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Accessory Buildings (Residential) Building Permit Requirements

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in obtaining a Building Permit to construct an accessory building on a residential lot. Typical accessory buildings are storage buildings and detached garages. A permit must be obtained prior to any land disturbance or building construction. A permit is not required if the building does not exceed 120 square feet in floor area.

Step 1 – Obtain Approval from the Environmental Health Department for Homes Served by a Private Septic System. [Note: This step is NOT required if the home is served by the County sewer system.]

If the home is served by a private septic tank system, Gwinnett Environmental Health must approve the proposed location on the lot before a permit can be issued. For review and approval information, contact Environmental Health at 455 Grayson Highway, Lawrenceville, or call 770.963.5132. Proof of approval by Environmental Health must be attached to the Building Permit Application.

Step 2 – Submit the “Accessory Building Location Plan” for Review & Approval by the Development Review Section of the Department of Planning and Development.

The purpose of this review is to verify compliance with County regulations regarding building setbacks, encroachments into utility easements, zoning buffer, clearing limits or impervious surface setbacks from the Chattahoochee River. This plan must be drawn to scale (i.e. 1”=10’, 1”=20’) and must show the lot boundaries, location of the existing home and driveway, easements, streams, buffers, clearing and impervious square footage within the Chattahoochee River Corridor, and the location of the proposed accessory building. A copy of the Final Subdivision Plat showing the lot dimensions is available at the Deed Record’s Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30046.

- **Size, Materials and General Location:** Accessory buildings cannot be larger than the sizes specified in the table below and cannot be located on vacant lots. These buildings must be located in the rear yard, be clear of any drainage or utility easements, buffer or flood hazard areas, and observe the following setback requirements adjacent to all property lines and right-of-ways:

Building Floor Area	Building Minimum Setback
Up to 100 sq. ft.	5 feet
101 to 300 sq. ft.	10 feet
301 to 500 sq. ft.	15 feet
Over 500 sq. ft.	20 feet

It is highly recommended that you contact Development Review staff at 678.518.6000 to verify for your location.

In all residential zoning districts, except RA-200, accessory buildings shall comply with the following requirements:

- A. The maximum cumulative total square footage of all accessory buildings is as follows:
 - i. 120 square feet in floor area for each lot under 10,500 square feet.
 - ii. 500 square feet in floor area for each lot 10,501 square feet to 0.99 acre.
 - iii. 650 square feet in floor area for each lot 1.00 acre to 1.99 acres.
 - iv. Accessory buildings on lots 2.00 acres and larger shall not exceed 50% of the square footage of the principal structure, up to a maximum 1,000 square feet in area.

Accessory Buildings (Residential) Building Permit Requirements (cont.)

- B. Accessory buildings shall not be used for any commercial operation whether permanent or part-time or for any type of human habitation except as part of an approved accessory dwelling, as provided in Section 230-100 and subject to the requirements of Section 230-120.
- C. Accessory buildings shall not be used for the storage of hazardous materials, waste products or putrescent materials.
- D. No commercial vehicles as delineated in Section 240-110 shall be stored inside an accessory building located within a residential zoning district.
- E. Accessory buildings greater than 120 square feet in floor area shall comply with the following design guidelines:
 - i. Exterior walls shall be finished with brick or stone or with materials and colors similar to that of the principal building.
 - ii. Internal floors shall be a solid surface and constructed with materials such as, but not limited to, concrete or wood. Gravel and dirt floors are prohibited.
 - iii. Roofing materials and colors shall match that of the principal building. Roof pitch shall be commensurate with the roof pitch of the principal building.
 - iv. Building height shall not exceed 12 feet.
- F. A Special Use Permit shall be required for any accessory building or cumulative total of accessory buildings over 1,000 square feet in area.

Step 3 – Complete Building Permit Application, and Erosion Control & Solid Waste Management Affidavit.

The Building Permit Application and Affidavit forms may be obtained from the Building Permits Counter, online at www.gwinnettcounty.com (“A-Z Index”) or from Permits staff at 678.518.6020.

Step 4 – Obtain Building Permit at the Building Permits Counter of the Department of Planning and Development.

Submit the Building Permit Application, Erosion Control & Solid Waste Management Affidavit, approved “Accessory Building Location Plan,” and permit fee. The fee, rounded to the nearest dollar, is calculated as follows: \$6 per \$1,000 of estimated construction cost (minimum fee is \$30). Fees must be paid at time of permit issuance.

Additional Information:

- The Building Permit may include electrical installation. A separate “electrical only” permit is not required. State licensed electrical subcontractors must submit a Subcontractor Affidavit form to P&D at least two (2) days prior to requesting inspections. Homeowners installing electrical systems themselves must also submit this affidavit.
- Inspections can be scheduled online at <https://eddspermits.gwinnettcounty.com/citizenaccess/>.
- The Building Permit Yard Card must be posted at the site and be visible from the street.
- The approved “Accessory Building Location Plan” must also be present at the time of inspection.
- Footing and electrical rough-in inspections must be scheduled and successfully passed prior to scheduling a final inspection. Prior to use or occupancy, a final inspection must be scheduled, successfully passed, and a Certificate of Occupancy obtained. The final inspection includes a final electrical inspection.

For additional information and questions regarding residential accessory buildings, contact Development Review staff at 678.518.6000.