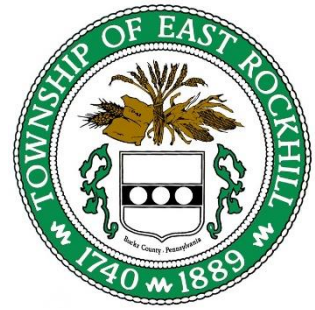


East Rockhill Township Zoning FAQs



GENERAL

1. **How long does it take for a Zoning permit application to be approved?**

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 require additional information or are incomplete may take significantly longer or may be denied.

2. **What is Impervious Surface?**

Impervious Surface is defined as a surface that prevents the infiltration of water into the grounds.

Impervious Surfaces include but are not limited to streets, sidewalks, pavement, roofs, or driveway areas.

Any surface areas designed to be pavers, gravel, or crushed stone shall be regarded as impervious surfaces and must be provided on the survey plan.

3. **What are Setback Lines?**

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.

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?**

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.’

That line from which all future property setbacks are measured.

The widths of future right-of-way, based on street classification is found in the Zoning Ordinance which is available online through the township website eCode, www.EastRockhillTownship.org. Any street not listed as a future right-of-way has a right-of-way of 33 feet for the total road.

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?

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.

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 and tax parcel number?

The East Rockhill Township Zoning District Map with Tax Map Parcels (TMP) is available online at the Township website, www.EastRockhilltownship.org, under ‘Building and Zoning’ and then under ‘Forms, Information.’

The Tax Map Parcel number may also be found on your current Real Estate tax bill or 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?

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.

A floodplain permit is required from East Rockhill Township for work in a floodplain.

SHEDS

1. What is the maximum height permitted for a shed?

Sheds cannot exceed 18 feet in height.

2. What are the setbacks for a shed installation?

Sheds can only be located in the side and rear yards. No shed can ever be erected within any easement, buffer or floodplain. Sheds cannot be located in drainage swales or impede the flow of stormwater runoff.

Currently, sheds in the R-1 Residential and S Suburban zoning districts must be no less than five feet (5’) from your property line and sheds in the AP Agricultural Preservation; RP Resource Protection; RR Rural Residential zoning districts must be no less than twelve feet (12’) from your property line. All sheds must be no more than five feet (5’) from any other structure.

3. What is the maximum number of sheds allowed?

Currently, no more than four (4) sheds may be located on a property.

4. Is a building permit required?

For a shed of 201 square feet or more a building permit is required.

FENCES

1. Do I need a permit?

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?

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

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

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.

Fences located in front yards cannot be located withing a right-of-way.

4. What happens if there is an easement on my 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 and is recorded at Bucks County Courthouse. 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. 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. Do I need to submit a permit application to replace an existing fence?

You must submit a permit application for a fence replacement.

IN-GROUND POOLS

1. Is a permit required for a temporary pool?

Yes, a zoning permit is required if the temporary pool has more than 24 inches of water.

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

Maybe. Assuming your proposed pool does not lead to an exceedance of the maximum permitted impervious surface ratio and meets setbacks for your Zoning District.

GRANDFATHERING

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

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. Non-conforming uses need to be registered with East Rockhill. Registered non-conforming is allowed to continue, but expansion or structural alterations may require zoning relief.

ADDITIONAL APPROVALS

1. Are Additional Approvals Required?

Maybe. It may be determined that additional approvals are required prior to final issuance of a Zoning Permit. Those additional approvals may include but are not necessarily limited to:

PennDOT:	Applications that affect the use of a property that take access from a road under PennDOT jurisdiction may require a PennDOT permit.
PaUCC	If the proposal includes construction regulated by the PA Uniform Construction Code, a Building Permit Application is required.
BCCD	If the proposed work area involves disturbance of more than 5000 square feet of soil then approval from the Bucks County Conservation District is required. www.buckscdd.org/index.htm
Stormwater	If the proposal involves the construction of cumulative area of 1,000 square feet or more of impervious surfaces since the year 2002, a stormwater management plan or review may be required. Impervious surfaces include but are not necessarily limited to: driveway (both asphalt and crushed stone), buildings, some decks, patios, walkways, etc.
Wastewater	Certain projects may necessitate the review and approval of the Bucks County Health Department or public water / sewer provider.
Driveway Permit	If the proposal involves work within a township right-of-way a Road Opening Permit may be required.

Land Development Certain uses may require the submission of a Land Development Application to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Other Certain uses may require submission to the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board or other Boards, Commissions or Agencies.

DEFINITIONS

Alteration As applied to a building or structure, a change or re-arrangement in the structural parts or an enlargement or diminution.

Building Height The vertical distance from the average elevation of the finished grade at the front two corners of the building to the top of the highest roof beams on a flat or shed roof, to the deck level on a mansard roof, and the average distance between the eaves and the ridge level for gable, hip, and gambrel roofs.

Easement A grant of the use of a parcel of land for the use by the public, a corporation or a person for a specified purpose.

Impervious Surface Impervious surfaces are those surfaces which do not absorb rain. All buildings, parking areas, driveways, roads, sidewalks and any areas in concrete asphalt and packed stone shall be considered impervious surfaces within this definition. In addition, other areas determined by the Township Engineer to be impervious within the meaning of this definition will also be classified as impervious surfaces.

Impervious Surface Ratio The impervious surface ratio is measured by dividing the total area of all impervious surfaces within the site by the net buildable site area.

Lot line Any boundary line of a lot.