

# CHESTERFIELD COUNTY VIRGINIA



How

## Code Compliance

Can Contribute to  
Clean, Attractive and Safe  
Neighborhoods

Planning Department  
Code Compliance Office  
(804) 748-1500

## Code Compliance Can Improve Neighborhoods

**Does the appearance of your neighborhood concern you?**

**Would you like your community to be a clean, attractive and safe place in which to live and work?**

**If so, you need to know about code compliance.**



Chesterfield County has zoning ordinances and codes that describe where, when, how and what activities may be conducted on property in various zoning districts. The Code Compliance Office ensures code regulations are followed to protect all property owners. Zoning and code

compliance help promote the health, safety and general welfare of Chesterfield's residents by designating the types of buildings, businesses and activities that are acceptable in specific zoning districts. For example, residential neighborhoods are zoned

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for housing, not for junkyards or waste transfer stations. Junkyards and transfer stations are permitted in specific zones. Zoning permits various uses and activities so that they do not adversely affect one another.

Code violations are conditions or activities on a property that are not permitted by either the zoning ordinance or the Chesterfield County Code.

Some of the most common violations found in the county involve:

- n dogs;
- n unlicensed or inoperable vehicles;
- n discarded materials;
- n recreational vehicles and equipment;
- n trucks parking in residential areas;
- n fences;
- n building and parking setbacks;
- n illegal home occupations;
- n signs;
- n grass and weeds;
- n stock farms.

Code Compliance requires the assistance of county residents, who must comply with zoning and other code regulations and who can report violations.

The information that residents provide is kept confidential. It is excluded from the Freedom of Information Act, and it is county policy not to reveal the identity of a complainant. Complaints may be lodged by phone weekdays, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., at (804) 748-1500. Complaints also may be submitted online on the Chesterfield County Web site at [chesterfield.gov](http://chesterfield.gov) (click on "County Departments" and select "Planning").

## Frequently asked questions

### **How many dogs may I have on my property?**

You may have two adult dogs over 4 months old. You may keep more adult dogs if you live on agriculturally zoned property and obtain a kennel license from Animal Control at (804) 748-1683. Residentially zoned properties require a special exception through the Planning Department, as well as a kennel license.



### **How tall may I build my fence?**

Fences may be only 4 feet tall in the front, but may be as tall as 7 feet in the rear yard on a residential lot. There are exceptions for corner lots.

### **May I have unlicensed vehicles on my property?**

You may park one inoperable vehicle that is not in an enclosed building on residential property. However, you must pay an unlicensed vehicle fee of \$100 per year. Inoperable vehicles also must be covered or shielded from view according to section 13-62 of the code and placed in the rear yard. You may also strip one vehicle for parts provided it is removed within 60 days. All other vehicles must have license plates that are current. In addition, current inspection stickers are required to park on the street.

### **May I park my boat in my driveway?**

No. All recreational equipment must be kept in the rear yard. Only two pieces of recreational equipment may be parked on a residential lot outside of an enclosed building. A development-

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standards waiver from the Planning Department is required to park elsewhere on the lot.

## **May I park my tractor-trailer truck at my home?**

No. Trucks or other commercial vehicles in excess of 10,000 pounds and having more than two axles, or which tow or haul disabled, wrecked or junk vehicles, may not be parked on residential property without a conditional-use permit from the Planning Department.

## **May I keep a broken lawn mower that I plan to fix or junk car that I plan to rebuild in my yard?**

No. Scrap metals or other scrap material; used or scrap building, plumbing, electrical or heating material; discarded household appliances, furnishings and fixtures; dismantled or demolished motor vehicles; or other machinery or parts of any of the above may not be stored in residential areas. These items are permitted only on property zoned for junkyards or inside garages or storage buildings. Also, the county provides a fee-based collection service for brush, leaves and yard waste, as well as a bulky-waste collection service. Contact the Waste and Resource Recovery Division at (804) 748-1297 for details.

## **Where may I place a storage shed on my property?**

In residential and commercial districts, there are several requirements that determine the placement of buildings and storage sheds. These restrictions are specific to the type of property and may vary by subdivision. Before building garages, storage sheds, etc., contact the Planning Department to obtain the setback requirements for your property. Note: All garages require building permits. For more information, contact Building Inspections at (804) 748-1057.

## **May I operate a home business?**

Yes, if you comply with restrictions adopted to maintain the residential quality of your neighborhood.

There are restrictions on how you may conduct your business. As a general rule, there should be nothing outside the home that indicates that a business is being operated there. Contact the Planning Department to learn what you may or may not do before you begin operating a home business. It is important to remember that you must obtain a business license and that there are other rules you must follow to run a home business.

## **May I put up small temporary signs?**

Small, temporary signs are allowed, but there are restrictions. For example, signs may not be affixed to utility poles or traffic-control signs. The only time you may place a sign on a tree is when that property is experiencing land-disturbing activities. Signs for yard sales may not be larger than 4 square feet and are limited to one sign on the property and one sign directing the way to the sale.

Yard sales, garage sales, rummage sales, etc., are limited to no more than four sales per calendar year and not more than two within a 30-day period. These sales cannot last more than two days. Items for sale are limited to the personal property and usual household items of the seller, who must own or rent the property.

There are rules concerning real estate signs, political signs and banners, as well. For more information about signs, see the flyer entitled "Chesterfield County Sign Ordinance Summary," available at the Planning Department. Call (804) 748-1050.

## **Do I have to cut my grass?**

Grass taller than 12 inches at an occupied dwelling, or 18 inches at an unoccupied dwelling, is a violation of the weed ordinance. Keep your

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grass cut and shrubs trimmed. This will make your neighborhood attractive and, potentially, your property more valuable.

## **May I keep a pet rabbit or duck?**

You may not keep stock animals on residentially zoned property without a conditional-use permit from the Planning Department. Stock animals include cows, sheep, goats, horses, chickens or other fowl, rabbits or other small-domesticated livestock or other farm animals. These animals are allowed on agriculturally zoned property with some restrictions. Contact the Planning Department for specifics at (804) 748-1050.

## **Summary**

There are many misconceptions about codes and code violations. If you're uncertain about codes, code violations or code enforcement, ask questions before you act to save time, money and effort. If you observe a violation, you may contact the Code Compliance Office. Remember, you don't have to give your name, but if you do, it will be kept confidential.

Keeping zoning violations to a minimum helps to beautify and preserve neighborhoods and businesses throughout Chesterfield County. Do your part by keeping your property clean.



# NUMBERS TO KNOW

## **Code Compliance Office (804) 748-1500**

**Deteriorated Structures: 748-1779**

**Drainage Ditches: 748-1035**

**Items in the Street: 674-2800**

**Bulky Waste Removal: 748-1297**

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### **Chesterfield County Vision**

Our vision is to be the recognized leader in local government across the commonwealth and the nation — the standard by which others measure their progress and success. Every employee has a personal devotion to excellence in public service and embraces the highest standards of ethics and integrity. Every citizen takes pride in knowing that the county provides the best customer service and highest quality of life available in any American community. And working together, we are committed to sustaining Chesterfield County as the premier community of choice — FIRST CHOICE.



**Providing a FIRST CHOICE community  
through excellence in public service**