

10 Things to Know About Unrestricted Land

When it comes to investing in land, it's important to be clear on what different property definitions really mean. One particular type of land that many buyers run into trouble with is unrestricted land. Without the proper background and knowledge, you may think that unrestricted land means you have free rein on the property. However, that's not always the case.

Interested in purchasing unrestricted land? Here are the important facts to keep in mind as you start your search.

What is unrestricted land?

Unrestricted land generally means the property is free from restrictions typically defined and enforced by a homeowner's association (HOA). If you're unfamiliar with what power an HOA may have – here's a crash course.

Depending on where you're located, a homeowner's association can enforce restrictions around the type, size, and color of house that you can put on the land. The HOA is in charge of your community's curb appeal, and because of this, they can regulate landscaping, exterior storage, parking, and even pets! While unrestricted land may mean that you're free of rules from an HOA or municipality, you likely will have deeds, easements, and other legal items that you'll need to consult.

As you move forward in your search for unrestricted land, here are the top ten things to know.

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In a perfect world, buying unrestricted land would be straightforward and pain-free, but unfortunately, that's not always how it works. While unrestricted property is a great option for many, it is important to have all the facts. Here are ten important factors to keep in mind if you're interested in buying unrestricted land.

1. **You're responsible for validating the property's unrestricted status.** When it comes to land listings, many sellers love to throw in "unrestricted" as a keyword, but it's on you to do your due diligence and confirm that the property is actually unrestricted. Many owners may believe that their land is unrestricted, but do your research and save yourself from headaches later on.
2. **The term "unrestricted" can be misleading.** It's traditionally been understood that "unrestricted" means that it's unlikely a homeowner's association exists, but that doesn't

mean the land is completely free from restrictions. Check with your real estate agent to see if there are any local zoning restrictions, deeds, or easements.

3. **Local zoning restrictions can impact how you utilize your property.** As mentioned above, land may be free of restrictions from an HOA, but there's still a possibility of regulations and requirements from local zoning that will dictate how you can use your property.
4. **The property likely has some type of easement restriction.** It is not so common that a plot of land is totally free from restriction. Easements can impact where you place your driveway or if you can even have one. That's because easement restrictions cover things like sewage, gas lines, traffic, utilities, and more!
5. **Check out the neighboring property before buying.** Purchasing unrestricted land can be exciting, but if your land is unrestricted, there's a chance your neighbors also have unrestricted land. What is their property like? Do they have a lot of junk outside? Are there any pre-existing agreements with the neighbors? These characteristics could ultimately affect your property's value.
6. **You may not be able to remove trees.** Many first-time unrestricted land buyers are surprised to find out that there could be restrictions on tree removal. That's because state departments of environmental protection and other similar agencies are likely to have restrictions in place to protect natural resources. If you're looking to buy a piece of land that you want to clear, it's important to check this out before purchasing.
7. **You can use unrestricted land for just about anything.** Although we said you might not have free rein on what to do with your property, it has become more popular to use unrestricted land for homesteading or placing an RV or tiny home on the land. Farming, timber sales, and raising livestock are also common ways to utilize unrestricted land.
8. **Pre-existing deeds may impact your dream for the property.** Deed restrictions limit how a property can be used. A DEED IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT that defines who owns a particular property. A deed could impact things like how many animals you're allowed to have on your property or the types of structures you can build on the land. Look into this before moving forward with a purchase, especially if you're looking to use the unrestricted land for something particular.
9. **Owners hold the deed in owner-financing deals.** If you'll be PURCHASING YOUR LAND THROUGH OWNER FINANCING, be sure to keep in mind that oftentimes the owner holds the deed until they are paid in full, which is when the buyer either makes the final payment or refinances with a mortgage from another lender.
10. **It is possible for land to be completely free from all restrictions.** While most of the points above may lead you to believe that there is no truly unrestricted land, that is simply not the case. It is totally possible to find a property with absolutely no limitations. Be sure to do your research and enlist the help of seasoned professionals, especially from the area where you're purchasing the property.

With all of this in mind, you can move forward with your search for land! It's also important to remember that if you do find unrestricted land that has some sort of restriction (whether it be deed, easement, or zoning from local government) that it's not always a bad thing. In fact, many restrictions in place can actually be beneficial to you and your investment.

To get the absolute most out of your unrestricted land purchase, it's crucial that you do your research before making any offers. You may also consider reaching out to the local building and planning department to run through your ideas and plans for the property to ensure they are feasible and legal.