, and you can buy one online.

Buy or renew online

1. Go to **portagecountyauditor.org**.
2. Tap **Purchase Your Dog License Online** (or open **Information**, then **Dog License Information**).
3. The online store opens at **services.portageco.com**, the county's own licensing site.
4. Enter your details and your dog's, or look up last year's tag to renew.
5. Pay, and save the receipt. Your tag is mailed to you.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Puppy discount

From July through November, licenses for dogs three months and younger are half price. Questions? The dog license line is **(330) 297-3560**.

Checked against the Portage County Auditor's site (portagecountyauditor.org) on November 13, 2026.

Found a dog? Look up its tag

The Auditor's site has a free **Portage County Dog Tag Search**. Type the number from a found dog's county tag to help get it home. The steps are in the Ways Portage County Online Can Make Life Easier topic.

HEADS UP

Lost-pet scams

If your dog goes missing, be cautious with callers who say they have it but want money sent first by app or gift card. Meet in a public place, and call the Dog Warden for help.

CHAPTER 19

Traffic Tickets and Court Fines

Many traffic tickets and court costs from the Portage County Municipal Court can be paid online through the Clerk of Courts. Some tickets require a court appearance and can't be paid online; the ticket says which.

Pay online

1. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov** and open **Portage County Services**.
2. Under **Online Payments**, choose **Traffic Tickets & Court Fines**. (On the Clerk of Courts pages this is called **Pay Fines & Court Costs**.)
3. Read the instructions, then follow the link to pay. Have your ticket or case number ready.
4. Check that the name and case number are right before you pay, and save the receipt.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

HEADS UP

Read the notice first

The Clerk's Traffic/Criminal Division page posts a notice about submitting online payments correctly. Read it before you pay, so your payment is credited to the right case.

Call the right branch

Municipal Court Traffic/Criminal	Address and phone
Kent branch	303 East Main Street, Kent · (330) 678-9100
Ravenna branch	203 West Main Street, Ravenna · (330) 297-3639

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

SCAM ALERT

Fake "unpaid ticket" texts

Texts claiming you owe a toll or a ticket, with a link to pay, are a very common scam. Courts don't collect fines by text link. Look up your case yourself, as shown in Chapter 20, *Searching Court Records*.

PART 4

Courts, Titles & Records

Looking up court cases, the Municipal Court, Probate Court, auto titles, and the Sheriff's online services.

CHAPTER 20

Searching Court Records

Court records in Ohio are generally public. The Portage County Clerk of Courts keeps the records for the Common Pleas Court and the Municipal Court, and the county site links to a court records search.

Find a case

1. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov**.
2. Open the **Courts** menu and choose **Search Court Records**. ("Search court records" is often listed under **Trending Searches** near the top of the page, too.)
3. Choose the court, then search by a person's or company's **name**, or by **case number** if you have it.
4. Open a case to see its **docket**: the filings, hearing dates and outcome.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Looking for a hearing date?

The Clerk of Courts and the Municipal Court each post **court schedules** on the county site. Your paperwork from the court is still the final word on when and where to appear.

Which court has the case?

Court	Typical cases
Common Pleas	Felonies, larger lawsuits, foreclosures. Domestic Relations (divorce) is a division of it.
Municipal (Kent, Ravenna)	Traffic, misdemeanors, small claims, evictions, smaller lawsuits.
Probate	Estates, wills, guardianships, marriage licenses.
Juvenile	Cases involving children. These records are generally not public.

HEADS UP

Paid "background check" sites

Search ads for "Portage County court records" often lead to paid background-check websites. Their information can be outdated or wrong. The county's own search is free.

CHAPTER 21

The Municipal Court in Kent and Ravenna

The **Portage County Municipal Court** handles traffic cases, misdemeanors, small claims, evictions and civil cases up to Ohio's municipal court limit. It has two branches, in **Kent** and **Ravenna**.

What you can do online

- Check a case and its next date with the court records search (Chapter 20, *Searching Court Records*).
- Pay eligible tickets and court costs (Chapter 19, *Traffic Tickets and Court Fines*).
- Read the **Municipal Court Schedules** and the **Civil Division** pages for small claims and civil cases.
- Download forms the court posts for common filings.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

Small claims, briefly

Small claims court is designed for people without a lawyer, for disputes such as an unreturned deposit or a contractor who didn't finish the job. The Municipal Court Civil Division page explains where to file and what it costs. Call the Civil Division with questions before you file.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Court staff can explain, not advise**
>
> Clerks can tell you how to file and what forms exist, but they can't give legal advice. For that, an attorney or a legal aid office is the right call.

CHAPTER 22

Probate Court: Estates, Wills and Marriage Licenses

Probate Court is the court most families deal with at some point, usually after a loved one passes away. In Portage County it's combined with the Juvenile Court, and it has its own pages on the county site.

What Probate handles

- **Estates:** settling the affairs of someone who has died, including small, simplified estates.
- **Wills:** a will can be filed with the court after a death.
- **Guardianships:** when an adult can no longer manage their own affairs.
- **Marriage licenses.**

Marriage licenses

1. Go to **portagecounty-oh.gov**, open **Courts**, then **Probate**.
2. Open the **Marriage License Application Instructions** page and start the application.
3. Both of you then go to the Probate Court together, with valid photo ID, to sign the license when it's issued.
4. Use it within 60 days, or you'll need a new one.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

After a death

Before anything else, ask the funeral home how many certified death certificates to order. Then call the Probate Court and ask what kind of estate filing fits your situation. Many estates don't need the full process. An attorney can advise you on the details.

SCAM ALERT

Grieving families are targets

Scammers read obituaries. Be wary of calls about a loved one's "unpaid debt" or "estate fee" that must be paid right now. Courts send paperwork; they don't call demanding payment.

CHAPTER 23

Auto Titles

In Ohio, car and boat **titles** are handled by the Clerk of Courts' **Auto Title** office, while license plates and registrations are handled by the BMV's deputy registrar offices. It's easy to mix them up.

Office	Go there for
Title office (Clerk of Courts)	Transferring a title when you buy or sell, replacing a lost title, titling in a family member's name, or titling a car after a death.
BMV deputy registrar	License plates, registration renewal, driver's licenses and state IDs.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

Before you go

1. On **portagecounty-oh.gov**, open **Departments**, then **Auto Title**.
2. Open **Auto Title Forms** and print any form you need ahead of time.
3. Call the Auto Title office at **(330) 297-3450** or **(330) 297-3453** to ask what to bring for your situation.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Check a title's history

Ohio's BMV has a free online **Title Search** (at bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov) for titles issued in Ohio. It's handy before buying a used car. Our Ohio BMV & Mobile ID guide covers the BMV side.

HEADS UP

Selling a car privately?

In Ohio, the seller's signature on the title must be notarized. Never hand over a signed title until you have been paid in full with money that has cleared.

CHAPTER 24

The Sheriff's Office Online

The **Portage County Sheriff's Office** has its own pages on the county site, with information you might need now and then.

Topic	What's there
CCW licenses	Concealed carry licenses and fingerprinting. CCW hours differ from office hours; the county page lists them as weekdays 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., subject to holidays.
Sheriff's sales	Foreclosed properties sold at auction, with sale lists and rules for bidders.
Useful links	The Sheriff's page of links to related services.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

SCAM ALERT

"This is the Sheriff's Office. You missed jury duty."

One of the most common scams is a caller claiming to be from the Sheriff or a court, saying there's a warrant for you and you must pay a fine right now, often by gift card, payment app or a cash deposit. Real law enforcement doesn't work that way. Hang up and call the Sheriff's Office yourself using the number on portagecounty-oh.gov. More in Chapter 28, *County Scams to Know*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Emergencies

For any emergency, call **911**. The website is for routine information only.

PART 5

Voting & Community

Checking your registration, finding your polling place, voting absentee, and county services for seniors.

CHAPTER 25

Voter Registration and Your Polling Place

The **Portage County Board of Elections** runs elections here, and Ohio's Secretary of State runs a statewide lookup that shows your registration and where you vote. Checking takes about a minute, and it's wise to do it before every election, especially if you've moved.

Check your registration

1. Type **voterlookup.ohiosos.gov** in your browser's address bar.
2. Fill in every box it asks for (all fields are required), and choose **Portage** as your county.
3. Tap **Search**. You'll see your registration status, your precinct and your polling location.
4. Not found? Try a different form of your first name, a former last name, or a previous address.

Checked against the Ohio Secretary of State's voter pages (ohiosos.gov) on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Still not found?

If you believe you're registered but can't find yourself, call the Board of Elections. If you need to register or update your address, you can do it online through the Secretary of State's site before the deadline.

The county's election page

On **portagecounty-oh.gov**, open **Departments**, then **Election**, and choose **Current Election**. There you'll find a voter registration lookup, a **polling place search by address**, and a link to view your sample ballot.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

SCAM ALERT

No one can charge you to vote or register

Registering, checking your registration and voting are always free. Ignore any text or call asking for payment or your Social Security number to "keep your registration active."

CHAPTER 26

Voting Absentee (By Mail)

Any registered Ohio voter can vote absentee by mail, without giving a reason. It's a comfortable choice if getting to the polls is hard.

1. Get an **absentee ballot application** from the Board of Elections page on portagecounty-oh.gov or from the Secretary of State's site.
2. Fill it in, **sign it**, and return it to the Portage County Board of Elections before the deadline for that election.
3. When your ballot arrives, follow the instructions exactly, including the identification and signature on the envelope.
4. Return it by mail or in person to the Board of Elections, or in the secure drop box outside the Board of Elections office.
5. Track it with the voter lookup; it shows when your application and ballot were received.

Checked against the Ohio Secretary of State's voter pages (ohiosos.gov) on November 13, 2026.

HEADS UP

Deadlines change with each election

Each election has its own application and return deadlines. Check the county's **Current Election** page or the Secretary of State's site well ahead of time, and mail early.

TIP

Need help with a disability?

The Secretary of State's site lists accessible voting options, including curbside voting. Ask the Board of Elections what's available at your polling place.

Checked against the Ohio Secretary of State's voter pages (ohiosos.gov) on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 27

Senior Services and County News

The county website isn't only for paying bills. It's also a good way to find services and stay informed.

Senior services

The Portage County Commissioners partner with Family & Community Services, Inc. to provide senior services. The **Portage County Senior Center** at **705 Oakwood Street, Ravenna**, offers activities and socialization for county seniors, without enrollment or activity fees. Call **(330) 297-3456**. On the county site, open **Departments**, then **Senior Services**.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

Other services worth knowing

- **Veterans Services**, including applying for a veterans ID card.
- **Job & Family Services** for assistance programs.
- **Curbside Recycling Collection Days** under Quick Links.
- **Passports**, listed under Apply / Register.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

County E-Alerts

At the bottom of every county page there's a **Subscribe to E-Alerts** link for news and notices by email. It's how you'd hear about things like a delay in tax bills or a water payment system outage. See the Ways Portage County Online Can Make Life Easier topic for the steps.

Checked against Portage County's official site (portagecounty-oh.gov) on November 13, 2026.

PART 6

Staying Safe, When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

The county scams to know, when a hand saves worry, and every county website and phone number on one page.

CHAPTER 28

County Scams to Know

Scammers love to pretend to be the government, because people take official business seriously. Here are the patterns to recognize, and one simple rule that beats all of them.

The rule

Never pay or share information because of a call, text or letter you didn't expect. Look up the office yourself on portagecounty-oh.gov and call the number listed there.

What you might get	What's really going on
A call saying you missed jury duty and there's a warrant; pay now to avoid arrest	Scam. Courts and the Sheriff don't collect fines by phone, gift card or payment app.
A text about an unpaid ticket, toll or fine, with a link	Scam. Look up your own case on the county site.
A letter offering a certified copy of your deed for a large fee	A private company, not the county. See Chapter 12, *The "Copy of Your Deed" Letter*.
A call threatening to shut off your water within the hour	Scam. Check your account on the county site.
A "records" website charging for property or court records	Not needed. The county's searches are free.
A call about a relative's estate or debt that must be paid right away	Scam. Probate Court sends paperwork.

SCAM ALERT

Gift cards are a giveaway

No county office, court or Sheriff will ever ask you to pay with gift cards, cryptocurrency, or by sending money through an app to a person. Anyone who does is a scammer.

Checked against FTC consumer advice on government impersonators on November 13, 2026.

If you already paid or shared information

1. Call your bank or card company right away using the number on your card.
2. If you shared a Social Security number, consider a credit freeze with the three credit bureaus.
3. Report it to the FTC at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**, and to the Portage County Sheriff's Office.
4. Tell someone you trust. Scammers are professionals; it can happen to anyone.

Checked against FTC consumer advice (consumer.ftc.gov) on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 29

When to Call Bill

This guide covers what you need to handle county business online on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's when I'd pick up the phone.

Good reasons to call

- You'd like help **bookmarking** the county sites so you never land on a look-alike.
- You want to look up your property and check your record together.
- You'd like help paying your **property taxes** or **water bill** online the first time.
- You want to sign up for the **Property Fraud Alert** or county **E-Alerts**.
- A call, text or letter about county business gives you a **"this doesn't feel right"** feeling.
- You've paid a scammer or shared information and want help securing your accounts.

Things you can handle yourself

Looking up your property, checking your voter registration, renewing the dog license and reading a court docket. These are yours now.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

I'm Bill, and I bring 30+ years of professional experience to helping folks feel at home with their technology, right here in Portage County, Ohio. I can sit with you through a Device Training session and set up everything in this guide on your own computer, tablet or phone. I'll never ask for your bank passwords or codes; you stay in control. $49 remote · $99 in your home. Call or text **(330) 200-8042** or book at **billshometech.com/book**. If you reach my assistant Sophie on the main line, she can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule.

Thank you for taking the time to learn this. Doing county business from home is a real convenience, and now you know how to do it safely.

— Bill

CHAPTER 30

Your Portage County Online Cheat-Sheet

Keep this handy. The county's websites and numbers, all in one place.

The websites

To do this	Go here
Almost anything county	**portagecounty-oh.gov** > Portage County Services
Look up my property, homestead, dog license	**portagecountyauditor.org**
Pay property taxes	portagecounty-oh.gov > Online Payments > **Real Estate Tax**
Pay the county water bill	portagecounty-oh.gov > Online Payments > **Water Bill**
Pay a ticket or court costs	portagecounty-oh.gov > Online Payments > **Traffic Tickets & Court Fines**
Search court records	portagecounty-oh.gov > Courts > **Search Court Records**
Deed copies, Property Fraud Alert	**portagecounty-oh.gov/recorder**
Am I registered? Where do I vote?	**voterlookup.ohiosos.gov**

The phone numbers

Office	Phone
Auditor	(330) 297-3565 · appraisal (330) 297-3568 · dog licenses (330) 297-3560
Recorder copies	(330) 297-3553
Auto Title	(330) 297-3450 or (330) 297-3453
Municipal Court	Kent (330) 678-9100 · Ravenna (330) 297-3639
County Engineer	(330) 296-6411
Senior Center	(330) 297-3456
FTC fraud reporting	ReportFraud.ftc.gov

The safety rules

- Start every county errand from **portagecounty-oh.gov** or **portagecountyauditor.org**.
- Don't pay from search ads, texts or emails; click through the county's own site.
- Read the convenience fee before confirming a card payment.
- No court, Sheriff or county office takes gift cards or payment-app transfers.
- You never need a private company to get a copy of your deed.

Keep these handy

My county details	
My parcel number	_____
My water account number	_____
My dog's tag number	_____
My polling place	_____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

FROM BILL

You've got this

From property records to the dog's tag, you now know where the county keeps it all online, and how to tell the real sites from the fakes. If anything ever looks off, call me before you pay.