



Accessory Buildings (Residential) Building Permit Requirements

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in obtaining a Building Permit to construct an accessory building on a residential lot. Typical accessory buildings are storage buildings and detached garages. A permit must be obtained prior to any land disturbance or building construction. A permit is not required if the building does not exceed 120 square feet in floor area.

Step 1 – Obtain Approval from the Environmental Health Department for Homes Served by a Private Septic System. [Note: This step is NOT required if the home is served by the County sewer system.]

If the home is served by a private septic tank system, Gwinnett Environmental Health must approve the proposed location on the lot before a permit can be issued. For review and approval information, contact Environmental Health at 455 Grayson Highway, Lawrenceville, or call 770.963.5132. Proof of approval by Environmental Health must be attached to the Building Permit Application.

Step 2 – Submit the “Accessory Building Location Plan” for Review & Approval by the Development Review Section of the Department of Planning and Development.

The purpose of this review is to verify compliance with County regulations regarding building setbacks, encroachments into utility easements, zoning buffer, clearing limits or impervious surface setbacks from the Chattahoochee River. This plan must be drawn to scale (i.e. 1”=10’, 1”=20’) and must show the lot boundaries, location of the existing home and driveway, easements, streams, buffers, clearing and impervious square footage within the Chattahoochee River Corridor, and the location of the proposed accessory building. A copy of the Final Subdivision Plat showing the lot dimensions is available at the Deed Record’s Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30046.

- **Size, Materials and General Location:** Accessory buildings cannot be larger than the sizes specified in the table below and cannot be located on vacant lots. These buildings must be located in the rear yard, be clear of any drainage or utility easements, buffer or flood hazard areas, and observe the following setback requirements adjacent to all property lines and right-of- ways:

Accessory structure size, in area	Required setback distance
0 – 120 sq. ft.	5 ft.
121 – 300 sq. ft.	10 ft.
301 – 500 sq. ft.	15 ft.
Over 500 sq. ft.	20 ft.

It is highly recommended that you contact Development Review staff at 678.518.6000 to verify for your location.

In all residential zoning districts, except RA-200, accessory buildings shall comply with the following requirements:

Table 230.2: Size of Permitted and Prohibited Accessory Buildings

Lot size	Accessory Buildings Permitted	Accessory Buildings Permitted with Variance from Zoning Board of Appeals	Accessory Buildings Permitted with Special Use Permit	Prohibited Accessory Buildings
Less than 10,500 sq. ft.	120 sq. ft.	121 – 500 sq. ft.	Not available	Greater than 500 sq. ft.
10,500 sq. ft. - 0.99 acres	500 sq. ft.	501 – 1,000 sq. ft.	Not available	Greater than 1,000 sq. ft.
1.00 – 2.99 acres	650 sq. ft.	651 – 1,000 sq. ft.	1,001 – 1,300 sq. ft.	Greater than 1,300 sq. ft.
3 acres or greater	Up to 50% of square footage of principal structure, up to 1,000 sq. ft.	Greater than 50% of square footage of principal structure, up to 1,000 sq. ft.	Greater than 1,000 sq. ft.	No maximum

- A. Accessory buildings shall not be used for any commercial operation whether permanent or part-time or for any type of human habitation except as part of an approved accessory dwelling, as provided in Section 230-100.
- B. Accessory buildings shall not be used for the storage of hazardous materials, waste products or putrescent materials.
- C. No commercial vehicles as delineated in Section 240-110 shall be stored inside an accessory building located within a residential zoning district.
- D. Accessory buildings greater than 120 square feet in floor area shall abide by the following design guidelines:
 - i. Exterior walls shall be finished with brick or stone or with materials and colors similar to that of the principal building.
 - ii. Internal floors shall be a solid surface and constructed with materials such as, but not limited to, concrete or wood. Gravel and dirt floors are prohibited.
 - iii. Roofing materials and colors shall match that of the principal building. Roof pitch shall be commensurate with the roof pitch of the principal building.

- iv. Building height shall not exceed 12 feet as measured from average grade level to average height of a pitched roof.
- E. The maximum cumulative total square footage of all accessory buildings allowed on a property shall be based on lot size, and may require a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals or a Special Use Permit from the Board of Commissioners, as indicated in table 230.2 above.

Step 3 – Complete Building Permit Application

The Building Permit Application form may be obtained from the Building Permits Counter, online at www.gwinnettcountry.com (“A-Z Index”) or from Permits staff at 678.518.6020.

Step 4 – Obtain Building Permit at the Building Permits Counter of the Department of Planning and Development.

Submit the Building Permit Application approved “Accessory Building Location Plan,” and permit fee. The fee, rounded to the nearest dollar, is calculated as follows: \$6 per \$1,000 of estimated construction cost (minimum fee is \$30). Fees must be paid at time of permit issuance.

Additional Information:

- The Building Permit may include electrical installation. A separate “electrical only” permit is not required. State licensed electrical subcontractors must submit a Subcontractor Affidavit form to P&D at least two (2) days prior to requesting inspections. Homeowners installing electrical systems themselves must also submit this affidavit.
- Inspections can be scheduled online at <https://eddspermits.gwinnettcountry.com/citizenaccess/>.
- The Building Permit Yard Card must be posted at the site and be visible from the street.
- The approved “Accessory Building Location Plan” must also be present at the time of inspection.
- Footing and electrical rough-in inspections must be scheduled and successfully passed prior to scheduling a final inspection. Prior to use or occupancy, a final inspection must be scheduled, successfully passed, and a Certificate of Occupancy obtained. The final inspection includes a final electrical inspection.

For additional information and questions regarding residential accessory buildings, contact Development Review staff at 678.518.6000.