

Frequently Asked Questions

Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development

Zoning

Q; What is zoning?

A: Zoning governs the specific use, height, area of land and density of development allowed on a property. Zoning in unincorporated Gwinnett County is governed by the [Unified Development Ordinance](#). Properties located within the municipal limits of a city (Buford, Lawrenceville, Norcross, Snellville, for example) are subject to that city's zoning requirements. In such cases, contact the Planning Department within the city in which the property is located for zoning information.

Q: Where online can I find the zoning requirements for unincorporated Gwinnett County?

A: Click [here](#) to view Title 2: Land Use and Zoning of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Q: What do the different zoning classifications mean?

A: In general, zoning classifications for residential uses begin with "R" (for example, R-100). Zoning classifications for commercial uses, such as retail stores, restaurants, etc., typically begin with "C" (for example, C-2). Zoning classifications for office uses typically begin with "O" (for example, O-1). Zoning classifications for manufacturing/industrial uses generally begin with "M" (for example, M-1).

Some uses of land may be allowed in several different zoning districts. Refer to the [Unified Development Ordinance](#) for the allowed uses in each specific zoning district.

Q: How can I determine the zoning for my property?

A: Contact Current Planning at 678.518.6000 for assistance.

Q: What are the building setbacks for my zoning?

A: Setbacks are listed in Section 230-10 of the [Unified Development Ordinance](#).

Q: Where can I get a survey of my property?

A: Contact the [Deeds and Records Office](#) of Gwinnett County at 770.822.8100 to determine if a property survey has been recorded with the County. If a survey is not on file with the Deeds and Records Office, it may be necessary to have a licensed professional surveyor prepare one for you.

Q: How can I request to rezone my property?

A: A property owner/agent may apply to rezone a property. Filing an application does not guarantee that a rezoning will be approved. Click [here](#) to view and download an application.

Applications are accepted in person, Monday through Friday (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.), by Current Planning, located at One Justice Square, 446 West Crogan Street, Suite 250, Lawrenceville, GA. Only complete applications are accepted.

Q: How does the zoning process work?

A: Upon submittal of a rezoning application, the case is scheduled for two public hearings: one before the Planning Commission and one before the Board of Commissioners. The zoning case information is published as a legal advertisement in the local paper. The applicant posts a zoning sign on the property, and mails notices to neighboring property owners within a 1,000 foot radius. Current Planning staff researches the proposal and prepares a written report with a recommendation to approve or deny the request. The Planning Commission holds the first public hearing and also makes a recommendation. The Board of Commissioners holds the second public hearing and makes the final binding decision on the matter.

Q: What is the meaning of each of these terms: “rezoning”, “Special Use Permit” (SUP), “change in conditions” (CIC), and “buffer reduction” (BRD)?

A: “Rezoning” is a change in the zoning of a parcel of land to allow a different use for the property. A “Special Use Permit” is a request for a specific use for a parcel of land that requires the applicant to obtain permission through public hearings. A Special Use Permit is typically required for a use that, due to its nature, the Board of Commissioners wishes to review on a case-by-case basis. A “change in conditions” is a request to amend the conditions previously placed on a property through the rezoning process. A “buffer reduction” is a request to reduce the required zoning buffer on a property by more than 50%. (A buffer is land area used to separate one use from another through screening and distance.)

Q: How will I know if anyone has submitted a rezoning application near my home?

A: To notify the public, a yellow sign is posted on the property which contains the case number, hearing dates, and proposed use or zoning. Additionally, the rezoning applicant is required to notify property owners within 1,000 feet through a direct mailing.

Q: Where can I find a list of current zoning cases that are scheduled in Gwinnett County?

A: The Department website is updated with the currently pending cases each month. Click [here](#) to access the list of upcoming rezoning cases.

Q: How do I oppose or support a rezoning?

A: Citizens have the opportunity to speak for or against a rezoning case at the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioner's public hearings. Concerned citizens can also contact their Planning Commission representatives and Board member prior to the scheduled meetings to voice opposition/support or to let them know of any neighborhood meetings organized to discuss the rezoning. Click [here](#) for additional information regarding the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners.

Q: When do the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission meet?

A: The Board of Commissioners generally hears zoning cases on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center (GJAC) at 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, GA. The Planning Commission generally meets the first Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. in the GJAC auditorium. These dates are subject to change for observance of public holidays or for local, state or national elections.

Q: How can I determine the name of my Planning Commissioner and Board of Commissioner?

A: The name of each [Planning Commissioner](#) and [Board of Commissioners](#) member, including the specific county district he/she represents is available online.

To determine the commission district for a particular residence or business location, contact Current Planning at 678.518.6000.

Q: How can I obtain a copy of the Conditions of Zoning placed on a specific property?

A: The final Board of Commissioners decision will be documented in an official Resolution signed by the Chairman of the Board. This Resolution will also list any conditions of zoning which may have been placed on the property. Click [here](#) to view and download Resolutions for recent zoning cases. To obtain a Resolution for any case which is not available online or for which the case number is not known, contact Current Planning at 678.518.6000.

Q: How can I request an official Zoning Certification Letter for a specific property?

A: To obtain a zoning certification letter from Gwinnett County, the following is required:

- Boundary survey and typed legal description of the property.
- \$50.00 processing fee.

The letter will be prepared and delivered within 3-10 business days following receipt of the required information. Click [here](#) for information on obtaining a zoning certification letter.

Q. How can I report a zoning violation?

A: To file a complaint about a zoning violation, either contact the Police Department Quality of Life Unit Hotline at 770.513.5004 or click [here](#) and on the “Code Complaints / Violations” navigation tab to file a complaint electronically.

Q: Which zoning districts allow a church?

A: Churches are allowed in commercial, industrial, and office zoning districts. A church is allowed within some residential zoning districts if the lot meets certain street location and minimum size requirements, or by special use permit if the minimum lot requirements are not met. Refer to the [Unified Development Ordinance](#) for additional information.

Q: Which zoning districts allow taxi and limousine service?

A: Taxi and limousine services are allowed in C-3 and M-2 zoning districts, or with approval of a special use permit in C-2 or M-1 zoning.

Q: Which zoning districts allow a personal care home?

A: Depending on the specific licensure requirements, a small-scale family personal care home may be allowed in residential zoning (minimum 1-acre lot size) upon approval of a special use permit. Large-scale personal care homes are allowed in most commercial zoning districts, or by special use permit in office and industrial zoning. Refer to the [Unified Development Ordinance](#) for additional information. To obtain authorization to operate a personal care home, verify the proper zoning and secure all applicable local, state and/or federal permits.

Q: Which zoning districts allow a daycare?

A: Daycare is defined as care for children or adults for less than 24 hours per day. Daycare is classified into three categories: family, group and commercial daycare. In some residential zoning districts, a family daycare with up to 5 children is allowed as an in-home occupation, and group daycare with 6 to 18 children is allowed with a special use permit. Larger-scale, commercial daycares are allowed in C-1, C-2, and C-3 zoning districts or with a special use permit in O-I, M-1, and M-2 zoning districts. To obtain authorization to operate a daycare facility, verify the proper zoning and secure all applicable local, state and/or federal permits.

Q: In which zoning can I operate a group home for children (state licensed Child Caring Institution or CCI)?

A: A group home for children (24-hour care) is allowed with a special use permit in the RA-200, R-LL, R-100, R-75, OSC, and TND zoning districts. To obtain authorization to operate a group home for children, verify the proper zoning and secure all applicable local, state and/or federal permits.

Q: Can I operate a business in my residence?

A: Operation of an in-home business depends on the type of business and the zoning district in which the residence is located. To determine if a particular business is allowed, verify the requirements for a Customary Home Occupation (Section 230-130.3.P of the [Unified Development Ordinance](#)). Customary home occupations are not allowed to include outside employees, and must not have any exterior evidence of the business (including signs). In-home businesses which provide a service on site, such as music lessons, hair salon, etc., must be granted a special use permit. Contact Current Planning at 678.518.6000 for further assistance.

Q: In which residential zoning district can I keep a horse or other livestock?

A: Horses and livestock are allowed in the RA-200 (Agriculture-Residence) zoning district, provided no animal quarters are located within 100 feet of any property line. Horses and livestock are allowed for non-commercial purposes in the Single-Family Residence Districts of R-100, R-LL, and R-75 if the lot is at least 3 acres and no animal quarters are located within 100 feet from any property line. It is also recommended to consult with your homeowners association (if applicable) to determine if horses are permitted.

Q: Where can I operate a kennel/pet shop/grooming establishment?

A: A kennel is allowed in the RA-200 (Agriculture-Residence) zoning district, provided no animal quarters are located within 100 feet of any property line.

A kennel or a pet shop/grooming establishment is allowed in C-2 zoning district (without outdoor runs/play areas). If the establishment has outdoor runs or outdoor play areas, a special use permit is required.

Q: Where are mobile homes allowed?

A: Mobile homes are allowed in MH (Mobile Home district) or MHS (Manufactured Housing Subdivision district) zoning. Mobile homes are also allowed in the RA-200 (Agriculture-Residence) zoning district with approval of a special use permit.

Q: How do I qualify my property for Section 8 rental?

A: The Section 8 rental program is not administered by Gwinnett County. For assistance, contact the Regional Office for the Department of Community Affairs in Athens, GA at 706.369.5636 or 404.331.5001.

Land Development

Q: Where can I get a copy of my lot or subdivision plat (often referred to as the final plat)?

A.: A copy of your subdivision plat may be obtained at the [Gwinnett County Deeds and Records](#) office in the Clerk of Superior Court at 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville, GA. All subdivision plats are recorded in the Deeds and Records office along with all revisions. For assistance regarding a specific lot and the setbacks, contact (678.518.6000) or visit Development Plan Review in the Department of Planning and Development located at 446 West Crogan Street in Lawrenceville, GA.

Q: Where can I install a fence on my residential property? How tall can I build the fence? Is a permit required?

A: Each lot has a front, side and rear setback from the property line. Review the final plat of the subdivision to find the locations of these setbacks on the property. Although fences in the rear and side yards may be built up to the property line, it is highly recommended to offset the fence internally from the property line to allow room for maintenance to avoid crossing over to the adjacent property. Fences are allowed to be up to eight (8) feet in height in the side and rear setbacks. Each corner lot has two front yard setbacks, one from each right of way. Fences in the front yard setback are not allowed to exceed four (4) feet in height except that a fence or wall on a corner lot located in the front yard where the side of the principal dwelling is also located in the front yard may be a maximum of eight feet in height. A building permit is not required to install a fence 8 feet or less in height except a building permit is required for masonry and concrete walls which exceed 4 feet in height and function as a fence, screen, or barrier. Refer to Section 230-80 of the [Unified Development Ordinance](#) for additional information regarding fences and walls.

Q: Where can I place a storage building (Accessory Structure) on my residential property?

A: Storage buildings are considered accessory structures which are required to be located in the rear yard or the side yard of the property. Each building must be located a minimum of five (5) feet from the rear and side property line and shall not encroach into any easements (water, sewer, drainage, stream buffer, or zoning buffers).

Q: What steps do I need to take before applying for a permit for a storage building on my residential property?

A: The following steps must be completed prior to submitting a permit application for a storage building located on residential property:

1. Provide an Accessory Building Location Plan that is drawn to an engineer's scale (1"=20' for example) showing the location of the house on the property and the location of the proposed storage building. Click [here](#) for an example of an Accessory Building Location Plan.
2. If the lot is served by a septic tank, contact the Environmental Health Department at 770.963.5132 to obtain approval for the proposed building location.
3. Bring the survey and the approval paperwork from the Environmental Health Department (if applicable) to the Department of Planning and Development located at 446 West Crogan Street (Suite 150) in Lawrenceville, GA.
4. Meet with Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review staff to locate any flood plain or easements on the property and to stamp the plans.
5. Meet with Development Plan Review staff for final approval and stamping of plans before requesting issuance of a building permit from Building Permits.
6. For assistance regarding this process, please contact the appropriate section at 678.518.6000.

Q: Can I remove tree(s) that are located on my property?

A: Refer to ["Tree Removal Information for Homeowners in Gwinnett County"](#) for information on tree removal.

Q: What is a "hazard tree"?

A: A "hazard tree" is a tree that has been determined by a Certified Arborist to be in jeopardy of falling at some time in the near future which may cause personal injury or property damage.

Q: Can I cut trees or clear brambles in a Stream Buffer or Zoning Buffer and then landscape it?

A: **No**, only dead limbs are allowed to be cleaned out which must be done manually with a minimal amount of land disturbance. No track or motor powered vehicles are allowed. Only trees that are determined by a Certified Arborist to be dead or dying, or a "hazard tree" can be removed.

Q: Who is responsible for the street trees that are in front of my home?

A: Each individual homeowner is responsible for maintenance and/or replacement of the trees directly in front of his/her home unless the Homeowner's Association is responsible for grounds maintenance in the subdivision.

Q: Do I need a permit to build a driveway?

A: **No**, a permit is not required. However, where a sidewalk is present, driveway installation must be in compliance with Standard Drawing 312 in Appendix Section 2.0 of the [Unified Development Ordinance](#). An 18" diameter pipe (minimum) must be installed beneath the driveway perpendicular to the driveway length for stormwater run-off if there is a drainage easement in the right-of-way.

Q: Why isn't there a buffer between my subdivision and the new one being developed?

A: A buffer is typically not required between two similar zoning districts including but not limited to RA-200, R-100, and R-75. However, a buffer is required between unlike zoning districts such as that located between commercial and residential zoning. A construction buffer is occasionally added to a project which remains undisturbed until a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) is issued to the homeowner. After issuance of the C.O., the buffer restriction is no longer in effect.

Q: What authorization is required for issuance of a land development permit?

A: Depending upon the type of project, plan review may be required by up to four separate plan review sections within the Department of Planning and Development and by several other enforcement agencies including Gwinnett County departments. For additional information, click [here](#) to view the Plan Review Process Guidelines.

Q: How many sets of plans do I need to submit for review regarding a land development permit?

A: Seven (7) sets of complete plans and one (1) compact disc in PDF format are required for each land development project. Nine (9) sets of complete plans and 1 compact disc in PDF format are required for each final plat. Plan review submittal application forms are located under ["Development Plan Review Application \(Submittal\) Forms"](#).

In lieu of paper format, plans may be submitted in electronic format. Contact Development Plan Review at 678.518.6000 for assistance.

Q: How much time is required for the initial plans submittal process for proposed land development?

A: The amount of time required for review of plans varies with the type and scope of proposed land development activity. A total of ten (10) business days is typically required for review of plans for land development permits. Plan review for other types of land development activities can often be completed within the same business day of plans submittal or may require several days to complete due to type and scope of activity proposed. The plan review process identifies specific codes, regulations, and ordinances that are not adequately shown on the plans which must be addressed prior to authorization for permit. For additional information, click [here](#) to view the Plan Review Process Guidelines.

Q: How can I determine if a specific lot is buildable?

A: Building permits shall only be issued on buildable lots of record as defined in the [Unified Development Ordinance](#). The extent to which a lot is buildable depends upon a number of factors which include but are not limited to zoning, building setback, utility, and environmental. For assistance in determining the extent to which a specific lot is buildable, contact Development Plan Review in the Department of Planning and Development at 678.518.6000 or click [here](#) to search for land development permit information on the county website using the “Development Permit Options” navigation tab. The specific site location must be provided which includes either the street address, parcel identification (district, land lot, and parcel number).

Water, Sewer, and Stormwater

Q: Why are utility contractors required to be on Gwinnett County's approved contractor's list in order to install water and sewer mains within the county? What is the process of becoming a Gwinnett County approved contractor?

A: To fulfill the commitment to provide the best possible water and sewer system for its citizens, Gwinnett County requires an approval process for each water and sanitary sewer utility contractor requesting to perform installations within the county. Contractor approval provides quality assurance and quality control for utilities that will be owned and operated by Gwinnett County Water and Sewerage Authority. Contractor approval also ensures that connections to existing water and sewer systems are installed in accordance to county standards which protects the health and welfare of the public.

The contractor approval process begins with completing and submitting the appropriate application form which can be obtained by contacting Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review staff at 678.518.6175 or by downloading from the department website (click [here](#) to locate the applicable form in the "Utility Construction Permits" section). Submit the completed application form and required documents to Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review in the Department of Planning and Development located at 446 West Crogan Street (Suite 150) in Lawrenceville, GA. The approval process typically takes 5 to 7 business days after the application is submitted.

Q: How can I determine if a specific property is served by a gravity sewer or by a septic system?

A: Contact the Department of Water Resources Records Section at 678.376.7139 for assistance. (The Department of Water Resources is located at 684 Winder Highway in Lawrenceville, GA.)

Q: Who can I contact to obtain information on septic tanks?

A: Contact the Environmental Health Department at 770.963.5132 for assistance. (The Environmental Health Department is located at 455 Grayson Highway, Suite 600, Lawrenceville, GA.)

Q: Who can I contact regarding water, sewer and stormwater emergencies including damaged pipes and water leaks located in the county right-of-way or easement, sanitary sewer overflow, water/sewer and stormwater easement maintenance, illegal dumping into the storm drain system, flooding, and drainage problems?

A: Contact the Department of Water Resources call center at 678.376.7000 for assistance 24/7.

Q: What options are available for paying my water bill?

A: Payment can be submitted by mail, in person at the Department of Water Resources located at 684 Winder Highway in Lawrenceville, Georgia, online (click [here](#)) or by contacting Customer Service at 678.376.6800. Payments **cannot** be accepted by the Department of Planning and Development.

Q: How can I obtain approval to install water and sewer mains and facilities for Gwinnett County projects?

A: Contact Gwinnett County Purchasing at 770.822.8720 for assistance.

Q: Where can I obtain a utility construction permit to install water and sewer in Gwinnett County?

A: Utility construction permits are issued at the Department of Planning and Development located at One Justice Square, 446 West Crogan Street, Suite 150, Lawrenceville, Georgia. Click [here](#) for information on water and sewer permit fees. For questions regarding existing water and sewer permits, contact [Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review](#) staff at 678.518.6175.

Q: What is a grease trap and when is one required?

A: A grease trap is a device which removes fats, oils, and grease (FOG) that can damage the county's sewer collection system by clogging pipes, pump stations and treatment plants. Food service establishments and facilities with commercial kitchens are required to install and maintain properly sized grease traps that collect FOG before it reaches the sewer system. Grease traps can prevent clogs which result in sewer back-up in homes and businesses or spills that contaminate creeks, streams and ponds.

Q: Am I allowed to install a fence within a drainage easement on my property?

A: Obstructions of any type including permanent structures are generally not permitted within drainage easements. Installation of fencing within a drainage easement requires approval by Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review.

Q: Am I allowed to add fill material to a drainage ditch on my property to redirect stormwater?

A: Filling in a drainage ditch and associated easement is not permitted.

Q: Am I allowed to regrade my property to change the flow of stormwater?

A: A land disturbance permit is required for grading. Redirecting stormwater onto neighboring property is not permitted.

Q: Am I allowed to pipe the creek on my property?

A: A land disturbance permit and a variance authorized by Gwinnett County and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division are required for stream piping activities.

Q: Am I allowed to construct a bridge across a creek to access my property?

A: A building permit is required for the bridge which must be constructed perpendicular to the stream.

Q: Am I allowed to remove a tree located in the stream buffer that appears to be in danger of falling?

A: A tree in the stream buffer can be removed only if it has significant impact to a residential or commercial structure. No permit is required unless removal includes the tree stump and roots. Notify Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review at 678.518.6000 regarding the intent to remove any tree within a stream buffer. An inspector will be required to visit the site prior to tree removal.

Q: Am I allowed to clean up the creek on my property which is full of unsightly debris due to recent storms?

A: Debris and trash may be removed from a stream or creek by hand and disposed of properly without a permit.

Q: Who can I contact to report construction which is discharging stormwater onto my property and causing erosion?

A: Contact Inspections in the Department of Planning and Development at 678-518-6070 regarding construction that is impacting your property.

Q: Am I allowed to construct accessory buildings within a drainage easement on my property?

A: No, structures including but not limited to accessory buildings, swimming pools, and decks may not be constructed within drainage easements as shown on the subdivision Final Plat.

Q: Who is responsible for detention pond maintenance?

A: The property owner is responsible for maintenance of a detention pond. A homeowners association is typically responsible for maintaining the detention pond which serves a residential subdivision. Contact the Stormwater Division of the Department of Water Resources for additional information.

Q: What department processes Volume Certificates for stormwater utility credits?

A: Representatives with property management companies and homeowners associations may submit Volume Certificates for stormwater utility credits directly to the Stormwater Division of the Department of Water Resources. Click [here](#) to access the Department of Water Resources website for additional information.

Q: How do I submit a Residential Drainage Plan (RDP) for review that is required for a particular lot?

A: Residential Drainage Plans (RDP) may be submitted in either paper or electronic format to [Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review](#) staff. For paper format submittal, meet with Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review staff during regular business hours. For electronic format submittal, click [here](#) to e-mail a PDF copy of the RDP to Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review staff.

Business/Occupation Tax

Q: Do I need a [business/occupation tax certificate](#)?

A: Each business which provides a service or sells goods and products is required to obtain a business/occupation tax certificate.

Q: How do I obtain a business/occupation tax certificate?

A: For instructions on obtaining a business/occupation tax certificate, contact Licensing and Revenue in the Department of Planning and Development at 678.377.4100 or click [here](#) for online information. Licensing and Revenue issues business/occupation tax certificates for businesses located in unincorporated Gwinnett County. For business locations within the city limits of a Gwinnett County municipality, contact the appropriate city government.

Q: What is the cost of a business/occupation tax certificate?

A: Each account is assessed an \$80.00 flat fee and an occupational tax based on projected calendar year gross receipts. The exact amount for each account is based on the tax class assigned.

Q: What does the term “gross receipts” mean?

A: Gross receipts are monies received by a business for services provided or from the sale of goods and products in the state of Georgia.

Q: What can be deducted from the reporting of gross receipts?

A: The following can be deducted: Sales, use, or excise tax; Sales returns, allowances and discounts; Inter-organizational sales or transfers; Payments made to a subcontractor or an independent agent; Governmental and foundation grants, Charitable contributions; Proceeds from sales to customers outside the state.

Q: Why do I need to complete the U. S. Citizen / Qualified Alien Affidavit concerning my legal presence status in the United States?

A: Georgia Law O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e) requires every county and municipality within the state of Georgia to verify the legal presence status of each applicant for a business/occupation tax certificate.

Q: What is a secure and verifiable document?

A: A secure and verifiable document is a picture I.D. of the individual signing the U. S. Citizen / Qualified Alien Affidavit and is most commonly a driver's license, U.S. Passport or Permanent Resident Card for U.S. Citizens and permanent residents, and an Employment Authorization Document for non-permanent residents. Click [here](#) to access the Attorney General of Georgia's website for a list of all secure and verifiable documents.

Q: Why do I need to complete an E-Verify affidavit?

A: Georgia Law § 36-60-6(a) requires each employer with more than 10 employees as of July 1, 2013 to register with and utilize the Federal Work Authorization Program, also known as E-Verify. Private employers with more than 10 employees as of July 1 2013 are required to submit the E-Verify Affidavit, Form A. Private employers with 10 or less employees as of July 1, 2013 are required to submit the E-Verify Affidavit, Form B.

Q: Is a publicly traded corporation considered a private employer?

A: Yes, according to the Attorney General's Office a publicly traded corporation is considered a private employer.

Q: I completed the U. S. Citizen / Qualified Alien Affidavit, E-Verify Affidavit along with my secure and verifiable document when I completed my initial application. Will I be required to re-submit these documents each year for renewal of my business/occupation tax certificate?

A: Yes. Georgia Laws regarding immigration requires that these forms be re-submitted each year during the renewal process of your business/occupation tax certificate.

Q: What should I do if I haven't yet received the documents for renewing my business/occupation tax certificate?

A: Renewal documents are mailed in January to all business with a valid business/occupation tax certificate the previous year. The renewal forms are unique to each account and contain information specific to each business including bar codes. Contact Licensing and Revenue at 678.377.4100 to request renewal documents which can be sent by postal delivery or in electronic format by email.

Q: What should I do if I submitted my business/occupation tax renewal documents and have not yet received my statement for payment?

A: Please allow 7 to 10 business days after submitting the required renewal information before receiving the statement for payment. Click [here](#) for additional information regarding business/occupation tax renewal.

Building Permits

Q: Can I review or obtain a copy of the plans for residences constructed in Gwinnett County?

A: The Department of Planning and Development typically retains a record copy of the plans for each residence located within unincorporated Gwinnett County with a heated floor area of 5,000 square feet or greater. Records of plans for residences located within incorporated areas of Gwinnett County are maintained by the cities. It's unlikely that a record copy of plans for residences constructed prior to 1995 is available due to changes in policy and procedure for permitting, plan review, and records retention. Plans retained by the county for residences generally consist of architectural and structural drawings. To determine the availability of plans for a particular residence, contact Building Permits at 678.518.6020.

Q: How do I obtain a Certificate of Occupancy to operate a business within unincorporated Gwinnett County if no construction is required?

A: A Certificate of Occupancy is required for a change of business name, change of occupancy, change of owner, or change of tenant regarding the interior spaces of commercial and multi-family residential buildings in which no construction is required. For businesses located within unincorporated Gwinnett County, a business/occupation tax certificate and a tenant change permit must be obtained followed by an on-site inspection of the tenant space by the Department of Planning and Development and the Fire Marshal's Office prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. For additional information regarding tenant change permits, contact [Building Plan Review](#) and [Fire Plan Review](#) at 678.518.6000 or click [here](#).

Q: How many sets of plans are required for review regarding a building permit for commercial and multifamily construction projects?

A: Plans for each commercial and multifamily construction project are required for review as follows:

- Five (5) sets of complete plans are required for each proposed building or building addition located in unincorporated Gwinnett County.
- Two (2) sets of complete plans are required for each interior finish or spec space located in unincorporated Gwinnett County.
- For projects located within the city limits (incorporated Gwinnett County), one (1) set of complete plans is required for businesses with food service for review by Storm/Water/Sewer Plan Review.
- Businesses with food service require a separate food service permit. Contact [Gwinnett County Environmental Health](#) at 770.963.5132 for assistance.

In lieu of paper format, plans may be submitted in electronic format. Contact Building Plan Review at 678.518.6000 for assistance.

Q: How many sets of plans are required for review regarding a building permit for one and two-family residential construction?

- A: Plans for each new residence (single-family, duplex, and townhouse) located in unincorporated Gwinnett County are required for review as follows:
- Two (2) sets of architectural and structural drawings are required for each single-family residence or duplex with floor area of 5,000 sq. ft. or greater or with more than 3 stories (excluding basement).
 - Two (2) sets of architectural drawings are required for each townhouse including complete details for all fire-resistant-rated construction.

Q: What authorization is required for issuance of a building permit?

- A: Depending upon the type of project, plan review may be required by up to four separate plan review sections within the Department of Planning and Development and by several other enforcement agencies including Gwinnett County departments. For additional information, click [here](#) to view the Plan Review Process Guidelines.

Q: How much time is required for the initial plans submittal process for a building permit?

- A: The amount of time required for review of plans varies with project type, size, and complexity. A total of ten (10) business days is typically required for review of commercial land development projects, and proposed buildings and building additions. Plan review for many other types of projects can often be completed within the same business day of plans submittal. Plan review for projects other than land development, buildings, and building additions may require several days to complete due to size and/or complexity. The plan review process identifies specific codes, regulations, and ordinances that are not adequately shown on the plans which must be addressed prior to authorization for permit. For additional information, click [here](#) to view the Plan Review Process Guidelines.

Q: What are the building permit fees?

- A: Refer to the [Commercial and Multifamily Construction Building Permit Fee Summary](#) and [Residential Building Permit Fee Summary](#) for information regarding building permit fees.

Q: What is an interior finish permit and when is it required?

- A: An interior finish permit is a type of building permit for construction within an interior space of a building which is typically required for renovation except for painting, wallpapering, tiling, carpeting, and similar finish work. New tenants are required to obtain a business/occupation tax certificate and a certificate of occupancy from the Department of Planning and Development and a certificate of occupancy from the Fire Marshal's Office prior to use of any space. Click [here](#) for additional information.

Q: Is a plan review fee required for review of drawings submitted for a building permit?

A: A plan review fee of 50% of the total building permit fee is only required for new construction of commercial and multifamily buildings including additions. (Click [here](#) for information on building permit fees.)

Q: What are the required construction and fire codes for Gwinnett County?

A: Click [here](#) for the list of applicable codes.

Q: Is a building permit required for relocating or modifying an existing storage racking system?

A: A building permit may be required depending upon the floor area occupied by the storage racking system, the height of the system, or the rated load capacity per storage level. (Click [here](#) for detailed information.)

Q: What are the requirements for obtaining a building permit for a retaining wall?

A: Click [here](#) for Retaining Wall Code Compliance Guidelines.

Q: What are the requirements for licensing of contractors in the state of Georgia?

A: Click [here](#) for contractor licensing information.

Q: Is a building permit required to finish the basement in my home?

A: Yes, a building permit must be obtained prior to starting the work. (Click [here](#) for permit requirements.)

Q: What type and size of building can be constructed without a building permit?

A: A building permit is not required for detached residential accessory structures used as a tool and/or storage shed, playhouse or similar use provided the floor area of each structure is less than 32 square feet and does not contain an electrical, HVAC (heating ventilation and air conditioning) or plumbing system. (Click [here](#) for permit requirements.)

Q: How can I obtain information regarding the construction I've noticed at my neighbor's property?

A: Contact the Department of Planning & Development at 678.518.6020 to learn whether or not a building permit has been issued for the work in progress. If a permit has not yet been issued, a building inspector will be assigned to visit the site and ensure that the construction is properly permitted and inspected. Construction without the proper permit can also be reported online by clicking [here](#) and using the "Code Complaints / Violations" navigation tab.

Fire Permits

Q: How many sets of plans are required for review regarding a fire permit?

A: One (1) set of complete plans is typically required for review regarding a fire permit except as follows:

- Plans for review regarding a fire permit are included in the five (5) sets of complete plans required for review regarding a building permit for each proposed building or building addition located in unincorporated Gwinnett County.
- Plans for review regarding a fire permit are included in the two (2) sets of complete plans required for review regarding a building permit for each interior finish or spec space located in unincorporated Gwinnett County.

In lieu of paper format, plans may be submitted in electronic format. Contact Fire Plan Review at 678.518.6000 for assistance.

Q: What are the fees for fire permits including plan review?

A: Refer to the [Fire Fee Summary](#) for information on fire permit fees.

Q: How much time is required for the initial plans submittal process for a fire permit?

A: The amount of time required for review of plans varies with project type, size, and complexity. A total of ten (10) business days is typically required for review of commercial land development projects, and proposed buildings and building additions. Plan review for many other types of projects can often be completed within the same business day of plans submittal. Plan review for projects other than land development, buildings, and building additions may require several days to complete due to size and/or complexity. The plan review process identifies specific codes, regulations, and ordinances that are not adequately shown on the plans which must be addressed prior to authorization for permit. For additional information, click [here](#) to view the Plan Review Process Guidelines.

Q: How do I obtain a Certificate of Occupancy to operate a business within city limits if no construction is required?

A: A Certificate of Occupancy is required for a change of business name, change of occupancy, change of owner, or change of tenant regarding the interior spaces of commercial and multi-family residential buildings in which no construction is required. For businesses located within city limits, a tenant change permit must be obtained from Fire Plan Review in the Department of Planning and Development followed by an on-site inspection of the tenant space by the Fire Marshal's Office prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Click [here](#) for additional information.

Q: What types of fireworks can I use in Gwinnett County?

A: The only fireworks/sparklers that can be used legally in the state of Georgia are those sold within the state of Georgia. Fireworks purchased outside the state of Georgia must be approved for use in the state of Georgia which requires verification of the “Safe and Sane” fireworks product line with the store sales representative.

Q: When can I burn my yard waste?

A: Refer to [“Burn Day Information”](#) on the Department of Fire and Emergency Services website or call the outdoor burning Information Hotline at 678.518.4979.

Q: Who can I contact regarding fire inspections?

A: Contact the Fire Marshal’s Office at 678.518.4980 or click [here](#) for information regarding fire inspections including but not limited to scheduling and status.

Inspections

Q: When will the building inspector complete my scheduled inspection?

A. To obtain an estimated time of inspection, contact Inspections at 678.518.6050 from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. on the date the inspection is scheduled or from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled inspection. Provide the inspector with the building permit number and street address associated with the building permit. (For assistance regarding inspections for fire permits, contact the Fire Marshal's office at 678.518.4980.)

Q. When can I contact an inspector regarding my project including inspection requests?

A. Inspectors are typically available to receive phone calls from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Contact Inspections at 678.518.6050 for assistance.

Q. What specific inspections are required before I can schedule the final commercial building inspection?

A. The following inspections must be completed and approved prior to the final commercial building inspection:

- Electrical final inspection
- Mechanical final inspection
- Plumbing final inspection
- Fire Marshal final inspection
- Development final inspection (applicable for new buildings and additions)

Q. Is the homeowner required to be present at his/her residence during a scheduled inspection by a building inspector?

A. Either the homeowner or an adult representative must be present before an inspector can enter an occupied residence or fenced property. For inspection of an outside structure such as a deck, pool, or storage shed, the homeowner may place a note on the permit card granting the inspector permission to enter the property if he/she cannot be present during the inspection.

Q. How do I request an inspection for a development permit?

A. Click [here](#) for instructions for online scheduling of an inspection for a development permit using E-Services. Click [here](#) for E-Services and on the "Development Permit Options" navigation tab. **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**

Q. How do I request an inspection for a building permit?

A. Click [here](#) for instructions for online scheduling of an inspection for a building permit using E-Services. Click [here](#) for E-Services and on the “Building & Fire Permit Options” navigation tab. **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**

Q: How can I determine the name of my inspector?

A: Contact information for inspections assistance is as follows:

- Site development inspections - 678.518.6070
- Building inspections – 678.518.6050
- Water and sewer inspections - 678.518.6175.

Miscellaneous

Q: How can I obtain information about new construction at a specific location?

A: Information regarding new construction at a specific location may be obtained by either contacting department staff or by searching permit records on the department website. The specific site location must be provided which includes either the street address, parcel identification (district, land lot, and parcel number), or nearest street intersection.

For land development activities limited to clearing, grubbing, and/or grading, contact Development Plan Review in the Department of Planning and Development at 678.518.6000 or click [here](#) to search for land development permit information on the county website using the “Development Permit Options” navigation tab.

For land development activities which include construction of buildings or structures, contact Building Plan Review in the Department of Planning and Development at 678.518.6000 or click [here](#) to search for building permit information on the county website using the “Building & Fire Permit Options” navigation tab.

Q: How can I determine if a specific property is located within city limits or in unincorporated Gwinnett County?

A: Contact Gwinnett County Tax Assessor’s Office at 770.822.7200 or use Gwinnett County GIS Data Browser to determine if a specific property is located within city limits or in unincorporated Gwinnett County. Click [here](#) for instructions.

Q: How do I report property that is not properly maintained including but not limited to tall grass/weeds, peeling paint, rotted wood, broken windows, graffiti, and junk vehicles?

A: To report property that is not properly maintained, contact the Police Quality of Life Unit at 770.513.5004 or email at qualityoflife@gwinnettcountry.com or click [here](#) to report online using the “Code Complaints / Violations” navigation tab. The specific site location must be provided which includes either the street address, parcel identification (district, land lot, and parcel number), or nearest street intersection.

Q: What is vacant real property?

A: Real property that:

- Is intended for habitation, has not been lawfully inhabited for at least sixty (60) days, and has no evidence of utility usage within the past 60 days;

Or

- Is partially constructed or incomplete without a valid building permit.

Vacant real property does not include a building or structure containing multiple units with common ownership that has at least one unit occupied with evidence of utility usage.

Q: What is foreclosed real property?

A: Foreclosed real property is improved real property which is held pursuant to a judicial or nonjudicial foreclosure of a mortgage, deed of trust, security deed, deed to secure debt, or other security instrument securing a debt of obligation owed to a creditor or deed in lieu of foreclosure in full or partial satisfaction of a debt or obligation owed to a creditor.

Q: What is required of an owner of vacant or foreclosed real property?

A: An owner of any vacant real property is required to register vacant real property with Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development within fourteen (14) days of the structure becoming vacant. An owner of any foreclosed real property is required to register the property within ninety (90) days after the date of property transfer to the owner. Click [here](#) for additional information.

General Services

Q: What forms of payment are acceptable?

A: Acceptable forms of payment include cash, checks, money orders, Master Card credit and debit cards, Visa credit and debit cards, and Discover credit and debit cards.

Q: What online services are currently available?

A: The following online services are currently available:

- Research property information including property owner, parcel number, and street address. (Click [here](#) and on the “Home” navigation tab.)
- Research zoning case information including rezoning, special use permit, buffer reduction, change-in-conditions, and moved-in-house. (Click [here](#) and on the “Zoning Case Search” navigation tab.)
- Research development permit information including permit applicant, project name and location, permit status, developer, and property owner. (Click [here](#) and on the “Development Permit Options” navigation tab.)
- Research building/fire permit information including permit applicant, project name and location, permit status, and contractor. (Click [here](#) and on the “Building & Fire Permit Options” navigation tab.)
- Request a development permit inspection. (Click [here](#) and on the “Development Permit Options” navigation tab.) **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**
- Request a building/fire permit inspection. (Click [here](#) and on the “Building & Fire Permit Options” navigation tab.) **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**
- Submit a Subcontractor Affidavit Form for a building permit. (Click [here](#) and on the “Building & Fire Permit Options” navigation tab.) **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**
- Submit electronic plans for review applicable to site development projects. (Click [here](#) and on the “Development Permit Options” navigation tab.) **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**
- Submit electronic plans for review applicable to commercial/multifamily construction projects. (Click [here](#) and on the “Building & Fire Permit Options” navigation tab.) **(This service requires access as a registered user.)**

- Report a violation of codes, ordinances, and/or regulations enforced by the Department of Planning and Development, Fire Marshal's Office, and Police Quality of Life Unit. (Click [here](#) and on the "Code Complaints / Violations" navigation tab.)

Access to services as a registered user requires establishing a user account and login with "User Name" or "E-mail" and password.