

Loudoun County Residential Occupancy Ordinances

Standards for Residential Units



County of Loudoun

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Why does the County of Loudoun regulate the number of people living in your home?

Loudoun County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. As the population grows, the demand for housing increases and many people search for affordable housing options. During the past several years, the county has received an increasing number of complaints from its citizens regarding overcrowding in single-family dwellings. In its worst state, overcrowding results in a threat to public safety and the welfare of the occupants of the homes, as well as the neighborhoods.

How is the number of people who can live in a dwelling determined?

The county has adopted a Zoning Ordinance and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code/International Property Maintenance Code, each of which regulates who and how many people may occupy a dwelling. Generally, the limitations are based on the size of the dwelling, the size and number of bedrooms, the relationship of residents, and fire safety standards. Non-compliance with any portion of these requirements constitutes a violation of legal occupancy requirements.



This brochure has been prepared

by the

***Loudoun County
Zoning Enforcement Staff***

Other Important Information:

Alterations to a residence such as converting rooms to other uses or building decks and sheds require the owner to obtain a zoning permit in addition to a building permit. (Not all sheds require a building permit.) Please consult with the Department of Building and Development, 703-777-0397, before starting construction.

Should you wish to report a zoning violation related to the issues discussed in this guide, please call the **Loudoun County Zoning Enforcement Hotline** at **703-777-0103** or our **Residential Occupancy Limitations Hotline** at **703-737-8190** to report overcrowding violations.

A zoning violation complaint can also be filed by faxing or mailing an Alleged Zoning Violation Form available online at www.loudoun.gov/b&d/zoning under "Zoning Enforcement."

Please do not hesitate to contact the **Department of Building & Development** at **703-777-0397** should you have questions or concerns regarding the information contained in this brochure.

The County of Loudoun applies occupancy limitation requirements to all residents, regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender or age.

The information contained in this brochure is for general guidance on matters of interest only and should not be construed as legal advice.

Prepared by the Loudoun County Zoning Enforcement Staff

1) Occupancy Limitations Relative to the Size of the Dwelling

Minimum Area Requirements: The county limits the number of adult occupants in a dwelling based upon the size of certain rooms in the dwelling.

The following table illustrates these limitations:

SPACE	MINIMUM AREA IN SQUARE FEET		
	1 - 2 Occupants	3 - 5 Occupants	6 or more Occupants
Living Room	No Requirements	120	150
Dining Room	No Requirements	80	100
Kitchen	50	50	60

**2) Occupancy Limitations
Applied to Bedrooms:**

Bedroom Size (Square Feet)	Maximum Number of Occupants per Room*
70	1
100	2
150	3
200	4

* *Number of Occupants includes adults and children*

Bedrooms:

- Must contain at least 70 square feet of floor area plus an additional 50 square feet per individual if occupied by more than one person.
- Bedrooms must not be the only access to other bedrooms or habitable space and must not constitute the only exit from other habitable space.
- Every bedroom must have access to a bathroom without having to pass through another bedroom.
- Kitchens and other non-habitable space must not be used for sleeping purposes.
- Bedrooms must provide light, ventilation, room area, ceiling height and room width in conformity with the code, and must be in conformity with fire safety requirements. (Please refer to 4) *Fire Safety Requirements Applied to Bedrooms.*)

Source: Uniform Statewide Building Code/International Property Maintenance Code.

3) Relationships of Occupants:

The Revised 1993 Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance permits a single-family dwelling to be occupied by a family as defined below:

Family: A group of people living together consisting of:

- a) One or more persons related* by blood or marriage together with any number of natural, foster, step or adopted children, domestic servants, nurses and therapists and no more than two roomers or boarders; or
- b) No more than 4 unrelated persons; or
- c) Any group identified in Section 15.2-2291 of the Code of Virginia, (e.g. mentally ill, mentally retarded, or developmentally disabled.)

* *Persons who are related includes husbands, wives, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces (including step or half relationships) as demonstrated by official public records such as government-issued identification, birth or marriage certificates; or by affidavits.*

**4) Fire Safety Requirements
Applied to Bedrooms:**

- Two means of exit must be available from a bedroom, with one being a door or window leading directly to the exterior.
- The window sill must be at a maximum height of 44 inches from the floor.
- An exit must not lead through another sleeping area or a bathroom.