

Chesterfield County Regulations

Periodically questions are raised on whether an activity on someone's property in Surreywood is in violation of Chesterfield's ordinances. County regulations are minimum rules on the use of property (subdivision covenants/conditions are more restrictive than county ordinances). The purpose of County regulations and subdivision restrictive covenants is to protect the health and safety of residents, to maintain property values, and to assure an attractive community.

Dogs - Up to three adult dogs are allowed. Having four or more dogs on a residential lot is considered a private kennel. Operation of a private kennel requires County Board of Zoning Appeals approval of a special exception after public notice to adjacent property owners and a public hearing. Contact the Planning Department (748-1050) for more information. A private kennel license also must be obtained from Animal Control (748-1683).

Leash laws - Dogs are prohibited from running at large within the county at any time during the year. The animal wardens are authorized to catch all dogs found running at large and take them to the county animal shelter. Running at large means a dog is off the owner's property and not directly connected to its owner by a physical restraint. A dog won't be released until the owner presents a current dog license receipt or tag; presents proof of a valid rabies vaccination; and pays a fee for the animal's impoundment of \$30.00 for the first 24 hours and \$12.00 a day for each additional day. A \$25 minimum fine may also be assessed.

Unlicensed or inoperable vehicles –All vehicles must have license plates that are current unless parked within an enclosed building. However, one inoperable vehicle that is not in an enclosed building may be kept on residential property if it is in the rear yard and covered or screened from view from outside the property. The owner must pay an unlicensed vehicle fee of \$100 per year.

Boats and recreational equipment – Only two pieces of recreational equipment including boats, boat trailers, travel trailers, pick-up campers, tent trailers and the like may be parked or stored on a residential lot outside of an enclosed building. They must be kept in the rear yard of the house. No recreational equipment shall be used for dwelling purposes.

Large trucks, vehicles - Parking and storage of any commercial truck (including tractor-trailer), commercial vehicle or public service vehicle in excess of 10,000 pounds and having more than two axles, or which tow or haul disabled, wrecked or junk vehicles, is prohibited on a residential lot.

Discarded material - Scrap metals; used or scrap building, plumbing, electrical, heating material; discarded household appliances, furnishings and fixtures; dismantled or demolished motor vehicles may not be stored on a residential lot unless inside a garage or the house. The County Waste Division (748-1297) will pick up brush, leaves, yard waste, and bulk items for a fee.

Home occupation, business – Surreywood's restrictive covenants do not allow any use of property other than for residential purposes. County zoning regulations specify that nothing on a residential property can give any indication a home occupation/business is being operated and that only family members that live on the premises can be involved.

Tall grass, weeds, brush – If taller than 12 inches at an occupied dwelling, or 18 inches at an unoccupied dwelling, it is a violation of the County weed ordinance. After inspection, the County will notify the land owner in writing with a deadline to comply. If not cut in the required time, the County will arrange to have it cut and bill the owner the cost plus a \$35 fee. If not paid within 60 days, the amount will be recorded as a lien against the property.

Leaf burning – The developed parts of the County are designated as a “no burn area.” Persons burning leaves will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of up to \$500. Contact the police or fire department if someone is burning leaves, branches, or brush.

Occupancy of houses – Surreywood’s covenants and County residential zoning regulations specify that only single family dwellings are allowed in the neighborhood. A family is defined by the County as (i) an individual, (ii) two or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption or guardianship plus foster children and not more than two roomers, living together as a single nonprofit housekeeping unit, or (iii) a group of not more than four persons not related by blood, marriage, adoption or guardianship living together as a single nonprofit housekeeping unit.

Second dwelling – The zoning ordinance permits one single-family dwelling unit per residential property. A single dwelling unit has one kitchen. A cooking area is considered a separate kitchen if it contains a sink and at least one major appliance such as a stove or refrigerator. A relative in need of care can move in and share the use of the home as long as only one kitchen is present. The property owner must apply for a conditional use permit to add a second dwelling (separate kitchen) and justify the need. Adjoining land owners are notified and given the opportunity to provide input at public hearings. The concern, though, is that the second dwelling could become rental property in the future.

Reporting a Problem to the County

If you observe a violation, contact the County Code Compliance Office at 748-1500 or by using their Web-based complaint system at **chesterfield.gov** (type “Code Compliance Complaint Form” in the Search field at the top of the page).

Chesterfield County policy is to not reveal the identity of zoning enforcement complainants. Information you provide is confidential, excluded from the Freedom of Information Act, and will not be revealed to others. An inspector will visit the site of the violation and will try to resolve the issue or take appropriate legal action.

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