

NEIGHBOR FAQ (Updated 03/12/2021)
[\(Master link to ALL FAQs\)](#)

PERMIT SECTION

What could happen on this property? – Consult with a professional.

The property would need to comply with all City of Boulder regulations in effect at the time of a proposed modification. The regulations include Land Use code, which can be found in [Title 9 of the Boulder Revised Code](#) and Building and Energy code regulations that are in [Title 10 of the Boulder Revised Code](#). We recommend working with a professional (for example, a designer, architect and/or engineer, attorney) who can help you consider your options for this specific property and determine how regulatory requirements could impact these options.

If you have questions about the application of a specific regulation, we can answer that. But we are not able to prepare a complete review of a property to identify all applicable regulations, or how those limitations would apply.

The city's pre application process can provide a more detailed and comprehensive means of exploring questions about how development regulations apply to a specific property. Please review the [pre application materials](#) to determine whether a pre application review may be applicable.

When is a building permit required?

[Section 10-5-2\(j\), BRC 1981](#), provides a list of all work exempt from building permit. Please note that while a project may be exempt from building permitting it must still meet all relevant building, zoning, and engineering code requirements. Additional approvals may be required if the property is located within a floodplain, wetland, [historic district or has been designated as an individual landmark](#).

When is a fence permit required?

Fences not over 7 feet tall are exempt from building permit requirements. However, if the fence will be located in a floodplain, wetland, will be constructed in an [historic district or on a property designated as an individual landmark](#), other processes are required before the fence can be built.

- A [floodplain development permit](#) is required for new and replacement fences in the floodplain.
- A [wetland permit](#) is required for new and replacement fences in a wetland
- A [landmark alteration certificate](#) is required to build or alter fences constructed in an [Historic District or on a property designated as an individual landmark](#).

Regardless of whether a permit is required, fences must be a minimum of 18" from public sidewalks and cannot obstruct [site triangles](#). Please refer to [section 9-9-15, BRC 1981](#) for fencing regulations.

When does a contractor need to be hired?

Please refer to the city's [Contractor Licensing website](#) for additional information about when a licensed contractor is required.

A homeowner contractor permit may be issued to a property owner who personally performs work on his or her own residence that is not intended for rent or resale and is not generally open to the public. If the homeowner does not intend to perform all of the work, licensed subcontractors are required. A list of licensed contractors in the City of Boulder can be found online [here](#).

When does an architect or engineer need to be hired?

A professional engineer or architect registered in the State of Colorado shall prepare the plans and specifications for and observe the construction of all buildings except for the following:

- Detached dwellings intended solely for private use, occupancy, or resale, including accessory buildings commonly associated with the same;
- Farm buildings and buildings for the marketing, storage, or processing of farm products;
- Minor additions, alterations, or repairs to the foregoing buildings that do not cause the completed buildings to exceed the applicable limitations herein set forth; or
- Nonstructural alterations of any nature to any building if such alterations do not affect the safety of the building.

Drawings and specifications for footings and foundations shall bear the seal and signature of a professional engineer or architect registered in Colorado and be designed as specified in Chapter 18 of the building code for all occupancies.

Exceptions:

- Detached structures not intended for human occupancy;
- Additions to existing detached dwellings not exceeding 150 square feet.
- Any structural modification to any building in the City of Boulder will require plans to be prepared by a structural engineer licensed in the state of Colorado.

How can I see the development history for a property?

Visit [emaplink](#). In the upper right-hand side of the screen find the search bar that defaults to “Enter Address” and type in the property address, then hit *Enter* on your keyboard.

Once the property has been identified on the map, click on the property and a pop-up window will appear with more information. Click on the “Property Report” link, then click on *Download PDF Report*.

How can I find out if a property has a previous review?

Visit [emaplink](#). In the upper right-hand side of the screen find the search bar that defaults to “Enter Address” and type in the property address, then hit *Enter* on your keyboard.

Once the property has been identified on the map, click on the property and a pop-up window will appear with more information. Click on the “Property Report” link, then click on “Download PDF Report”. If the Property Summary

Information includes a parcel tag referencing a *Previous Review* please contact

PDSRecordRequest@bouldercolorado.gov to obtain information about previous approvals associated with the property.

Once you have reviewed the materials you may contact a Project Specialist at plandevlop@bouldercolorado.gov with specific questions related to the development restrictions associated with the approvals. The development limitations on this FAQ page may not apply to the property if a previous review exists.

Please be advised that even if the Previous Review parcel tag is not associated with the property there is a chance that additional development constraints apply to the property. If you know that a variance, planned unit development, site review or use review has been approved for the property, or it seems clear that the property does not meet the development requirements found on this page, please follow the steps in *How can I get the permit history from a property, planned unit development documents or a copy of a survey?* above.

How can I find out if a permit has been issued for construction that is currently taking place?

The permit history for a specific property may be viewed through the [Customer Self Service portal](#).

Go to “Records Search”. Select “Permit” from the dropdown menu. Enter the address and click search. All permits associated with the property will be listed. Click on the case number to review further information associated with the permit.

How can I get copies of the permit history from a property, planned unit development documents or a copy of a survey?

Through the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) anyone can request information on a property. Our records department is able to share any files that can be legally distributed to the public. If you are looking for general information on a property, surveys, previous reviews, planned unit development documents, permit history, certificates of occupancy, etc. please submit a request to P&DSRecordRequest@bouldercolorado.gov.

When is a test for asbestos required?

Asbestos testing triggers are as follows:

- Residential Projects –32 sf of disturbed surfaces (walls, ceilings, floor), 50 linear feet of disturbed pipes, or 55-gallon drum in volume of waste produced;
- Commercial Projects – 160 sf of disturbed surfaces (walls, ceilings, floors), 260 linear feet of disturbed pipes, or 55-gallon drum in volume of waste produced.

Previously the Boulder County Health Department regulated asbestos testing. The regulation of testing is now part of the building permitting process.

When is a ROW/Utility Permit required?

You will need a ROW Permit, if you are working in the public Right of Way’s or easement. Dumpster/POD’s also require a ROW Permit, if placed in the right of way. Utility Permits are required for new sewer, water, storm, sewer, pole replacements, and all appurtenances related to wet and dry utilities.

What are the City of Boulder construction work hours?

Standard hours are 7am to 5am, however these hours can vary depending on the scope of work, and the area where the work is occurring. Please refer to your permit conditions for further instruction on specific hours.

ZONING SECTION

What could happen on this property?

The property would need to comply with all City of Boulder regulations in effect at the time of a proposed modification. The regulations include Land Use code, which can be found in [Title 9 of the Boulder Revised Code](#) and Building and Energy code regulations that are in [Title 10 of the Boulder Revised Code](#). We recommend working with a professional (for example, a designer, architect and/or engineer, attorney) who can help you consider your options for this specific property and determine how regulatory requirements could impact these options.

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The city's pre application process can provide a more detailed and comprehensive means of exploring questions about how development regulations apply to a specific property. Please review the [pre application materials](#) to determine whether a pre application review may be applicable.

How can I determine the zoning for a property?

Visit [emaplink](#). Once on this page, click the gray box next to the “Zoning Districts” layer in the legend on the left-hand side of the page. Next, in the upper right-hand side of the screen find the search bar that defaults to “Enter Address” and

type in the property address, then hit Enter on your keyboard. This will zoom into the property displaying the zoning district.

Some properties have requirements beyond the by-right regulations set forth by the zoning districts. This may be indicated by a Parcel Tag labeled "Previous Review". See *How can I find out if a property has a previous review?* Below.

What is the maximum number of people that can live in a home? What is the maximum occupancy for a property?

Occupancy is dependent on the zoning district. First, determine the zoning district of the property, see "*How do I determine the zoning for a property?*" above. Then review [9-8-5, B.R.C. 1981 Occupancy of Dwelling Units](#).

How can I determine the maximum allowable building coverage for a property?

First, determine the zoning district of the property, see "*How do I determine the zoning for a property?*" above.

Navigate to [9-7-11, B.R.C. 1981 Maximum Building Coverage](#) and read through the "Scope" section to determine if building coverage limitations apply in the zone. Properties located within the RMX-1, RR-1, RR-2, RE, RL-1, RL-2 zoning districts can use the [Maximum Floor Area Ratio – Building Coverage Calculator](#) to perform the calculation.

Building coverage is defined in [9-16, B.R.C. 1981](#) as:

Building coverage means the maximum horizontal area within the outer perimeter of the building walls, dividers, or columns at ground level or above, whichever is the greater area, including, without limitation, courts and exterior stairways, but excluding:

- (1) Uncovered decks, stoops, patios, terraces, and stairways, all less than thirty inches high;
- (2) The outer four feet of completely open, uncovered, cantilevered balconies that have a minimum of eight feet vertical clearance below;
- (3) Up to three hundred square feet of a single-family detached residence front porch that is adjacent to a street;
- (4) Up to one hundred fifty square feet of additional porch area not located in the front yard for a single-family detached residence; and
- (5) One accessory building, no larger than eighty square feet in size and no taller than ten feet in height, associated with a single-family detached residence.

How can I determine the lot size of a property?

Visit the Boulder County Assessor's [Property Search](#) webpage. Once on the webpage, you will see a white text bar across the center/top of the screen that says "Enter search term...", enter the property address into this text bar and hit enter on your keyboard. A nested menu will appear on the left-hand side of the screen. Click the section titled "*Property*". Look for the line item that says Est. Parcel Area: -> Square Feet. Please note that this number is for reference only and often does not reflect parcel size as accurately as a survey.

How can I determine the maximum allowable floor area for a property?

First, determine the zoning district of the property, see "*How do I determine the zoning for a property?*" above.

Navigate to [9-8-2, B.R.C. 1981 Floor Area Ratio Requirements](#) and read through the "Scope" section to determine if floor area limitations apply in the zone. Properties located within the RMX-1, RR-1, RR-2, RE, RL-1, RL-2 zoning districts can use the [Maximum Floor Area Ratio – Building Coverage Calculator](#) to perform the calculation.

Floor Area is defined in [9-16, B.R.C. 1981](#) as:

Floor area means the total square footage of all levels measured to the outside surface of the exterior framing, or to the outside surface of the exterior walls if there is no exterior framing, of a building or portion thereof, which includes

stairways, elevators, the portions of all exterior elevated above grade corridors, balconies, and walkways that are required for primary or secondary egress by Chapter 10-5, "Building Code," B.R.C. 1981, storage and mechanical rooms, whether internal or external to the structure, but excluding an atrium on the interior of a building where no floor exists, a courtyard, the stairway opening at the uppermost floor of a building, and floor area that meets the definition of uninhabitable space.

How do I know if a specific use is allowed in a zone district?

First, determine the zoning district of the property, see *"How do I determine the zoning for a property?"* above.

Navigate to TABLE 6-1 USE TABLE in section [9-6-1, B.R.C. 1981](#). Here there are multiple expandable tables. The tables are broken up by use category. The use tables are organized with the zoning district listed along the top row of the table and use descriptions listed in the left-most column. When you locate the use in question and the applicable zoning district, find the box where they meet, and you will see either a letter or an asterisk. A key defining the asterisk and letters is provided below the last table and states:

A: Allowed use.

L: Limited use. See [Section 9-6-2](#), B.R.C. 1981, for review procedures.

C: Conditional use. See [Section 9-2-2](#), B.R.C. 1981, for administrative review procedures.

U: Use review. See [Section 9-2-15](#), B.R.C. 1981, for use review procedures.

*****: Use prohibited.

n/a: Not applicable; more specific use applications apply.

What are the requirements to establish an accessory dwelling unit (ADU)?

Please visit the city's [Accessory Dwelling Unit webpage](#) for more information.

Is my view protected?

Boulder is a beautiful community, with breath taking views. However, the city does not have development regulations that protect views.

What are the city's outdoor lighting requirements?

For information on the city's outdoor lighting ordinance and permitting requirements, please visit the [Outdoor Lighting Ordinance webpage](#).

MAPS SECTION

Is a property in the floodplain?

Visit the [Flood Hazard Zones Map](#). Enter the address in the upper right-hand corner of the screen and hit *enter* on your keyboard.

Refer to sections [9-3-3](#), [9-3-4](#), [9-3-5](#), and [9-3-6, B.R.C. 1981](#) for regulations governing the zones of the floodplain including floodplain development permitting requirements.

Is a property in a wetland?

Visit the [stream, wetland and water body map](#). Enter the address in the upper right-hand corner of the screen and hit *enter* on your keyboard.

Refer to section [9-3-9, B.R.C. 1981](#) for regulations governing streams, wetlands and water bodies within the city, on city owned or managed land or impacted by city activities.

Is a property in a historic district?

Visit [emaplink](#). Once on this page, click the gray box next to the “*Local Historic Districts*” layer in the legend on the left-hand side of the page. Next, in the upper right-hand side of the screen find the search bar that defaults to “*Enter Address*” and type in the property address and hit *enter* on your keyboard. This will zoom to the property displaying the historic information, if available. You may click on the property a pop-up window will appear with more information. Visit the [Historic Preservation webpage](#) for information including [FAQ’s](#) and [Design Guidelines](#). Any proposal for an exterior modification of a building in a Historic District or an Individual Landmark must first go through a [Landmarks Alteration Certificate](#) (LAC) review. The LAC must be approved **prior** to submitting for building permit. The reviews cannot be performed concurrently.

ENFORCEMENT SECTION

How can I see the enforcement history for a property?

Please refer to the city’s [Enforcement Activity Summary webpage](#) for information about the enforcement history of a property.

How do I report a violation for building without a permit?

If the work appears to exceed the scope listed for work exempt from permit “*Do I need a building permit?*” above and a building permit placard is not posted on site, you can report the violation to our Code Enforcement team using [Inquire Boulder](#).

LICENSING SECTION

Do I need a ROW License?

You need a ROW License if you plan to work in the right of way or easement. You need a ROW License for POD/Dumpster placement. Lastly, you need a ROW License for in property work, for example a sewer or water repair.

Does a Building License allow a contractor to apply for a ROW Permit?

The Building License does not cover work within the right of way or easements. You would need to apply for a Right of Way License. Right of Way Licenses can be applied for by emailing COBContractorLicense@bouldercolorado.gov. The 2021 Schedule of Fees will outline specific fees related to the Right of Way License.

RENTAL SECTION

When is a rental license required?

Please refer to the city’s [Rental Housing Licensing webpage](#) for rental licensing information.

ALL FAQ'S SECTION

Can the City of Boulder survey/mark a property line?

Surveys/property lines need to be surveyed by a private contractor. The City of Boulder does not provide this service.

How much longer will my water be shutoff for?

For information related to water shutoffs, contact the Utilities Dept at 303-441-3200.