

Frequently Asked Questions – Updated 09/2025

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Section 1 – Building Code

Q1.1: How many kitchen circuits do I need?

A: Two (2) dedicated 20-amp circuits are required for small appliances in the eating area. These circuits are exclusive to the receptacles in the eating area (not including lighting outlets) and are separate from circuits for the range, dishwasher, disposal, and microwave.

Q1.2: How deep must I bury underground electrical conduit or direct buried cables?

A: Please refer to the National Electrical Code that is in effect with current adopted Florida Building Code by visiting www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards.

Q1.3: Can an electrical contractor submit plans for review for his own work, or do the electrical plans need to be signed by an engineer?

A: According to Florida S.S. 471.003 (Engineering) Qualifications for practice, Exemptions: 2(h), Any electrical, plumbing, air-conditioning, or mechanical contractor whose practice includes the design and fabrication of electrical, plumbing, air-conditioning, or mechanical systems, respectively, which she or he installs by virtue of a license issued under chapter 489, under former part I of chapter 553, Florida Statutes 2001, or under any special act or ordinance when working on any construction project which:

1. Requires an electrical or plumbing or air-conditioning and refrigeration system with a value of \$125,000 or less; and,
2. Requires an aggregate service capacity of 600 amperes (240 volts) or less on a residential electrical system or 800 amperes (240 volts) or less on a commercial or industrial electrical system. If the project/design meets the above requirements, the electrical contractor may do his own design. The plans must contain his/her signature and license number.

Q1.4: What is the building code requirement regarding the placement of the third nail when adding it to attic straps and trusses on homes built in the 80s as it relates to wind mitigation?

A: Please reference [Chapter 17 of the Florida Building Code \(Existing\)](#) for retrofitting requirements.



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Q1.5: What electrical equipment can be placed below the Design Flood Elevation?

A: All utility company equipment such as distribution lines, transformers, and underground wiring are exempt from the regulations. The point of connection to the utility company equipment is typically the meter equipment and service disconnecting means. The meter equipment and disconnecting means have specific access requirements and are therefore allowed below the regulatory Flood Elevation. Floodplain regulations state that all equipment and materials used below the Regulatory Flood Elevation must be “flood resistive.” The building main distribution panel boards, receptacles, boxes, switches, wiring, and connections are not considered flood resistive equipment; they could be damaged by flood water and are required to be elevated above the design flood elevation for that location.

Q1.6: What is required for a Residential Solar Photovoltaic (PV) permit?

A: Please visit the following link for required documentation related to a [Residential Solar PV permit](#). According to Florida S.S. 377.705(4)(d), “All solar energy systems manufactured or sold in the state must meet the standards established by the center and shall display accepted results of approved performance tests in a manner prescribed by the center, unless otherwise certified by an engineer licensed pursuant to chapter 471 using the standards contained in the most recent version of the Florida Building Code.” Therefore, a Florida Solar Energy Center® certification of PV system and components or engineered signed and sealed plans are required.

Section 2 - Code Compliance/Violations

Q2.1: How do I report a code violation or file a complaint?

A: Here are four convenient methods to submit your complaints to the Code Compliance Section:

1. Call 941.743.1201 and select option “2” for Code to speak directly with an administrative assistant.
2. Send an email to CodeEnforcement@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Please note that emails may be subject to Florida’s Open Records Law.
3. Utilize the online [Citizen Access Portal](#).
4. Visit us in person at 18400 Murdock Circle in Port Charlotte. Our office hours are as follows:
 - Monday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., except holidays.

Due to Florida legislative changes in 2021, a code inspector may not initiate an investigation of a potential code violation based on an anonymous complaint. The only exceptions are if a violation pertains to an imminent threat to public health, safety, or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources.

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Q2.2: What can I do about an overgrown *vacant* or *undeveloped* lot?

A: The Lot Maintenance Standards of [Section 2-5-70](#) of the [Charlotte County Code of Laws and Ordinances](#) does not address vacant lots. Therefore, there is no ordinance or requirement addressing tall grass/weeds or overgrown conditions on vacant lots. It is suggested that the complainant reach out to the owner of the lot and request cleanup in a neighborly fashion. The lot owner's name and address information may be found by visiting the [Charlotte County Property Appraiser](#) website and clicking the "Real Property Record Search" link.

Q2.3: What can I do about an overgrown *developed* lot?

A: You can report the condition of the property to the Code Compliance Section. Please note that that the term "excessive growth" on a *developed* lot is defined by the Code of Laws and Ordinances as "any growth of weed or grass that exceeds 12 inches in height and covers 50% or more of the mowable lot area cleared of native vegetation and not used for agriculture activities." Trees and bushes are not addressed by ordinance. To report or submit a code violation or complaint, please see Q2.1.

Q2.4: My neighbor has junk-like conditions around their yard, and they haven't cut their grass for months. To whom do I report this condition?

A: You can report the condition of the property to the Code Compliance Section. To report or submit a code violation or complaint, please see Q2.1.

Q2.5: How do I report a clearing/tree removal violation?

A: You can report the condition of the property to the Code Compliance Section. To report or submit a code violation or complaint, please see Q2.1.

Q2.6: Is parking a vehicle on a sidewalk a violation?

A: Parking a vehicle on a sidewalk is addressed in [F.S.S. Title XXIII, Section 316.1945](#). that deal with motor vehicle law. It states the following: "Except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic, or in compliance with law or the directions of a police officer or official traffic control device, no person shall stop, stand, or park a vehicle: (1) on the roadway side of any vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street; (2) on a sidewalk; (3) within an intersection; (4) on a crosswalk." This means that parking a vehicle on a sidewalk constitutes a noncriminal traffic infraction, which is punishable as a non-moving violation. Citizens may report alleged violations by calling the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office non-emergency phone number at 941.639.2101.

Q2.7: Do rollout solid waste carts have to be moved after waste is collected?

A: Rollout carts for waste collection are addressed in [Section 1-12-117](#) of the [Code of Laws and Ordinances](#), which states the following: "Dumpsters and recycling dumpsters must be stored away within twenty-four (24) hours after of collection. When not scheduled for pickup, these containers must be kept stored out of public view in compliance with the requirements of this article." Citizens may report violations by contacting the Solid Waste Division of the Public Works Department at 941.764.4360 or SWR@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.



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Q2.8: Is there a limit on the number of vehicles that can be parked in a front yard?

A: There is no limit on the number of cars that can be parked in a front yard. However, they must be operable and possess a valid tag as is required by the [Code of Laws and Ordinances](#). There are also regulations in the county code ([Section 3-9-79.1](#)) that address the parking of boats, recreational vehicles, trucks, and trailers. To report or submit a code violation or a complaint, please see Q2.1.

Q2.9: What should I do if I receive a Notice of Violation and Notice of Hearing with a date in the mail?

A: Call the code compliance officer listed on the document to discuss options. There is often the possibility that the case can be dismissed if compliance is attained prior to the Code Enforcement Special Magistrate's hearing date.

Q2.10: Is it a code violation for a neighbor to have friends over to shoot firearms in their backyard?

A: No. In 2011, the Florida State Legislature enacted laws which took away the power of all local governments to control, enforce or enact laws regarding the personal use of firearms. Many if not most local governments repealed any such local laws due to the personal liabilities or penalties that could be imposed. If more information is needed, please contact a law enforcement officer with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office at 941.639.2101 or by visiting www.ccsso.org.

Q2.11: Where can I park my motorhome at my home?

A: A motorhome that is legally tagged may be parked in the driveway or yard. If it is unlicensed, then it must be parked in the driveway only and appear to be operable. To report or submit a code violation or a complaint, please see Q2.1.

Q2.12: Does the county require a Home Solicitation Permit for door hanger distribution?

A: Florida Law (FS 501.22) and [Section 1-10-77](#) of the county code states that a Home Solicitation Permit is required from the [Charlotte County Clerk of the Circuit Court & County Comptroller](#). They can be reached by calling 941.743.1400.

Q2.13: What are the hours that construction work is allowed?

A: [Section 3-2-73\(c\)](#) of the [Code of Laws & Ordinances](#) states: "No person shall operate or cause to be operated any machinery, demolition equipment, construction equipment, power tools, equipment of a semi-mechanical nature or otherwise undertake construction work which emits a sound plainly audible across the property line of an inhabited residential property in a residential area between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. However, this subsection shall not apply to the use of temporary pumps or other machinery which, because of its very nature and purpose, is required to operate twenty-four (24) hours a day. This subsection shall also not apply to any activity, noise or disturbance caused by emergency work." To report a noise disturbance, please contact the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office non-emergency phone number at 941.639.2101.

Q2.14: Where can I park boats and trailers at my house?

A: You can park boats and trailers in your driveway or behind the leading edge of your house. However, they must be operable and possess a valid tag.



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Q2.15: Can I live in my motorhome/RV/Travel Trailer in Charlotte County?

A: The only allowable places to live in a motorhome/RV/travel trailer in Charlotte County are RV parks.

Q2.16: What can I do on my vacant lot zoned residential before I build a house on it?

A: You are permitted to install a seawall, dock, and fence before building a primary structure. Please note you are not allowed to store anything on a vacant lot.

Q2.17: How do I report a boat adrift or abandoned in a waterway?

A: Please visit the [Abandoned Vessels](#) webpage of Natural Resources. It contains detailed instructions on how to identify and report abandoned or derelict vessels.

Q2.18: Can I place signs by the road in front of my house?

A: Signs may not be erected over or upon any publicly owned property or right-of-way. However, every single-family residential parcel is permitted, two (2) freestanding yard signs, that do not exceed four (4) square feet in area individually or one (1) sign up to six (6) square feet. Such yard signs must be temporary in nature and shall be removed fifteen (15) days after their purpose has been fulfilled. For a complete explanation of signage, please refer to [Charlotte County Code Section 3-9-85](#).

Q2.19: My neighbor doesn't trim their trees and branches are coming into my yard, what can I do?

A: As a property owner, you have the right to trim any growth on your side of the property. However, Charlotte County does not have an ordinance regulation. It is a civil issue between property owners.

Q2.20: I rent a house in Charlotte County and the landlord isn't making needed repairs, is this a code violation?

A: There may be code violations present, but the first thing to do is review [Chapter 83 of the Florida Statutes](#) to find out your rights and responsibilities under Florida Law. You may also call 800.435.7352 or visit the [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Landlord/Tenant Law](#) website.

Q2.21: Is there a limit to the number of yard sales I can have at my house?

A: Yes. Garage or lawn sales conducted at private residences by the owners or occupants may not exceed three (3) days and be conducted no more frequently than twice a year.

Q2.22: How can I find out if there are liens on a property?

A: Please visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/code-compliance/research-requests.shtml> for more information.

Q2.23: How can I apply for a lien reduction?

A: Please visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/code-compliance/lien-relief-program.shtml> for more information. Please keep in mind that to apply, the property must be in compliance with all county codes.

Section 3 – Contractor Licensing

Q3.1: How do I verify that a contractor is licensed?

A: There are four ways that a license can be verified:

1. Search the online database of the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (Florida DBPR) at MyFloridaLicense.com.
2. Call Florida DBPR at 850.487.1395.
3. Search the [Citizen Access Portal](#).
4. Call Community Development at 941.743.1201.

Q3.2: How do I obtain a contractor license?

A: Please view our [Contractor Licensing brochure](#) for information.

Q3.3: What do I need to know about hiring a contractor?

A: A contractor must list their license numbers on all forms of advertisements, business cards, contracts, invoices, and proposals. If a contractor has their business name displayed on their vehicle, then they must also display their contractor license number on it. For more information, please view our [Working with Contractors Guide](#).

Q3.4: Does a locally licensed contractor have to re-register if they don't renew or cancel their license (note: this does not apply to state-certified licensed contractors, as the fee does not apply to them due to a state law change)?

A: Locally licensed contractors may keep paying the \$50 per license cycle inactive fee and remain inactive for up to 5 years. If the license remains inactive for more than 5 years, or if the license was canceled for more than 5 years, they must start from the beginning of the licensing process.

Q3.5: Where do I obtain a handyman's license?

A: Charlotte County does not issue licenses for handymen. However, a [Local Business Tax Receipt](#) (previously known as an occupational license) is required to be obtained. It is issued at the [Charlotte County Tax Collector](#). A signature is required on a form that explains what a handyman can or cannot perform. The Tax Collector can be reached at 941.743.1350.

Q3.6: Where do I obtain a local business tax receipt (BTR)?

A: A local business tax receipt (previously known as an occupational license) is obtained from the [Charlotte County Tax Collector](#). They can be reached at 941.743.1350.

Q3.7: How do I file a complaint about my licensed contractor?

A: To file a complaint about your licensed contractor, an owner needs to provide documentation such as a copy of the contract, proof of payment, and proof that the owner sent a letter to the contractor giving written notice of the nature of the complaint and giving the contractor an opportunity to resolve. The notice letter is required by Florida Statute FS 558.004 (a notice letter is not required if the contractor is unlicensed). If still not resolved after giving written notice, then please visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/licensing/unlicensed->



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[contractors.stml](#) to download the [Uniform Complaint Form](#). Complete the form and submit by one of the options below:

1. Deliver or mail the required documentation to: Code Compliance & Licensing Manager, E. Jay Carlson
Community Development Building, 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948.
2. Email the required documentation to ContractorLicensing@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

If there are any questions about the procedure or the documentation, please call 941.743.1201 to speak to a representative.

Q3.8: How do I obtain a contractor license?

A: Please visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/licensing/>.

Section 4 - Elevation Certificates

Q4.1: How do I find an Elevation Certificate for my *developed* lot or property?

A: There are several ways to find or look up Elevation Certificates as follows:

1. *Call* Community Development Department at 941.743.1201
2. *Email* BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov
3. *Online* at <https://charlottecountyfl.withforerunner.com/>

Q4.2: How do I find an elevation certificate on a *vacant* lot?

A: Elevation certificates do not exist for, nor are they performed on, vacant lots. The certificates only apply to existing buildings.

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Section 5 – Impact Fees

Q5.1: How do I find information about impact fees?

A: Information about impact fees can be found at the following link: <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/planning-zoning/impact-fees/>. Information can also be obtained by calling Zoning at 941.743.1964.

Section 6 – Inspections

Q6.1: How do I schedule an inspection?

A: Inspection requests can be made in the following ways:

1. Automated Inspection Request System (contractors & owner-builders): Call 941.833.4086
 - a. Inspection codes are required: [List of Inspection Codes](#)
2. [Inspections Through Text](#) (contractors & owner-builders)
 - a. Inspection codes are required: [List of Inspection Codes](#)
3. Online via the [Citizen Access Portal](#) (contractors only)
4. VuSpex Virtual Inspections (contractors only). More information at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/building-construction/inspections.stml>.
5. Call the main office (contractors & owner-builders) at 941.743.1201.

All options are available 24/7 (except calling into the main office). Inspection requests must be made by 8 p.m., to be eligible for next day service.

Q6.2: How do I know what inspections are required?

A: There are two ways to determine required inspections as follows:

1. The required inspections are listed on the Permit-Inspections Job Card provided to the permit holder at the time the permit was issued.
2. The required inspections are also found at Online Services. Please visit the [Citizen Access Portal](#). Scroll down to the "Building" heading and select "Search Permits." On the next page, enter the permit number and scroll down and click the "Search" button. Click the "Record Info" tab and click "Inspections" on the drop-down list. The required inspections will be listed under the "Upcoming" heading and each marked as pending. Inspections that have been completed will be listed under the "Completed" heading.

Q6.3: What is the cut-off time to schedule a next day inspection using the Automated Inspection Request System phone line?

A: For next day inspection service, the cut-off time is 8 p.m., but the system is available 24/7.

Q6.4: What are the options for scheduling an inspection appointment or time window?

A: We provide our customers the ability to make special requests such as:

1. An A.M. or P.M. only inspection (note: we attempt to honor this request but is not a guarantee).

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2. Receive a phone call from the inspector ½ hour before arriving for the inspection.
3. Visit the [Citizen Access Portal](#) or call 941.743.1201, each after 7:30 a.m. each business day. Customers can find out the name of the assigned inspector and the inspector's phone number. There is also an online [Phone & Email Directory for Inspectors](#).
4. The Inspections Manager, Tim Rodgers, can also be contacted in the morning before 7:30 a.m. at 941.391.0208, or Joe Dimina at 941.661.7441, if needed.

Q6.5: How can I find out who is assigned to perform my inspection today and how can I contact them?

A: There are several ways to do this after 7:30 a.m. each business day as follows:

1. Call 941.743.1201
2. Email BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov
3. Online at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/building-construction/inspections.shtml>
 - a. Scroll down to "> Today's Inspections"

Customers can find out the name of the assigned inspector and the inspector's phone number. There is also an online [Phone & Email Directory for Inspectors](#).

Q6.6: Do reinspection fees have to be paid before the next inspection can be scheduled?

A: No unless the inspection is a Building Final inspection. All re-inspection fees must be paid before any of the Building Final inspections can be scheduled.

Section 7 – Permitting

Q7.1: Can I modify a shipping container to make it into a house or a shed?

A: The Florida Building Code allows the use of alternative materials, design, and methods of construction if they meet the intent of the provisions of the code in quality, strength, durability, and safety, from the foundation to the roof. A structure is permissible if engineering documents prepared by a Florida licensed engineer or architect with complete construction details are submitted with the permit application for review and approval. Please also refer to the Q&A in this section about the minimum home size that can be built in Charlotte County (Q7.3).

Q7.2: Are tiny houses allowed in Charlotte County?

A: The Florida Building Code allows the use of alternative materials, design, and methods of construction if they meet the intent of the provisions of the code in quality, strength, durability, and safety, from the foundation to the roof. If the home is on wheels, the wheels must be removed. If wheels are present, the structure is a mobile home and would only be allowed in a mobile home/RV park. A structure is permissible if engineering documents prepared by a Florida licensed engineer or architect with complete construction details are submitted with the permit application for review and approval. Please also refer to the Q&A in this section about the minimum home size that can be built in Charlotte County (Q7.3).

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Q7.3: What is the minimum home size that can be built in Charlotte County?

A: Charlotte County does not have a minimum size requirement for one & two-family dwellings. However, the county does enforce the Florida Building Code, which has several minimum requirements. These requirements provide specifications for the internal floor area of dwellings and rooms as follows:

1. Habitable rooms, except kitchens, must have a floor area of not less than 70 square feet. (FBC-Residential R304.1 Minimum area).
2. A habitable room is defined as all rooms used for living, dining, sleeping, and cooking purposes (FBC-Residential R202 Definitions).
3. Bathrooms, closets, halls, and utility spaces are not considered habitable rooms (FBC-Residential R202 Definitions).
4. All residential units shall provide at least one bathroom, located with maximum possible privacy (FBC-Residential R320.1.1).
5. Bathroom: A group of fixtures consisting of a water closet, lavatory and bathtub or shower (FBC-Residential R202 Definitions).
6. Each dwelling must have a minimum of one water closet, one lavatory, one bathtub, one kitchen sink and one automatic clothes washer connection (FBC-Building-Plumbing Table 2902.1).
7. Habitable rooms, except kitchens, shall be not less than 7 feet in any horizontal dimension (FBC-Residential R304.2 Minimum dimensions) and cannot have any one wall less than 7 feet in length (FBC-Residential R304.3 Minimum dimensions).
8. Portions of a room with a sloping ceiling measuring less than 5 feet or a furred ceiling measuring less than 7 feet from the finished floor to the finished ceiling are not to be considered as contributing to the minimum required habitable area for that room. (FBC-Residential R304.3 Height effect on room area).
9. There may be covenants or deed restrictions that have minimum size regulations. These would be privately enforced by the parties who are subject to them. It is suggested that a visit be made to the offices of the Clerk of Circuit Court, or contact a title lawyer, to investigate covenants or deed restrictions.
10. For more information about the building code, please call 941.743.1201 or email BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

Q7.4: Is a new home required to have a handicap accessible bathroom?

A: The Florida Building Code (Residential) R320.1.1 states, “All new single-family houses, duplexes, triplexes, condominiums, and townhouses shall provide at least one bathroom, located with maximum possible privacy, where bathrooms are provided on habitable grade levels, with a door that has a 29-inch (737 mm) clear opening. However, if only a toilet room is provided at grade level, such toilet rooms shall have a clear opening of not less than 29 inches (737 mm).”

Q7.5: Are water or sewer services available for my property?

A: Please contact Charlotte County Utilities at 941.764.4300.



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Q7.6: When does a permit expire?

A: A permit can expire in two (2) ways as follows:

1. When an approved required inspection was not made within 180 calendar days from permit issuance; and/or,
2. When an approved required inspection was not made within 180 calendar days from the last approved required inspection.
 - Note #1: At time of permit issuance, the initial expiration date is printed on the job card.
 - Note #2: The required inspections are printed on the job card and are shown online as “pending.”
 - Note #3: An automated email reminder is sent to the permit holder 45 days before permit expires.

Q7.7: Is a permit required for a mobile or manufactured home repair or remodel?

A: Yes. A permit is required for mobile or manufactured home repair or remodel. More information can be found at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/building-construction/permits/residential-permits/> depending upon the scope of work.

Q7.8: Is a permit required to replace a faucet, sink or toilet?

A: No. A permit is not required.

Q7.9: Is a permit required for above ground swimming pools (24 inches or more in depth)?

A: Yes. A permit is required. The following is a list of documents to be submitted with a permit application package:

- Site plan of the parcel, drawn to scale, with dimensions showing the location of the pool and equipment, including the required weatherproof, GFCI protected electrical receptacle.
- The plan shall show the 48" Pool Access Barrier as required by Florida Building Code section R4501.17. Access Barriers might include the pool wall, fences, walls, decks, stairs, ladders, gates, doors, windows, or other similar pool/spa access. Additionally, the required Pool Barrier system must be maintained and in place including times when the pool is unattended.
- In addition to the required GFCI protected pool equipment receptacle. All other electrical receptacles located within 20 feet from the pool edge must be GFCI.
- Overhead electrical lines 0-750 volts must be 22.5 feet minimum away from the water edge.

Q7.10: Do I need to have a bathtub in my home?

A: No, not if a shower is provided. The answer is based upon the Florida Building Code-Residential, R306.1 Toilet Facilities, which states: "Every dwelling unit shall be provided with a water closet, lavatory, and a bathtub or shower."

Q7.11: What is the cost for a sign permit?

A: A sign permit costs \$116. However, if it is a face change only, then the cost is \$22.



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Q7.12: What are the permit fees in Charlotte County?

A: Please see the [Fee Schedule for Permits & Associated Services](#) brochure. The fee schedule is also listed under the Permitting section of [“Forms & Documents”](#) on our website.

Q7.13: How can I pay reinspection, permit renewal or permit extension fees?

A: Call Permitting at 941.743.1201 (option 4). If the caller is a licensed contractor, these fees may be paid using the Citizen Access Portal on our website. Fee payments over the phone or online may be made using a MasterCard or Visa credit/debit card. In-person fee payments are accepted in cash, check (made out to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners), MasterCard, or Visa credit/debit card.

Q7.14: When did permit workflow management software begin in Charlotte County?

A: Permit workflow management software was first implemented in June 1989 with software called *CD-Plus*. In September 2009, the county moved to *Accela* as its permitting management software, which is still used today.

Q7.15: When must a plans change be submitted for approval?

A: Work shall be installed in accordance with the approved construction documents. Any changes made during construction that are not in compliance with the approved construction documents shall be resubmitted for review and approval as an amended set of construction documents (FBC-Building 107.4).

Q7.16: What is the fee for plan changes to approved plans?

A: The fee for a commercial plans change is \$75 for each category: building, electrical, plumbing & mechanical. The fee for a residential plans change is \$50.

Q7.17 Are a proposed drainage plan and as-built survey required for a residential shed or residential detached garage?

A: Our department does not require drainage plans and drainage as-built surveys for detached sheds and garages if the existing conveyance or swale along the side and rear of the property is not diverted or blocked. These structures are still required to have the final grade slope at a minimum of 6 inches within the first 10 feet of the building to comply with the Florida Building Code (Residential) – section 401.3, unless provided with an exception.

Q7.18 How do I determine if a property is in the City of Punta Gorda?

A: Please visit the [Charlotte County Property Appraiser](#) website and click on the “Real Property Record Search” button. Searches can be performed by street address, parcel number, or owner name. From the search results, look for the “In City of Punta Gorda” field. The response will state yes or no.

Q7.19 Is a permit required to install or construct a pergola?

A: A permit is not required if the pergola is a single, free standing (not attached to any other structure) pergola having maximum dimensions of 12 feet x 12 feet with no footings required, with no roofing or sheathing, with no electric or plumbing, and which also complies with the Zoning Ordinance. Please contact Zoning at 941.743.1964 or Zoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov for further assistance.



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Q7.20: How do I obtain a road or street closing permit for a block party or event?

A: An application package for a [Temporary Use Permit \(TUP\)](#) must be completed with all required attachments and information. The review process begins with the submittal of the TUP application package to the Zoning Division of Community Development located at 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. For more information, please contact Zoning at 941.743.1964 or Zoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Please also contact Public Works at 941.575.3600 for information about road or street closing authorization.

Q7.21: Where can I find forms for permitting, licensing, zoning, planning and land development?

A: Forms for permitting, licensing, zoning, planning and land development are found at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/forms.stml>.

Q7.22: How can I check the status of a permit application or search for permits by address?

A: Please see the following instructions on how to look up the status of a permit application:

1. Go to CharlotteCountyFL.gov
2. Scroll down to Popular Links and click the icon titled "Permit Information"
3. Scroll through the Citizen Access Portal to find "What would you like to do today?" then click "Search Permits" under "Building."
4. Search for permits by Permit Number, Street Address, Contractor's Business Name, or License Number.
5. Enter street number and name for address search, using only the first few letters of the street name.
6. Click the teal "Search" button.
7. For Permit Number search, click "Record Info" tab for options like reviewing plan status or inspection details.
8. To view Plan Review Comments, click the teal button labeled "View Review Status/Comments".
9. For other search options like "Address", a downloadable list of permits will be displayed, where you can click on any permit number for details.

Q7.23: How do I find out if a permit is or is not required?

A: Please visit [What Does or Does Not Require a Permit](#).

Q7.24: Do Engineer Letters need to be signed and sealed?

A: Yes. They must have either wet original signatures and seal, or digitally signed and sealed authenticated by a third-party certification authority. Some of the certification providers are Cosign, Identrust, Docusign, Entrust, Globalsign and Verisign or another provider approved by the Florida Engineer's Board (see [User Information](#)). Digitally signed and sealed documents may be submitted by either email or uploading to the online permit application.

Q7.25: Are digitally signed and sealed documents accepted by Charlotte County?

A: Yes. We follow Florida Statutes and the Engineer's Board rules. That means that we accept digitally signed and sealed documents for all projects, both residential and commercial. Documents issued by an engineer or architect must be submitted electronically and they must have a digital signature and seal verified by a third-party authority. Some of the certification providers are Cosign, Identrust, Docusign,



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Entrust, Globalsign and Verisign or another provider approved by the Florida Engineer’s Board (see [User Information](#)).

Q7.26: Do surveyors need to have a third-party authority verifying digital signatures and seal?

A: No. Per Florida Statutes, surveyors can self-certify their signature and seal.

Q7.27: Can I purchase and set a used manufactured home in Charlotte County?

A: Maybe. First, verify with Zoning that it is permissible on the lot/parcel where the home is to be placed. Second, carefully review the following page of the Residential Mobile Home Permit Application: *Mobile Home & Recreation Vehicle Permit Application Information*. Along with the other requirements shown, pay attention to items 5 & 7:

5. Submit a copy of the state registration or title for the used mobile home.
7. Provide proof that the Mobile Home or RV is designed for Zone III Wind Loads.

Q7.28: Can an electrical contractor submit plans for review for his own work or do the electrical plans need to be signed by an engineer?

A: According to Florida S.S. 471.003 (Engineering) Qualifications for practice, Exemptions: 2(h) Any electrical, plumbing, air-conditioning, or mechanical contractor whose practice includes the design and fabrication of electrical, plumbing, air-conditioning, or mechanical systems, respectively, which she or he installs by virtue of a license issued under chapter 489, under former part I of chapter 553, Florida Statutes 2001, or under any special act or ordinance when working on any construction project which:

1. Requires an electrical or plumbing or air-conditioning and refrigeration system with a value of \$125,000 or less; and,
- 2.a. Requires an aggregate service capacity of 600 amperes (240 volts) or less on a residential electrical system or 800 amperes (240 volts) or less on a commercial or industrial electrical system. If the project/design meets the above requirements, the electrical contractor may do his own design. The plans must contain his/her signature and license number.

Q7.29: Do I need to submit the manufacturer’s installation instructions with the permit application for all of the products that require a Florida Product Approval/NOA number?

A: While the installation instructions are required to be on site for inspections, a complete list only of current Florida Product Approval/NOA numbers is required. Please note: the Florida Product Approval numbers must include any digit(s) after the decimal point.

Q7.30: Do I need a mid-point brace for soffit?

A: The manufacturer’s installation instructions must be followed.

Q7.31: Are gutters required on my new home?

A: Gutters are required by the State of Florida Department of Health only on the side where a septic field is located.



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Q7.32: Can the roof of a single-family residence be hand-framed?

A: Yes, provided the design by a Florida-registered design professional, is compliant with Florida Building Code (Residential) Chapter 8.

Q7.33: How do I determine if I need a permit for a project?

A: Call 941.743.1201 or email BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Answers may also be found on the department's website at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/building-construction/permits/permit-requirements.stml>.

Q7.34: What are the requirements for replacing doors or windows?

A: The requirements for door or window replacement is covered in Chapter 16 of the Florida Building Code (Building) as well as applicable sections of the Florida Building Code (Existing). The document, "[Top Residential Door, Window & Shutter Permit Application Mistakes,](#)" has information to assist as well.

Q7.35: Is a permit required to replace a few panels on a carport?

A: If the repair is under 100 sq. ft., a permit is not required.

Q7.36: Do I need a solicitation permit for door-to-door sales?

A: Yes. Per Charlotte County Code, "It shall be unlawful for any person to engage on behalf of himself or others, in the business of door-to-door selling without having first obtained a home solicitation permit from the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court pursuant to F.S. section 501.022(2), as amended, and any regulations amendatory, supplementary or additional thereto." This can be found at: https://library.municode.com/fl/charlotte_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=GEORSPAC_CH_1-10LIBURE_ARTIIIDO-DSE_S1-10-77HOSOPEEQ.

Section 8 – Planning

Q8.1: What is the Comprehensive Plan?

A: The Board of County Commissioners approved the Charlotte 2050 Comprehensive Plan on July 20, 2010. Because of challenges to the adoption of the plan, the effective date of the plan was delayed until June 15, 2011. It covers a vast range of topics from sustainability to creating walkable communities to enhancing our waterfronts. In 1985, the State of Florida began requiring each of its 67 counties to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. More information can be found at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/planning-zoning/comprehensive-planning/charlotte-2050/>.

Q8.2: How do I find out about new development in Charlotte County?

A:

1. Visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-development/>.
2. Scroll down and click "Maps & Addressing" under Popular Links.
3. Click the "Interactive Map App Gallery" on the right-hand side of the webpage.
4. Under Map App Gallery, select "New Development in Charlotte County."

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Q8.3: What is the purpose of the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

A: The function of the MPO is to translate local priorities in Charlotte County to state and federal transportation project funding. You can read the plan and view upcoming meetings at the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s website ccpgmpo.gov.

Section 9 – Septic Tanks

Q9.1: Where do I obtain a septic tank permit?

A: Septic tank permits are issued by the State of Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County. They can be contacted at 941.624.7200 extension 7387, Charlotte.EH@FLhealth.gov, or by visiting their offices at 1100 Loveland Boulevard, Port Charlotte. Their website is charlotte.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-program/.

Q9.2: Who do I call for a new septic tank inspection?

A: Septic tank inspections are performed by staff of the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County, a State of Florida agency. They can be contacted at 941.624.7200 extension 7387, Charlotte.EH@FLhealth.gov, or by visiting their offices at 1100 Loveland Boulevard, Port Charlotte. Their website is charlotte.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-program/.

Q9.3: Who is affected by the inspection and pump out of septic tanks requirement in the county code?

A: Section 3-8-256(g)(1)(2) of the county [Code of Laws and Ordinances](#) requires the pump/clean out of septic tanks at least once every 5 years. This is required to be performed by a state licensed septic tank contractor or plumber certified to pump out septic tanks. They must inspect it for damage, make repairs as necessary and pay a fee of \$115 to the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County. They can be contacted at 941.624.7200 extension 7387 or CharlotteEH@FLhealth.gov.

Section 10 – Tree & Landscape

Q10.1: Is a tree permit required to be obtained to trim trees on my property?

A: No. A tree permit is not required to be obtained to trim trees on your property. All tree pruning shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of the National Arborist Association Pruning Standards for Shade Trees. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Tree Care standards and guidelines shall be followed. Severe pruning, such as tree "topping," "hatracking," and "lollipoping," is prohibited.

Q10.2: Is a Tree Permit required for removal of a Starfruit or a Norfolk Pine tree?

A: Trees such as those mentioned do not require a permit to remove. Only trees that are listed on the Approved Tree List, Exhibit 8, codified in [Section 3-9-100.3](#) of the [Code of Laws & Ordinances](#) require a permit for removal.

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Q10.3: Who can I ask questions about Tree Points or Tree Buyout?

A: Please contact Gloria Walberg at 941.743.1207 or Gloria.Walberg@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. However, if there are questions about the [Tree Buyout Form](#) and the submittal process, please contact Zoning staff at 941.743.1964 or Zoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

Q10.4: What is a “tree point?”

A: One tree point is equivalent to a native tree with a 2-inch caliper measurement. The caliper is the diameter of the tree, measured at 12 inches above the existing grade. As the caliper of the tree increases, the point value also increases. For more information, see [Exhibit 5: Tree Points, in Section 3-9-100.3](#) Tree Requirements of the [Code of Laws and Ordinances](#).

Q10.5: When is a landscape plan required?

A: A landscape plan is required:

1. For all new commercial and multifamily (three or more dwelling units) development
2. For existing commercial and multifamily properties undergoing redevelopment or expansion:
 - a. When the square footage of the addition(s) exceeds 50 percent of the square footage of the existing improvement(s); or,
 - b. When the estimated cost of the addition(s) or improvement(s) exceeds 50 percent of the appraised value of the existing improvement(s).
3. Whenever existing parking areas are scarified, or new parking areas are to be constructed.

Note: see [Section 3-9-100.1](#): Buffers, Landscaping and Tree Requirements of the [Code or Laws and Ordinances](#) for more information about exemptions and requirements

Q10.6: What needs to be included with a Tree Removal Permit Application?

A: All applicants proposing development must submit an accurately completed and signed [Tree Permit Application](#) at the time of application for building permits, and prior to any development or clearing/earthwork activity. As part of the application, a tree survey consisting of development site boundaries, location of all individual trees (which have a caliper four inches or greater), the trees’ common names and their approximate calipers measured, must be supplied. The tree survey should be a full inventory illustrating all proposed and existing improvements, clearly showing which trees are to be removed and which are to be preserved. If there are no trees onsite, the applicant must still submit the Tree Permit Application, filling out the fourth section (No Tree Affidavit Form).

Q10.7: What does the process look like for a Mulching Permit Application?

A: (1) Staff completes a preliminary environmental review of the property. (2) Staff identifies any potentially active gopher tortoise burrows onsite, flags the burrows, and marks the approximate locations on an aerial photo. The applicant does not need state authorizations or permits if the burrow area can be avoided by the mulching activity. Mulching/clearing activity must not take place within 25 feet of the area around the burrow entrance. The area must be clearly marked, staked, and barricaded. (3) Staff may conduct an inspection once the mulching activity has been completed. If burrows have been disturbed during mulching, notification will be submitted to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for further action.

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Q10.8: What happens when gopher tortoise burrows are found on a property that is to be developed?

A: (1) The gopher tortoise is listed as a threatened species by the FWC, and their burrows must be avoided by 25 feet unless a relocation permit is obtained from FWC. This includes all construction activities that will be taking place (i.e., clearing, filling, vehicular traffic, etc.). (2) If staff identifies any potentially active gopher tortoise burrows onsite, the burrow(s) will be flagged, and the approximate location will be marked on an aerial photo. It is the applicant's responsibility to hire an environmental consultant to conduct a full gopher tortoise site survey, there may be additional burrows onsite. (3) If the applicant can avoid the burrow by 25 feet in all directions, they can submit an avoidance plan documenting a minimum 25' undisturbed buffer around all burrows. (4) When the burrows cannot be avoided, an FWC approved relocation permit with verification of successful relocation will be required prior to approval. Staff must receive the after-action report stating the results of the burrow excavation or bucket trapping. (5) The state FWC allows on-site relocation as well as off-site relocation for gopher tortoises that are displaced by development. If relocation is proposed, please provide an approved FWC relocation permit with verification of successful relocation for staff approval of the building permit application. If tortoise(s) are relocated on site, please provide a site plan identifying where the relocation area will be located.

Q10.9: What is a heritage tree?

A: A heritage tree is defined as either an oak, cypress, or pine tree that is 30" in diameter or greater for single stem tree and 45" or greater if multi-stem tree. Trees are measured by diameter at breast height (DBH) or 54" above grade. Charlotte County Code, Chapter 3-9-100.3(e) Heritage trees states, "No person shall cut down, remove, relocate, or in any way damage a heritage tree. These trees shall be protected without regard to their location or the date of final development approval."

If staff identifies a potential heritage tree onsite during a preliminary environmental review, the applicant will be asked to provide a modified tree site plan showing the heritage tree as remaining preserved from all development activities. If the tree cannot be preserved, it must be demonstrated that every effort has been made to design and locate the home to prevent the removal of the tree. If the tree is in advanced stages of decline, staff reserves the right to request a determination from a certified arborist. If the tree is causing substantial structural or infrastructural damage, staff reserves the right to request a determination from a qualified engineer of record. The applicant must demonstrate that alternative remedies such as root barriers or trimming are not feasible.

If a heritage tree is wrongfully removed, the applicant shall pay \$150.00 per DBH inch to the native tree replacement fund.

Q10.10: How does the Scrub Jay Boundary Area affect the building process?

A: If the property falls within the Scrub Jay Permit Boundary, then a [Charlotte County Scrub Jay Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\)](#) application must be accounted for. There are development fees associated with impacting property within the Scrub Jay Permit Boundary which provide long-term funding for Land Acquisition, Habitat Assessment Planning & Restoration, Habitat Management and more. The fee schedule can be found on the county's [Natural Resources Department](#) page. Scrub-jay nesting season is March 1 through June 30. As defined in the HCP application and per Ordinance 2015-003, there shall be



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no clearing during nesting season. More information can be found at: <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/core/fileparse.php/409/urlt/scrub-jay-faq.pdf>.

Q10.11: How does a bald eagle nest affect the building process?

A: Bald eagles are no longer listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act or the Florida Endangered and Threatened Species rules, however, they remain protected by the State Eagle Rule (68A-16.002, F.A.C.), the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection ACT. Bald Eagles are most active throughout Charlotte County during nesting season between October 1 and May 15.

When a project proposes development or construction within 660 feet of a bald eagle nest tree, the applicant is advised to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to determine if a federal permit is required. USFWS will determine if a Bald Eagle Management Plan is required and the steps necessary to move forward.

Q10.12: What does the process entail for a dock, seawall, or boatlift permit?

A: When a dock/seawall/boatlift is proposed on a vacant lot, staff will conduct a preliminary environmental review onsite to check for the presence of environmental concerns. If there are gopher tortoise burrows onsite, staff will request an avoidance plan showing how the burrow(s) will not be impacted during the construction process or an after-action report if the applicant obtains a relocation permit from FWC. If any trees must be removed along the bank, staff will request a Tree Removal Permit Application to be completed and filled out so each tree onsite is accounted for. Staff may check to see if the applicant has obtained and provided all applicable state or federal permits before commencement of development. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary state and federal permits before construction begins.

Q10.13: What options are available if wetlands are on a property that is proposing development?

A: Staff will filter each property through the National Wetlands Inventory Map to identify any possible jurisdictional wetlands onsite. If the proposed clearing or development may impact jurisdictional wetlands, the applicant must have the property surveyed for wetlands. The survey must be performed by an environmental consultant or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The survey must be submitted to county staff. If the survey does not identify jurisdictional wetlands and county staff agrees with it, no further action is required. If the survey identifies jurisdictional wetlands on site, then the applicant has the options below:

- If the clearing, filling, and development does not impact jurisdictional wetlands, the applicant must submit a site plan showing the jurisdictional wetland line, a minimum 15 and average of 25-foot upland buffer and the area of activity. This will document that no additional clearing, filling, and development is proposed within the wetland and upland buffer area; or,
- If the clearing, filling, and development will impact the wetland area, a dredge and fill permit must be obtained from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Both authorizations will be conditioned as part of Charlotte County's local government approval.
- For further information please contact DEP at the 239.344.5600.

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Q10.14: What is a Protected Species Assessment (PSA)?

A: When development is proposed on a property that is more than one acre in size, staff will ask for a current PSA conducted by an environmental consultant prior to permit approval. It is the applicant's responsibility to seek out an environmental consultant to complete the work and provide a document concluding their findings. The applicant will then provide that document to staff who will complete the environmental review for the permit.

Section 11 – Zoning

Q11.1: Can someone live on a vacant lot while they build their home?

A: No. The [Charlotte County Code of Law & Ordinances](#) does not allow occupancy in a temporary structure or recreational vehicle (e.g. RV, shipping or storage container, tent, etc.) until the primary structure is completed and has an issued Certificate of Occupancy. See section [3-9-79.1](#), the following shall not be parked on undeveloped property in residential districts, cargo trailers with more than four (4) wheels or cargo containment area greater than twenty (20) feet in length; boat trailers with more than six (6) wheels or tri-axes; boats or RVs shall not be stored or parked on stands, jack stands, block, or other similar apparatus in residential districts not including integrated leveling stands.

Q11.2: Are chickens allowed in residential areas of the county?

A: Yes. Accessory chicken keeping is a [conditional use](#) in the Residential Single-Family (see [sec. 3-9-33](#)) zoning district. The raising of poultry is permitted with the Agricultural (AG) zoning district. 4H, FFA and similar uses and activities are permitted with conditional uses in the following zoning districts (RSF, RMF, RMF-T, MHP, MHC). A permit is needed.

Q11.3: Where do I go to “kill and combine” property?

A: Please contact the [Charlotte County Property Appraiser](#) by calling 941.743.1498 or by visiting 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948.

Q11.4: Are medical marijuana dispensaries allowed in Charlotte County?

A: Charlotte County follows Florida law in that the county does not treat Medical Marijuana Treatment Center Dispensing Facilities (MMTCDFs) any differently than pharmacies, except for the 500-foot buffer around elementary, middle, or high schools. Also, under state law, an MMTCDF must be vertically integrated with one of the approved licensed growing operations located in the State of Florida. It is recommended that a Zoning Determination Letter to be applied for with the Zoning Division.

Q11.5: How do I find out if a lot is “buildable” in Charlotte County?

A: The Zoning Division can assist in determining if the lot is conforming to the current zoning standards or if it is nonconforming. Contact Zoning to assist with this research by calling 941.743.1964 or email the address and/or parcel number to Zoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. [Chapter 3-9](#) of the [Code of Laws & Ordinances](#) contains the Zoning and Land Development regulations by zoning district.



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Q11.6: Do I need to submit a new application to renew my “doggy dining” permit?

A: Yes. Please see [Article VIII – Dogs in designated areas of food service establishments, section 3-5-207](#) for all the requirements.

Q11.7: In AG zoning, can a metal building be placed exceeding 1,500 sq. ft.?

A: Yes, if the lot coverage is not exceeded. The total lot coverage of all buildings in the Agricultural (AG) zoning district is 10%. Lot coverage of structures related to process of hydroculture or similar uses excluding warehouse is 80%.

Q11.8: Are shipping containers allowed for storage on Agricultural (AG) zoned property?

A: The AG zoning district does not prohibit shipping containers. For more information, please see permitted accessory uses and structures in [section 3-9-30](#).

Q11.9: Are shipping containers allowed on [Residential Single-Family \(RSF\)](#) or [Manufactured Home Conventional \(MHC\)](#) zoned property for storage?

A: No. Construction trailers and cargo containers are prohibited in these zoning districts. Shipping containers can be used as a single-family residence. They must be on a foundation and meet Florida Building Code.

Q11.10: What are the setbacks for my zoning district?

A: The first step is to determine the designated zoning district for the property address. The [Charlotte County Geographic Information System \(GIS\)](#) can assist with determining the zoning district. Please see the Charlotte County website for [GIS layer information](#). Then, go to the [Code of Law & Ordinances, Chapter 3-9, Article II](#) for the district regulation. It is recommended to contact the Zoning Department to ensure all information is received. Call 941.764.1964 or email Zoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov for more information.

Section 12 – Miscellaneous

Q12.1: Where do I register my home security system?

A: Home security systems can be registered with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office. For contact information, please visit ccso.org and look for the “Contact Us” tab and call one of their non-emergency phone numbers.

Q12.2: Where is the Community Development Building located?

A: The Community Development Building is the one-story building to the right of the five-story Administration Building at the Charlotte County Administration Center campus. The address is 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948.

Q12.3: What is Unity of Title?

A: The Unity of Title legal process was created to assist homeowners who have a home with abutting multiple lots, and they want to construct a structure, such as a detached garage, on one of them. This



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works to a homeowner's advantage in that water connection fees would not be charged for an additional meter and would only have a single water bill.

Q12.4: Is a permit required for wetland cleanup such as removing cattails or dead exotics from any body of water in the county?

A: A permit is not needed if you are conducting pond or canal vegetation removal, if no heavy equipment (causing soil compaction) is involved and no sediment excavation or dredging of soil takes place in any form. This includes removing cattails or submerged vegetation with the roots. Activities that are OK include cutting, reciprocating, and raking if these do not disturb native wildlife, especially listed or protected species.