

Frequently Asked Code Enforcement Questions

How many unrelated people may live in a house?

Up to four unrelated people. If more than four unrelated individuals live in a house, it is considered a boarding or rooming house operation. It is illegal to operate a boarding/rooming house, except under very limited circumstances requiring a special permit. To report a suspected illegal boarding house, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/striketeam or call 703-324-1300, TTY 711.

Can a vehicle or trailer be parked on the lawn?

Vehicles must be parked on the street or on a paved driveway. The only exception is if a vehicle is being actively cleaned, repaired or loaded. A vehicle may be parked on the lawn for these reasons, but for no longer than 48 hours. More information on parking and neighborhood traffic rules can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/rtap.htm.

Can commercial vehicles be parked on a residential property?

One commercial vehicle may be parked on a residential property, such as a van or truck. The vehicle may be parked on a paved driveway or on the side or the backyard lawn. If your neighborhood is part of a Community Parking District, commercial vehicles may be prohibited from parking on the street; for more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/large_cpd.htm. Garbage trucks, tractor-trailer trucks, dump trucks and cement-mixer trucks may not be parked on a residential property.

Can a commercial vehicle be parked on a residential street?

No — except for one licensed taxicab or limousine per home. Commercial vehicles — such as tractor-trailers, semi-trailers, cement-mixers, garbage trucks, construction equipment and trucks, trailers or semi-trailers for transporting lawn-care equipment or storing or selling food — are prohibited on a residential street. However, vehicles commonly perceived as commercial vehicles — such as U-Haul trucks and trailers or vans used by a plumber or an electrician — may be parked on a residential street.

Can construction equipment be parked on residential property?

Construction equipment may be kept anywhere on the property if there is a valid building permit and work is in progress.

How much of a front yard can be paved for use as a driveway or other purpose?

It depends on the zoning district in which the neighborhood is located. In R-1 and R-2 Districts, no more than 25 percent may be paved; in R-3 and R-4 Districts, no more than 30 percent may be paved. To find out how your neighborhood is zoned, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/zoning/myzoningdistrict.htm.

What should I do if a car or truck is blocking the street, preventing other vehicles from passing?

Call the Fairfax County Police Department's non-emergency phone number at 703-691-2131, TTY 711, and the police will investigate. Parking is allowed on both sides of narrow residential streets, but vehicles must be parked close to the curb and face the

proper direction of travel. However, it is prohibited to park within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, within 20 feet of a crosswalk and within 30 feet of a stop sign.

Are cars without license plates allowed to be parked on the street or a driveway?

No. Vehicles must have current license plates, according to state and county codes. New residents must get Virginia license plates within 30 days of moving into the state. Military and diplomatic personnel are exempt from this requirement, but they must have current license plates on their vehicles. Call the Fairfax County Police Department's non-emergency phone number at 703-691-2131, TTY 711, if you see a car with expired license plates or no plates at all.

Are cars with out-of-state license plates allowed to park on the street or a driveway?

Yes. However, new residents must get Virginia license plates within 30 days of moving into the state. Military and diplomatic personnel are exempt from this requirement, but they must have current license plates on their vehicles.

How long may a home construction project remain unfinished?

Home construction projects with the proper permits may continue indefinitely provided substantive progress is being made. If work is suspended or abandoned for more than six months, the building permit may be revoked. The county cannot force homeowners to finish a construction project, if it has proper permits.

Can I store construction materials in my yard?

Yes, if you have a valid building permit.

Are home businesses legal?

Home businesses are allowed with a proper permit, but clients or customers may not come to the house — with the exception of a licensed child care business and teachers, such as dance or piano instructors. Home businesses may not display signs or store, display or sell goods on the property. Repair and service businesses, such as car repair, car detailing or barbers, are prohibited. You may need county permits or licenses to operate a home business. To learn more, call the Department of Planning and Zoning at 703-222-1082, TTY 711.

How long can trash stay on the curb?

Trash bags may only be put out at the curb 12 hours before they are picked up, but trash cans and recycling bins may be put out at the curb 24 hours before pickup. However, many homeowners associations have stricter rules about when trash can be put out at the curb. Trash companies do not normally pick up large, bulky items, such as mattresses, furniture or fallen trees. You can ask your trash company to pick up these kinds of items for an extra fee. It is a homeowner's responsibility to make sure these items are picked up. If trash is left at the curb for more than 10 days, call the Health Department at 703-246-2300, TTY 711. The county will investigate the complaint, collect the trash if the property owner does not comply with directives to remove it

themselves, and charge the property owner for picking it up under the county's Clean Street's Initiative Program. The minimum fee for the program is \$250, and can rise depending upon the amount of trash.

Can I store unused, unwanted items in my yard, such as tires or furniture?

You can store items in your yard, but they must be put in the backyard. They also must be screened with a fence from view from the first-story window of nearby homes. The storage area cannot exceed 100 square feet on most residential properties.

Can portable storage containers, also known as pods, be kept on the street or residential property?

Portable storage containers are allowed anywhere on residential properties, including lawns and driveways. But they may not be placed on a street, sidewalk, trail or anywhere that might block cars or pedestrians. Within a six-month period, they may be kept for seven consecutive days in townhouse complexes; 30 consecutive days on lots that are 36,000 square feet or less; or 60 consecutive days on lots larger than 36,000 square feet. In some cases, they may be kept for up to six consecutive months with a special permit.

What are the rules for how homes must be maintained?

The County Code requires that all structures be kept in good repair and in sound condition both on the exterior and interior of the structure. Common problems include broken windows, falling gutters and missing siding.

What's the maximum height for uncut grass?

Uncut grass cannot be higher than 12 inches on residential properties that are half an acre or less. To submit a complaint, call 703-324-1937, TTY 711, or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/grass_height.htm.

What should I do about graffiti in my neighborhood?

The first step is to report the graffiti to the Police Department's non-emergency number, 703-691-2131, TTY 711. Fairfax County requires that property owners remove, clean or cover the graffiti within 15 days. Further information on the county code and how to prevent and remove graffiti can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gangprevention.