



GWINNETT COUNTY
Department of Planning & Development
One Justice Square
446 West Crogan Street, 1st Floor, Suite 150
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045
Phone: 789.518.6000 Fax: 678.518.6240
www.gwinnettcounty.com

“In-Law Suite” Zoning & Building Permit Requirements
(Restricted to detached, single-family homes)

(Revised May 2008)

This document’s purpose is to clarify zoning & building permit requirements for an "In-Law Suite" in a home. Office hours to obtain plan approvals & permits are 8 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

1. Definitions. The following adopted definitions are relevant in determining what type of additions or remodeling may be authorized regarding "In-Law Suites":

- The Zoning Resolution defines a Dwelling Unit as follows: One or more rooms, designed, occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters, with cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities provided within the dwelling unit for the exclusive use of a single family maintained household.
- The Zoning Resolution defines a Family as follows: A group of not more than eight persons occupying a single dwelling unit.
- The Zoning Resolution defines a Single-Family Dwelling as follows: A dwelling containing one (1) and only one (1) Dwelling Unit, other than a manufactured home.

2. Requirements. The construction of an “In-Law Suite” is allowed for single-family dwellings provided the following requirements are satisfied:

- The “In-Law Suite” may not constitute a separate dwelling unit.
- The “In-Law Suite” shall be restricted to a single Dwelling Unit located within single-family zoning districts [R-200, R-140, R-LL, R-100, R-75, R-60, and R-ZT (detached only)].
- The individual residing in the “In-Law Suite” must be allowed access to the common areas of the Dwelling Unit (e.g. the kitchen, bathroom, living room, etc.).
- The "In-Law Suite" shall not have separate gas and electric utilities (more than one meter per utility would constitute a separate Dwelling Unit and is prohibited).
- The "In-Law Suite" shall not be located in an accessory building (this would constitute a separate Dwelling Unit).
- The "In-Law Suite" shall be connected to the main heated living area of the dwelling (the “In-Law Suite” shall not be connected to the building by a breezeway as this would constitute a separate Dwelling Unit).
- The "In-Law Suite" shall have principal means of access to the outside of the Dwelling Unit via the Dwelling Unit's main exterior doorways (single access to the outside of the "In-Law Suite" would constitute a separate Dwelling Unit).
- The "In-Law Suite" may have a kitchen and bathroom as well as a bedroom.

3. Appeals. Appeals from these regulations or their interpretation are decided by the Zoning Board of Appeals in accordance with the “Appeal of Administrative Decision” process. The appellant should contact the Development Services Section in order to obtain additional information regarding the appeals process.

4. Additional Building Permit Application Requirements. All permit applications shall be accompanied by the following additional information (please see the Planning & Development documents “Basement Finishing of a Home – Building Permit Requirements” or the “Building Addition to a Home – Building Permit Requirements” for more information):

- a. A "sketch" floor plan indicating the use of each room, doorway locations and demonstrating compliance with Section 2 of this memorandum;
- b. A signed & notarized affidavit from the property owner stating who will reside in the "In-Law Suite" and acknowledging that the "In-Law Suite" is prohibited from use as an apartment;
- c. A Building Addition Location Plan (if adding to the home).