

Zoning - Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

When in doubt, please contact the Zoning Office

Q: When do I need to apply for a zoning permit?

A: A zoning permit is required for all types of development or improvements to your property, whether you are adding or replacing.

This includes but is not limited to:

- New construction
- Additions
- Enclosing a porch
- Finishing a basement
- Finishing an attic
- Decks
- Pools (above and in-ground)
- Hot Tub/Spa
- Fences
- Retaining Walls
- Driveways (new, repaving or expanding)
- Walkways
- Handicap ramp
- Patio
- Generator
- HVAC
- Sheds
- Greenhouse
- Pergola
- Gazebo
- Commercial Change of use or Occupancy
- Commercial Signage

PLEASE NOTE: If your project exists within an historic district or within Bloomfield Center, additional steps are required.

Q: How do I apply for a zoning permit and what information do I need?

A: You will need to submit a Zoning Permit application along with a copy of a current property survey. Zoning Permits are online under Township Forms. The survey should accurately reflect existing conditions on your property, and also illustrate any and all proposed work on the property. It shall contain all property lines, easements and lot restrictions.

Q: How long does it take for a zoning permit to be reviewed?

A: State law provides 10 business days for review. We always try to do our reviews in less time than that, but sometimes, depending on volume and other factors, we do take the full time allowed.

Q: Does the Township have copies of my survey?

A: The Township does not maintain records of private property surveys. You should have received a copy of your survey with your deed when you purchased the property. If you need your survey and don't have a current one, you will have to hire a professional land surveyor.

Q: Do I need a permit to install or repave (resurface) my driveway?

A: You need a zoning permit, even if you are just repaving the same area

Q: Can I install a driveway on the front lawn?

A: No. In residential zones, no required parking shall be permitted in any front yard except in a driveway leading to a garage.

Q: I want to expand my driveway so we can fit two cars across can I?

A: No. The width of a driveway shall be limited to the width of the garage.

Q: Can I park a commercial vehicle on my property?

A: No commercial vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 5,000 pounds shall be parked or stored outdoors overnight in any residential zone. Not more than one commercial vehicle of any kind shall be parked or stored on any residential lot.

Q: What are the setback requirements for sheds?

A: Sheds can only be 80 square feet and 8 feet tall and must maintain a rear yard setback of 5 feet and a side yard setback of 5 feet, except if your rear lot line serves as a front or a side lot line of an adjoining property then it is 10 feet.

Q: I want to build a pergola, gazebo or a greenhouse on my property. What are the requirements?

A: A zoning permit is required and these are considered accessory structures and would have to meet the same requirements as a shed. No more than two accessory buildings shall be permitted on any one residential lot. No accessory building or structure shall be permitted in any front yard.

Q: I'm replacing my shed and wish to put it back in the same place do I need a permit?

A: Yes, we need to ensure that the shed conforms to the 80 square feet and 8 feet tall and also needs to adhere to current setbacks.

Q: I have a complaint I would like the Zoning Officer to investigate, how do I go about filing the complaint?

A: You may email the Zoning Officer at rbeese@bloomfieldtwpnj.com, please make complaints Zoning related only.

Q: It looks like my neighbor's shed or fence is on my property. What should I do?

A: This is not a zoning issue; it is a private matter. You need to talk to your neighbor.

Q: My neighbor and I are having a dispute regarding the boundary line of our properties. Can the Zoning Office help me?

A: This is not a zoning issue. Boundary disputes are personal legal matters and are not within the jurisdiction of the municipality (NOTE: Unless a municipal boundary is the subject of the problem). You should consult an attorney or your title company to assist you.

Q: Do I need a zoning permit to turn my basement or attic into a living space?

A: Yes. The zoning code has a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) and we have to review your project for compliance with of this standard.

Q: Do I need a permit to put a fence on my property?

A: Zoning approval is required for all fences, including the replacement of existing fences.

Q: How high can my fence be?

A: 4 feet in a side yard and 6 feet in a rear yard. Note that corner lots have two front yards. Both street frontages are front yards from a zoning perspective. Fences are not permitted in the front yard of the R-1A Zone, but in other Zones need to 4 feet and 60% open.

Q: Where can I put my fence?

A: Fences may go on the property line.

Q: Which way does my fence have to face?

A: Decorative side faces out.

Q: My neighbor's fence is in disrepair can you help me?

A: You may contact the Health Department (973-680-4024) for this property maintenance issue.

Q: Do I need a zoning permit to install or replace my patio?

A: Yes, a zoning permit is required for the replacement or addition of all patio and walkways as the zoning code has a maximum amount of impervious coverage per property and we have to review your project for compliance. All decks, patios and terraces shall be located in the rear yard only and must meet the required yard setbacks for principal buildings.

Q: I want to knock down my deck and rebuild it do I need a permit?

A: Yes the zoning code has a maximum amount of impervious coverage per property and we have to review your project for compliance of the side and rear setbacks.

Q: What are the requirements for installing a pool?

A: All pools including the replacement of a pool require initial zoning approval to ensure compliance with setbacks and lot coverage requirements. For semi in-ground or in-ground pools, the application process involves a topographical survey of current and proposed grading conditions. Pools need to be placed in the rear yard and can be no closer than five feet to any accessory structure or side or rear lot line or 10 feet to the principal building on the lot and 10 feet from neighboring structures. Also construction permits for building, electrical and plumbing are needed.

Q: I bought one of those pools from Walmart do I need a permit?

A: All pools whether permanently installed, portable, collapsible or otherwise, 24 inches in height or more require zoning approval.

Q: Can I operate an Airbnb, Rooming House or Boarding House?

A: Per Township Code Chapter 433, no residential premises, including dwelling houses, apartments, rooming houses or boarding houses or any parts thereof or rooms therein, except duly licensed hotels and motels, shall be rented or let for occupancy by any person or persons for a period or term of less than 30 days.

Q: Is my property in the floodplain?

A: To confirm whether or not you are in the floodplain and what your potential exposure to flood risk may be; you may contact the Engineering Department (973-680-4009) or visit FEMA's Flood Map Service Center website.