

Purpose of Brochure

The City of Richmond Zoning Administration Office is responsible for enforcing the zoning regulations within the City. There are specific regulations that apply to all residential, commercial and industrial properties. This brochure is intended to describe the City of Richmond zoning laws as it pertains to certain common enforcement issues. Our enforcement duties specifically apply to:

- Family Definition (Too many occupants)
- Lodginghouses or Rooming Houses
- Auto Repair (Junk & Unlicensed Vehicles)
- Commercial Vehicles
- Shipping Containers & PODs/Smartboxes
- Setback (Yard) Requirements
- Illegal or Excessive Signage
- Fence Height & Location
- Trailers & Vendors (Food Carts)
- No Certificate of Zoning Compliance (CZC)
- Trash Collection Areas (Dumpster Screening)
- Domestic Animals and Household Pets

The following sections of the City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance explain these issues in detail.

Family Definition

- One (1) or more persons or, two (2) unrelated adults plus children related to one or both adults, related by blood, marriage, legal guardianship or adoption, including foster children.
- Not more than three (3) unrelated persons or a combination of related and unrelated persons.
- Not more than eight (8) unrelated mentally ill, mentally retarded, or developmentally disabled persons occupying a single dwelling unit, exclusive of resident counselors or other staff persons for which the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation & Substance Abuse Services (VDMHMRSAS) is the licensing authority, except for persons currently using or addicted to a controlled substance.
- Not more than eight (8) handicapped persons, as defined by the federal fair housing act, occupying a single dwelling unit, exclusive of resident counselors or other staff persons.

Lodginghouse Definition

A building containing any number of lodging units (separate living quarters or rooms) with or without board that are not available for occupancy for periods of less than one week. Existence of any one or more of the following characteristics constitutes lodginghouse use:

- Separate rental agreements
- Exterior locking mechanisms on interior doors
- Separate entrances from the exterior of the building
- Common areas of the dwelling unit, such as the living room, family room or dining room, are being used as sleeping areas or are not available on an equal or common basis to all occupants.

Auto Repair (Junk & Unlicensed Vehicles)

Servicing and minor repair of motor vehicles within enclosed service bays or stalls is a permitted use in the following zoning districts: **B-2, B-3, M-1 & M-2.**

General vehicle repair, body repair, sanding and painting involves heavier, noisier and more intense repair work that must be within a completely enclosed building. These facilities are only permitted in the following zoning districts: **B-3, M-1 & M-2.**

Auto repair **IS NOT** a permitted use in any residentially-zoned district. ***Be aware that none of the districts allow junked or dismantled vehicles unfit for operation on the streets to be stored outside of an enclosed building.*** Additional requirements include on-site parking, landscaping and a Plan of Development (POD).

Shipping Containers, PODS/EZ-BOX/SMARTBOX

Temporary storage containers, including shipping containers, Smart or EZ-Boxes or PODS, dumpsters and similar structures, can be placed in your yard for up to three (3) days if you are moving or renovating your property. If it is to remain longer than three (3) days, it must meet yard (setback) requirements and cannot be located in the front yard. If you cannot locate the structure in the rear, the *Department of Public Works (DPW)* allows and issues permits for these structures to be placed in the street.

Commercial Vehicles.

No vehicle that exceeds an empty weight of 6,500 pounds, semi-trailer, or commercial vehicle shall be parked or stored outside of a completed enclosed building in any R-district.

Vendor Food Carts & Trailers

Vendor food carts, **placed on City sidewalks** (sidewalk vendors), are regulated by the Department of Finance (See: Sections 18-521 et seq. of the Richmond City Code). The Department of Finance is located at 900 East Broad Street, City Hall - Room 102, Richmond, VA 23219. For additional information, please call a Finance representative at: (804) 646-5928.

Vendor food carts and trailers **permanently parked on private property are typically not permitted** and must obtain a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) under the Building Code. For more information, please contact the Permits & Inspections Office at: (804) 646-6955 and the Zoning Administration Office at: (804) 646-6340.

Certificate of Zoning Compliance (CZC) City Code (Section 114-1020) requires that **ALL** properties within the City obtain a CZC. A CZC is a permit issued by the Zoning Administration Office certifying conformance with the Zoning Ordinance. A CZC is also required to obtain a City business license.

Yard (Setback) Requirements

Each zoning district has a specified front, rear and side yard (setback) and it is important to check your requirement prior to locating any building or structure on your property. Some buildings or structures may not require a building permit, but they still must comply with yard requirements.

Fences & Walls

Fences and walls not exceeding 6½ feet in height may be located within any required yard. However, in certain zoning districts (R-6, R-7 & R-63) they cannot exceed four feet (4') in height if they are located in the front yard. No building permit is required for a fence, but it may require approval if located in a historic district. Most walls, because they are structural, require a building permit. In addition, electric fences are not permitted anywhere in the City. Barb- and razor-wire fences are also regulated.

Pets and Domestic Animals

More than five (5) dogs, cats or other household pets over the age of four (4) months constitutes a kennel and can only be located within certain zoning districts. Also, keeping of domestic animals (i.e. - horses, goats, chickens) for non-commercial purposes is allowed, provided that all pens, runs, out-buildings and other facilities for the housing or enclosure of the animals shall be not less than two-hundred feet (200') feet from all property lines. This spacing limitation equates approximately with a minimum lot size of one (1) acre.

Signs

Each zoning district within the City has specific regulations regarding the type, number, location and size of signs.

There are two categories of signs: permanent and temporary. In addition, there are several permanent sign types with varying methods of installation, including: wall signs, projecting signs, suspended signs, awning and canopy signs and freestanding signs.

Many sign displays, though intended to be temporary, may not be permitted. These generally include sign displays attached to fences, walls or poles or other buildings or structures, which typically advertise tobacco or drink products. The following are examples of non-permitted signs:



REPORTING A ZONING VIOLATION

If you believe a property within the City of Richmond is in violation of any zoning laws contact the Zoning Administration office. We may be reached via telephone at: **646-6340**.

Please be prepared to provide a detailed description of the violation. It will also be necessary that you obtain and provide an accurate property address.

You may also report any violation via E-mail

DCDZoningAdministration@Richmondgov.com

or by using the City's online *Citizens Request* system that can be accessed via the City's webpage at:

www.richmondgov.com/applications/citizensrequest/frmNewEntryType.asp

Once an alleged violation is reported to our office, it is assigned to enforcement staff for investigation by researching records and, if necessary, by performing an on-site inspection.

If our office determines that a property violates a zoning requirement, a *Violation Notice & Correction Order* is sent to the owner and/or occupant of the property. The violator is normally given thirty (30) days to abate the violation, as Virginia law requires a 30-day appeal period. If a violation is not abated or an appeal filed, a summons may be issued for criminal court. Violation of the Zoning Ordinance is a Class I misdemeanor, subject up to a \$2,500 fine and/or up to a year in jail.



Zoning Violations: A - Z

City of Richmond

Department of Community Development
Zoning Administration Division
Enforcement Section

900 East Broad Street

City Hall - Room 110

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Phone: (804) 646-6340

Fax: (804) 646-6948

E-Mail Address:

DCDZoningAdministration@Richmondgov.com

Zoning Administration Webpage:
www.richmondgov.com/departments/citydevelopment/zoning

Community Development
Webpage:
www.richmondgov.com/departments/citydevelopment

City of Richmond Website
www.richmondgov.com