

Land Use Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know what zone I live in?

Check the [Zoning Map](#) on our department's main webpage.

What is a setback?

This is the distance from your property line you must remain when building any structures.

How do I know what my setback is?

Check the "[Setback and Bulk Requirements](#)" document on our department's main webpage.

What is maximum lot coverage?

Maximum lot coverage refers to the amount of land you are allowed to cover with impervious surfaces. Put another way, this is the amount of ground covered such that rain water cannot penetrate the surface. This includes houses, sheds, covered porches, paved driveways and paved patios.

What do I need to do to build on my property?

Let's start with the basics. Check to see if there are wetlands on your property. If there are, you'll need a Wetlands Permit. You need to check with the Tax Office to ensure all of your taxes are paid in full. If not, we cannot issue any permits. Next, you'll need to check with Chatham Health Department. You may need a review conducted in order to protect your water source and septic system, if you have one. Once you have the OK from the Tax Office and the Health District, you can submit your Zoning Application, followed by your Building Application. If you have any questions, feel free to call our office.

What are the rules regarding chickens?

Chickens are not regulated. You can have chickens in your yard. We recommend careful consideration in regards to roosters as not everyone likes their crowing. Please be aware that any coops or buildings do need the proper approvals from our office. See Section 8.4.C on page 137 of the [regulations](#) for more information regarding structures and enclosures.

Can I have horses on my property?

Horses are considered a Class 3 animal as defined by the East Hampton Zoning Regulations. For animals this size, your property needs to be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre above the minimum lot size for your zone for the first horse, and an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ acre for each animal beyond that. See Section 8.4.C on page 137 of the [regulations](#) for more information regarding livestock. Barns and other structures must adhere to the setbacks provided in the regulation and for your specific zone.

What are the requirements for sheds?

Sheds are allowed with the necessary zoning approval and building permits. Sheds under 200 square feet in size with no foundation, power, or water only need a zoning approval. Small sheds under 200

square feet must adhere to the front setback and be more than 6 feet from side and rear property lines. Larger sheds must meet the requirements of your zone found in the Setback & Bulk Requirements. Other Regulatory departments and Commissions may have oversight.

Do I need permits for a fence?

If the fence is under 7' then no permits are required. If it is over 7' then Zoning and Building Permits are required. There are no setbacks requirements for fences under 7', they can go up to the property line but we do recommend that it be 1-2' from the property line to leave some room to maintain the fence while on your own property. A fence over 7' has setback requirements. Properties in Middle Haddam Historic District are subject to the requirements of the Middle Haddam Historic District Ordinance. All fences along the street are required to be no less than 6 feet from the edge of pavement or on your property which ever is further. Other Regulatory departments and Commissions may have oversight.

Are temporary sheds allowed? Do they need permits?

The Zoning Regulations do not differentiate between permanent and temporary sheds. Anything with sides and a roof is considered a building and needs to be approved. The same rules apply as above. Other Regulatory departments and Commissions may have oversight.

Can I run a business at my house?

As of April 1, 2022 new regulations went into effect allowing for home occupations and [home based businesses](#). The new regulations can be found in Sections 8.4.O and 8.4.P of the East Hampton Zoning Regulations. Other Regulatory departments and Commissions may have oversight.

Can I build a pool?

You can. It must conform to the lot coverage requirements, and can be no closer than 15 feet from your side or rear property line and must be behind your house. Be sure you apply for all of the required permits. You'll need to check with Chatham Health Department. You may need a review conducted in order to protect your water source and septic system, if you have one. Other Regulatory departments and Commissions may have oversight.

When do I need a Wetlands Permit?

Any time you are digging in a wetland, or within 100 feet (or more in some areas) of a wetland (the Upland Review Area) you will be required to obtain a permit from the [Inland Wetlands Agency](#). If you are unsure if your project is in or near a wetland, please contact this office. It's better to find out you need a permit before you start the activity than after.