Yard Setback Information For Your Project

Thinking about building on your property? Buying or building a shed, pool or carport? Check with the Planning Department before you get started.

Chesterfield County, Virginia
Providing a FIRST CHOICE Community through Excellence in Public Service
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9800 Government Center Parkway
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Fax: (804) 717-6295
Email: planning@chesterfield.gov

What are setbacks?
Building setbacks are the required minimum distance between property lines and all structures on your property. Whether or not a building permit is required, any structural improvements are subject to setback requirements of your specific zoning district.

Every property in Chesterfield County has different standards that must be considered before proceeding with a project. Contact the Planning Department to see if there are any special zoning requirements or easements on your property.

How are setbacks determined?
Setbacks depend on the zoning of your property and whether your project is attached or detached from your home. All front and corner side setbacks are measured from the ultimate right-of-way.

For detached structures, setbacks are dependent on the average height.

\[
\text{Average Height of Detached Structure} = \frac{\text{Wall Height} + \text{Grade to Peak}}{2}
\]

Special consideration
Contact the Building Inspections department to see if your project would require a building permit. If a building permit is required, be sure to submit the following with your application:

- Draw a sketch identifying where your structure will be on your property. Example sketches are provided on the next panel. Although it is not required, an as-built survey with existing property improvements is the best way to ensure an accurate sketch.

- Label the setback measurements from each property line to the closest point on the structure. Building setback distances are measured perpendicular to the property line and the ultimate right-of-way. Be as exact as possible.

- Be aware of any buffers, easements, or floodplains located on your property. No structure may be located in these areas.

Detached Structure Example Sketch

Attached Structure Example Sketch

* Additional information may be required during the building permit process.
I have an easement on my property. Are my setback requirements affected?

You are not allowed to place structures inside any easements. Structures may be built adjacent to an easement as long as the structures meet setback requirements and do not encroach into easements.

If an easement is located on a property, the setback is still measured from each property line. However, if the easement is greater than the setback, you would take the larger measurement as your minimum setback.

In the example below, there is an 8-foot easement along the right side line of a property. If the minimum side yard setback is 7.5-feet for a detached accessory structure, the left side yard setback would be 7.5-feet as measured from the side property line. However, since there is an 8-foot easement along the right side property line, the minimum setback would increase to 8-feet on the right side in order to stay outside of the easement.

I have a buffer on my property. Does this affect my setback requirements?

No structures may be located in buffers, easements, or floodplains. Be aware of any located on your property.

Most buffers are exclusive of required setbacks. If a buffer is located on a property, the setback is measured from the edge of the buffer closest to the proposed structure. Check with the Planning Department to be sure.

In the example below, there is a 25-foot buffer strip along the rear line of a property. If the rear yard setback is 10-feet for the detached structure, the rear yard setback is measured from the inside edge of the 25-foot buffer.

Property With Buffer Strip

Property With Easement

What is the Ultimate Right-of-Way for my property?

The width of the right-of-way varies depending on location. Contact the Transportation Department to determine the width of the right-of-way for your area:

Chesterfield County Transportation Department
Phone: (804) 748-1037
Email: transportation@chesterfield.gov

Where can I get a survey of my property?

The County does not perform surveys. You may check in the Circuit Court Record Room in the Courts Building to see if they have one on record.

Circuit Court Clerk and Records Room
Address: 9500 Courthouse Road
Phone: (804) 748-1241

If a survey is not on record, you may contact a private surveyor. The Planning Department can also provide you with an approximate sketch of your property from our geographic information system. This would be acceptable to submit with your building permit.

Why do setbacks matter?

- Help to avoid conflicts with neighbors. If everyone is adhering to the same set of regulations, then there will be less cause for conflict.
- Your homeowner insurance or ability to resell may be affected. Certain insurance companies and lenders may not underwrite certain illegal or nonconforming structures.
- Prevent legal action by homeowner associations.

Questions? Contact us:

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