# MOST ASKED QUESTIONS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE GUIDE

Charles County Government

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CHARLES COUNTY MARYLAND
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## BUILDING PERMITS

### 1. WHY DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?

A building permit is your assurance that your building or structure has been reviewed and inspected for compliance with minimum building codes, zoning ordinance and environmental requirements. By obtaining a building permit, you are helping to ensure that all structures and buildings are safe, sound and worthy of the often considerable investment they represent.

### 2. DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT FOR A SHED, BARN, ETC.?

A building permit is not required for residential sheds 200 sq. ft. or less in area on any lot size and for bona fide agricultural use buildings on lots of five (5) or more acres. All other accessory-type buildings or structures require a building permit. However, a zoning permit may be required. Please contact the Planning Department at (301) 645-0540 or (301) 870-3896 for more information.

### 3. DO I NEED A PERMIT TO TAKE OVER A COMMERCIAL SPACE IF I AM NOT DOING ANY CONSTRUCTION?

A use and occupancy permit is required to establish the use and occupancy under the new tenant's name and "trading as" name. The licensing office will require this use and occupancy certificate prior to the issuance of a business license to operate from the proposed space. This permit is known as a "Green Card" permit, referencing the actual color of the signature cared that will be issued to the applicant indicating the necessary inspection requirements. This permit cannot be issued when a change of use is proposed for the space. The use of the space is determined using Section 301.1 of the adopted edition of the International Building Code.

### 4. WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING WITH ME?

Submittal requirements vary with the project; however, most projects require a completed building permit application, two (2) sets of construction drawings and four (4) copies of the site plan. Contact a Permit Specialist, at (301) 645-0692 or (301) 870-3935, for the exact requirements for your project.

## CONSTRUCTION

### 1. HOW MANY ACRES DO I NEED TO BUILD A HOUSE ON?

The Charles County Zoning Ordinance established various residential zones for the County, with lot sizes ranging from as little as 8,000 square feet to a minimum of three (3) acres. The amount of acreage required to build a house depends on the zoning of your property. To determine the zoning of your property, obtain the TAX MAP, PARCEL and GRID NUMBER for your property (this can be obtained from the TAX ASSESSOR at (301) 932-2440 or (301) 870-2619, and then call the Planning Department at (301) 645-0540 or (301) 870-3896.

**2. HOW FAR DO I HAVE TO STAY FROM THE PROPERTY LINES (FOR A HOUSE, SHED, ETC.)?**

For primary structures on a property, the Zoning Ordinance establishes setback, or building restriction lines, for the front, rear and sides of your property, according to the zone in which your property is located. When building a primary structure on a lot, you must remain within these required distances from your property line.

In addition to setbacks for primary structures, the Zoning Ordinance specifies different setback requirements for accessory structures such as sheds, barns, detached garages, etc. These structures shall be established within 6' of any side or rear lot line. No accessory use or structure shall be established within the required front yard.

To determine the zoning and setbacks for your property, obtain the TAX MAP, PARCEL and GRID NUMBER for your property (this can be obtained from the TAX ASSESSOR at (301) 932-2440 or (301) 870-2619), and then call the Planning Department at (301) 645-0540 or (301) 870-3896.

**3. DOES A CONTRACTOR NEED A SPECIAL LICENSE TO PERFORM HOME IMPROVEMENT WORK?**

Maryland State law requires that any person engaged in the home improvement business shall have a valid license issued by the Maryland Home Improvement Commission. The provisions of this state law may not be waived by agreement. You may obtain further information by calling MHIC at (410) 230-6231 or (888) 218-5925.

## SIGNS

**1. HOW DO I GET A SIGN PERMIT?**

The Charles County Zoning Ordinance in Article XV allows for the placement of building and pylon signs within Charles County principally for commercial businesses. In order to receive a sign permit, the applicant must complete a sign permit application, which can be obtained from the Department of Codes, Permits, and Inspection Services.

Please refer to Article XV of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance to review the specific size limitations and other criteria. A synopsis of the requirements is available at the Permit Administration counter.

In addition to a sign permit, most pylon signs require a building permit. Should you have any additional questions, please contact the Planning Technician at (301) 645-0649.

## SUBDIVISION

**1. HOW DO I SUBDIVIDE MY PROPERTY?**

The County has adopted Subdivision Regulations which outline the requirements for subdivision of a property. Subdivisions are classified as either "minor", involving the creation of five (5) lots

or less, or "major", involving the creation of more than five (5) lots.

Major subdivisions require the submittal of a preliminary plan, while minor subdivisions may go through an abbreviated process.

For more information on major and minor subdivisions, contact the Planning Department at (301) 645-0540 or (301) 870-3896.

## ZONING

**1. ARE THERE ANY REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO UNTAGGED AND/OR JUNKED CARS IN A RESIDENTIAL ZONE?**

The Charles County Zoning Ordinance established the following regulations regarding junk cars:

"No inoperable or untagged motor vehicle or vehicle parts may be parked or stored on any lot unless such vehicle or parts are stored withing a completely enclosed building." There are provisions in the Ordinance which may exempt antique vehicles or vehicles in running condition designed for competitive racing. For further information, please call (301) 645-0540 or (301) 870-3896.

## MOBILE HOMES

**1. WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS FOR PLACING A TRAILER ON MY PROPERTY?**

A mobile home is treated as a single family dwelling and a building permit is required prior to placing a mobile home in any lot. A Class "A" mobile home is permitted in the AC, RC, RR, RV, RL, RM, RH and PMH zones. A Class "B" mobile home is permitted in the AC, RC and PMH zones and in the RR and RL zones with a special exception.

Please consult the Charles County Zoning Ordinance for the specific requirements and zoning verification. For further assistance, please call(301) 645-0540 or (301) 870-3896.

## HOME OCCUPATION PERMITS

**1. WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO HAVE A BUSINESS FROM MY HOME?**

Article II, Section 29 of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance permits certain home-based occupations or businesses to be operated in residential zones.

The purpose of establishing the regulation is to allow non-impact type businesses to operate in home settings. The regulation prohibits business operations that may noticeably impact the residential nature of communities.

For an application and a copy of the requirements, please contact Codes, Permits, and Inspection Services at (301) 645-0692 or (301) 870-3935.