

Warrington



Township

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Warrington Township Zoning FAQs

GENERAL

- 1. How long does it take for a Zoning permit application to be approved?**
 - a. Applications are reviewed on a first come first serve basis. Turnaround is dependent on the volume of applications received during any given period of time as well as the quality of the application itself. Applications that are incomplete may take significantly longer or may be denied.

- 2. What is “Impervious Surface”?**
 - a. Impervious Surface is defined as a surface that prevents the infiltration of water into the grounds.
 - b. Impervious Surfaces include but are not limited to streets, sidewalks, pavement, roofs, or driveway areas.
 - c. Any surface areas designed to be pavers, gravel, or crushed stone shall be regarded as impervious surfaces.
 - d. Every line in Section 12b of the permit application must be accurately filled out whenever any additional impervious surfaces are being proposed.

- 3. What are “Setback Lines”?**
 - a. A Setback Line is the line within a property defining the required minimum distance between any building to be erected and the adjacent ultimate right-of-way or adjacent property.
 - b. Such line shall be measured at right angles from the front street ultimate right-of-way line of the property and from side and rear property lines common to adjoining properties

- 4. What is the “Ultimate Right-of-Way”?**
 - a. The Ultimate Right-of-Way is defined as the “area or public way owned or acquired by the Township at the time of subdivision by dedication.”
 - b. That line from which all future property setbacks are measured.
 - c. The street line.
 - d. The widths of ultimate rights-of-way, based on street classification is found in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance which is available online through the township website, www.warringtontownship.org.

- 5. I live on a corner property; does that put me in a different situation than those that do not live on a corner property?**
 - a. Any property line abutting a street line is considered a “Front Yard”. Corner properties typically have two front yards; some properties may even have three or four front yards.
 - b. Living on a corner property essentially means you cannot build any structures, pools, or fences in either of the front yards.

- 6. How do I find my zoning district?**
 - a. The Warrington Township Zoning Map is available online at the Township webpage, www.warringtontownship.org, under ‘Community’ and then under ‘Township Maps and Directions’.

- 7. How do I find my Tax Parcel Number?**
 - a. The Tax Map Parcel number may be found on your current Real Estate tax bill or it may be found under property records at the Bucks County Board of Assessment, www.buckscountyboa.org. The County database can be searched by owner name or property address.

- 8. How do I determine if my property is in a floodplain?**
 - a. Use the Bucks County Parcel Viewer produced by the Bucks County Planning Commission at <http://buckscounty.org/government/PlanningCommission>. After entering the Parcel Viewer and locating your property on the map, turn on the Floodplains (FEMA) layer. These are the boundaries of flood districts as determined and regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). There are four color codes for the 0.2 percent annual chance flood hazard (500-year flood), and Zones, A, AE, and AE floodway. Zones A, AE, and AE floodway are all in the Special Flood Hazard Area (commonly known as the 100-year flood) and are specially regulated. The 0.2 percent annual chance flood hazard area and all unmapped areas are not regulated.

SHEDS

- 1. What is the maximum height permitted for a shed?**
 - a. Sheds cannot exceed ten (10) feet in height.

- 2. What are the setbacks for a shed installation?**
 - a. Sheds can only be located in the side and rear yards. No shed can ever be erected within any easement. Sheds cannot be located in drainage swales or impede the flow of stormwater runoff.
 - b. Currently, sheds must be no less than three feet (3’) from your property line.

- 3. What is the maximum square footage permitted for a shed?**
 - a. Sheds may be up to 192 square feet in area on properties greater or equal to 7,500 square feet in area.
 - b. Sheds may not exceed 120 square feet in area on properties less than 7,500 square feet in area.

- c. No more than one shed may be located on a property.

FENCES

1. Do I need a permit?

- a. All fences to be erected require a permit. Site plans are required showing the location of the proposed fence.

2. What is the maximum height permitted for a fence?

- a. Fences for residential use cannot exceed six feet (6') in height.

3. How close to my property line can I install a fence?

- a. Fences can be installed along the side and back property lines of your property unless there is an easement on your property. It is **ALWAYS** a good idea to discuss the location of proposed fences with all affected neighbors. If there is disagreement, you can hire a surveyor, currently licensed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to locate property lines and prepare a map of survey. The township does not perform property surveys.

4. What happens if there is an easement on my property?

- a. When any type of application is received, the township checks available records to determine if there are any easements on the property. An easement gives the right to another party to enter the property without the property owner's permission in order to do necessary work or to cross over the property. Sheds, pools, buildings, gym sets, are never allowed to be placed in any easement. Exceptions can be made for fences, but approval must be obtained from the easement holder. Sanitary sewer easements are held by the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority. Water easements are held by North Wales Water Authority. Storm drain easements are held by Warrington Township. Permits will not be issued until proof of permission to erect a fence from the easement holder is provided. This is normally done by means of a formal agreement between the property owner and the easement holder and filed with the Bucks County Recorder of Deeds. The agreement is permanent and runs with the land binding all future property owners to the terms of the agreement. There are additional fees to cover the cost of preparing and recording the agreement.

5. Can I install a fence in my front yard?

- a. Fences are not permitted within the front yard setback except on certain corner lots. They are only permitted within the side yard perpendicular to the front entrance of your building and in the back yard.

6. Do I need to submit a permit application to replace an existing fence?

- a. You must submit a permit application for a fence replacement.
- b. Under certain circumstances, you may not be required to pay the application fee if the fence you are replacing was previously permitted by the Township.

IN-GROUND POOLS

1. Can I install an in-ground pool on my property?

- a. Maybe. You must always conform with the impervious surface ratio requirements for your Zoning District regardless of the improvement you propose.
- b. Assuming your proposed pool does not lead to an exceedance of the maximum permitted impervious surface ratio for your Zoning District:
 - i. Pools may only be located within the rear or side yard of the property on which it is an accessory use.
 - ii. Pools—including accessory structures—may not be located any closer than 5 feet from the rear or side yard setback, and not in any easement or drainage swale.
 - iii. The swimming pool area or the entire property on which it is located shall be so walled or fenced or otherwise protected as to prevent uncontrolled access by children from the street or from adjacent properties.
 1. Said barrier shall conform to all current applicable building code(s).

GRANDFATHERING

1. Am I grandfathered to the requirements in place when my house was built?

- a. No. There is no such thing as grandfathering to allow the use of old ordinance requirements. You are required to meet and use the current requirements as listed in the zoning ordinance. Some houses or properties may be considered to have ‘existing legal non-conformities’ if the lot or structure was in conformance with the zoning ordinance when it was created and then the ordinance subsequently changed the requirements rendering the property non-conforming. In these cases, the non-conforming condition is allowed to continue, but expansion or structural alterations may require zoning relief. When in doubt, contact the Deputy Zoning Officer or the Zoning Officer.