

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ's

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Section 1 – Building Code.

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

A: Two (2) small appliance 20 amp rated branch circuits that may not serve any other outlets except eating area receptacles (this does not include lighting outlets). This does not include the range circuit, dishwasher circuit, disposal circuit, and microwave circuit.

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

A: Please refer to NEC Table 300.5 of the 2014 National Electrical Code which may be found by clicking the



NEC Table 300.5 -
Cover Requirements

following PDF or link: 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.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.

Q1.4: What is the building code requirement regarding the placement of the 3rd nail when adding it to attic straps and trusses on homes built in the 80's as it relates to wind mitigation?

A: The code reference is FRC 908.8.1.4 prescriptive method for gable roofs on a masonry wall. Sufficient eave sheathing shall be removed to expose a minimum of 6-feet of framing members, measured from the corner, along the exterior wall on each side of each gable end. The anchorage of each of the exposed rafters or truss shall be inspected. Wherever a strap is missing or an existing strap has fewer than four fasteners on each end, approved straps, ties or right angle gusset brackets with a minimum uplift capacity of 500 lbs. shall be installed that connect each rafter or truss to the top plate below or directly to the masonry wall using approved masonry screws that will provide at least a 2-1/2 embedment into the concrete or masonry. When the straps or right-angle gusset brackets are attached to a wood sill plate, the sill plate shall be anchored to the concrete masonry wall below. This anchorage shall be accomplished by installing ¼-inch diameter masonry screws, each with supplementary ¼-inch washer, having sufficient length to develop a 2 ½ inch embedment into the concrete and masonry. These screws shall be installed within 4-inches of the truss or rafter on both sides of each interior rafter or truss and on the accessible wall side of the gable end truss or rafter.

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. Flood plain 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, could be damaged by flood water, and are required to be elevated above the design flood elevation for that location.

Q1.6: What is needed for Solar PV System permits?

A Please click the following link for required documents www.charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Pages/PermitType.aspx?PermitType=Residential%20Solar%20Photovoltaic Also note that 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, FSEC 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 complaint?

A: There are four ways to report or submit a code violation or complaint to the Code Compliance Section as follows:

1. *Call:* 941.743.1201 to speak to a customer service specialist.
2. *Email:* CodeEnforcement@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.
3. *Online:* visit secureapps.charlottecountyfl.gov/CitizenAccess/.
4. *In-person:* business hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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 [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 using the Property Appraiser's website ccappraiser.com by clicking the "Real Property 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 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." To report or submit a code violation or complaint, please see question 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 question 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 question Q2.1.

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

A: Parking a vehicle on a sidewalk is addressed in Section 316.1945 of the chapter of Florida Statutes that deal with motor vehicle law. It has language that addresses stopping, standing, or parking prohibitions in specified places as follows: "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 on the roadway side of any vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street; on a sidewalk; within an intersection; 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 their local law enforcement agency's non-emergency phone number. In the case of Charlotte County, the agency would be the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office (CCSO). Contact information for the CCSO can be found online at ccso.org. Florida Statutes can be found online at leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?Mode=View%20Statutes&Submenu=1&Tab=statutes.

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

A: Rollout containers for waste collection are addressed in Chapter 1-12 of the [Code of Laws and Ordinances](#). The code section reference is Section 1-12-117 (Mobile Solid Waste Containers) which states as follows: "Mobile solid waste containers such as rollout containers, trash cans or dumpsters, compactors or recycling dumpsters on wheels, are permitted under this article. After pickup on the day of collection, these containers shall be promptly stored away. When not scheduled for pickup, these containers shall be kept stored out of public view, and in the case of dumpsters, compactors or recycling dumpsters on wheels shall comply 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.

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 that address the parking of boats, recreational vehicles, trucks and trailers and the code section reference is Sec. 3-9-79.1. To report or submit a code violation or a complaint, please see question Q1.1., above.

Q2.9: How does a code violation case get opened?

A: Most cases are opened due to a citizen complaint. After an investigation by code compliance staff, a decision is made whether the allegation/violation is valid. If not valid, the case is immediately closed. In commercial corridors, however, pro-active code compliance measures are taken by staff with or without a complaint being filed.

Q2.10: Does the county accept anonymous complaints or reports of violations?

A: Yes. However, some violations will be difficult to pursue since code compliance officers cannot see or witness the violation. For legal and safety reasons, they are not allowed to access upon private property other than to attempt contact with the occupant by using the main entryway.

Q2.11: 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.

Q2.12: 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 one of their non-emergency phone numbers. Visit their website for contact information ccso.org.

Q2.13: Are fireworks legal Florida?

A: As of April 2020, by state action, fireworks can be legally used 3 days of the year: Independence Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Violations are a local law enforcement issue which would be the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office. Visit their website for contact information ccso.org. The violation is classified as a misdemeanor which means the officer must witness the violation to make an arrest or issue a citation.

Q2.14: 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 question Q1.1., above.

Q2.15: What is the Vacant Property Registration program?

A: Established by county ordinance, the Vacant Property Registration (VPR) program requires abandoned or vacant properties meeting certain criteria be registered annually and for a fee. More information about the program can be found at charlottecountyfl.gov/dept/commdev/Pages/default.aspx then in the left column under Community Development click on "[Vacant Property Registration Program](#)." The fee increases each year and when the property becomes occupied, it can be removed from the VPR program. The registration form can be found on the [Community Development](#) web page, in the left column click on Forms & Documents and then scroll down to Permitting Forms & Documents.

Q2.16: Does the county require a Home Solicitation Permit for door hanger distribution?

A: Florida Law (FS 501.22) and the County Code (Sec. 1-10-77) states that a Home Solicitation Permit is required from the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. The [Clerk of the Circuit Court](#) can be contacted at 941.743.1400. Additional contact and other information can be found at their website co.charlotte.fl.us/Default.aspx.

Q2.17: What are the hours that construction work is allowed?

A: Section 3-2-73(c) of the [Code of Laws & Ordinances](#) states the following: "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." To report a violation, please contact the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office (CCSO). Contact information for the CCSO can be found online at ccso.org.

Q2.18: 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.

Q2.19: Can I live in my motorhome/RV/Travel Trailer in Charlotte County?

A: The only places you are permitted to live in a motorhome/RV/ Travel Trailer in Charlotte County are RV parks.

Q2.20: 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. You are NOT allowed to store anything on a vacant lot.

Q2.21 How do I report a boat adrift or abandoned in a waterway?

A: Visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/services/naturalresources/Pages/Abandoned-Vessels-Program.aspx>. This website contains detailed instructions on how to identify and report abandoned or derelict vessel.

Q.2.22: 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 refer to Charlotte County Code Section 3-9-85.

Q.2.23: 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 regulating this. It is a civil issue between property owners.

Q.2.24: 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 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 can also call 800.435.7352 or visit the website at www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Landlord-Tenant-Law-in-Florida.

Q.2.25: 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.

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 as follows:

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:* Community Development's Online Services database at secureapps.charlottecountyfl.gov/CitizenAccess/.
4. *Call:* Community Development at 941.743.1201 between the hours of 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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

A: Please visit or download our Contractor License Guide brochure charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Documents/Licensing-Brochure.pdf.

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 read our "[Working with Contractors Guide](#)." The guide can also be downloaded by visiting CharlotteCountyFl.gov. In the left column below "Popular Links," click "Permitting & Licensing." Then in the left column below "Building Construction, click "Licensing." Then in the right column below "Related Links," click on "[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/year registration fee and remain inactive. If they want to renew, they can. However, if they cancel it and never keep up the registration payment, then when and if they return to renew their license, they must start all over again from the beginning to re-register with the county.

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. This is issued at the Tax Collector's office. This office will require a signature on a form that explains what a Handyman can or cannot perform. The link to the form is charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Documents/HandymanBTRForm.pdf. The Tax Collector's office can be reached at 941.743.1350 and their website is taxcollector.charlottecountyfl.gov. In addition, if the handyman lives in Charlotte County, a Minor Home Occupation must be applied for and approved. Please contact the Zoning Office at 941.764.4903 for the Minor Home Occupation process and information.

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 Tax Collector's office. The office can be reached at 941.743.1350 and the office's website is taxcollector.charlottecountyfl.gov.

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 visit charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Pages/Unlicensed-Contractors.aspx to download the Uniform Complaint Form. Complete the form and either deliver or mail it with the required documentation to: Licensing Manager, Building Construction Services Building, 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948. If there are any questions about the procedure or the documentation, please call 941.743.1201 to speak to a Customer Service Specialist. One may also contact the Licensing Manager, Erin Mullen-Travis, at 941.623.1007 or Erin.Mullen-Travis@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

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

A: Download our [Contractor License Brochure](#). Go to CharlotteCountyFL.gov. In the left column below "Popular Links," click on "Permitting & Licensing," Next, in the middle column scroll down to and click on the elongated "Contractor Licensing" button. Next, in the right column below "Related Links," click on "[Contractor Licensing Brochure](#)."

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* as follows:
 - a. Visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Permitting & Licensing under "Popular Links" in the left column.
 - b. Click Elevation Certificates under "Building Construction" in the left column.

- c. Scroll down the middle column and click "Search for an Elevation Certificate by Address." The Charlotte County Interactive Map App Gallery will appear.
- d. Click the Floodplain Management App.
- e. Click the "Close" button to accept the Disclaimer Statement. You are now at the county's GIS System.
- f. Enter the street address in the search field in the upper left and click the search icon. A "Search result" window will appear with the address displayed.
- g. Click the "Zoom to" tool in the window.
- h. Move your cursor/pointer out of the "Search result" window and scroll out slowly to see if the letter "E" in a blue circle pointing to the property appears. If an "E" points to the property, then an Elevation Certificate is on file.
- i. Click the "E" and an "Elevation Certificate" window will appear. Click on the blue underlined "Elevation Certificate" link near the bottom of the window. Print or save a PDF copy of the certificate.

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.

Section 5 – Impact Fees.

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

A: Information about [Impact Fees](#) can be found on the county's website CharlotteCountyFl.gov. Below "Popular Links" in the left column, click on "Departments." Next, in the left column click on Community Development. Next, below "Community Development" click on "[Impact Fees.](#)" Information can also be obtained by calling the Zoning Section at 941.743.1964.

Section 6 – Inspections.

Q6.1: How do I schedule an inspection?

A: There are three ways to schedule an inspection:

1. *Call:* 941.743.1201 between the hours of 7:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays) and a customer service specialist can assist with scheduling.
2. *Call:* 941.833.4086 for the Automated Inspection Request line and follow the instruction prompts. The line is available 24/7 but note that the cut-off time for next day inspection service is 11:59 pm.
3. *Online:* (licensed contractors only). Inspections can be scheduled by using Online Services secureapps.charlottecountyfl.gov/CitizenAccess/. Note: the cut off time for next day inspection service is 11:59 pm.

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. Go to CharlotteCountyFL.gov and in the left column of the page select "Online Permits, Licensing & Code Violations." On the next page that

appears, scroll down on the middle column and select the "Online Services Portal" button. On the next page, click the elongated button at the bottom of the middle column. 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 11:59 pm 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 AM or PM only inspection (note: we make attempts to honor this request but is not a guarantee).
2. Receive a phone call from the inspector ½ hour before arriving for the inspection.
3. Visit Online Services secureapps.charlottecountyfl.gov/CitizenAccess/ or call 941.743.1201, each after 7:30 am 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 of Inspectors](#)" that is published at charlottecountyfl.gov. Click "Permitting & Licensing" below Popular Links (left column) and then below "Building Construction" in the left column scroll to the [Phone & Email Directory of Inspectors](#) link. We also have a "How To" guide about using Online Services to view the assigned inspector's name found at: charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Documents/How-to-Research-Permit-Inspection-Information-Online.pdf.
4. The Inspections Manager, Tim Rodgers, can also be contacted in the morning before 7:30 am at 941.391.0208, or his assistant, Bob Hunek, at 941.391.0210 if needed.

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

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

1. *Call:* 941.743.1201.
2. *Email:* BuildingConstruction@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.
3. *Online:* visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov and then:
 - a. In the left column under "Popular Links", click "[Online Permits, Licensing & Code Violations.](#)"
 - b. In the middle column, at the bottom, click the elongated button "Online Services: Permits, Licenses & Code Violations."
 - c. Scroll down to the "What would you like to do today?" heading and under the "Building" heading click "Search Permits." This takes you to the "Search for Permits" page.
 - d. Permits can be searched by the following: Permit Number, Street Number & Street Name (i.e. Address), Contractor's Business Name, or Contractor License Number.
 - e. **Helpful Hint!** If searching by street address, only type the Street Number in the first Street Number field (with the word "From" in it). For the Street Name field, only type the first 3 or 4 letters of the street name.
 - f. Scroll down the left side of the page and near the bottom, click the green "**Search**" button.
 - g. If the search was made by Permit Number, information about that permit will be displayed. Click the "**Record Info**" tab (upper left of the page) which will display a drop-down list of options. To

check if an inspection is scheduled as well as the inspector's name, click **"Inspections"** and review the **"Upcoming"** list. To check inspection results, review the **"Completed"** list.

- h. An online [Phone & Email Directory of Inspectors](#) is published at charlottecountyfl.gov then click "Permitting & Licensing" below "Popular Links" in the left column. Then below "Building Construction" in the left column scroll to the [Phone & Email Directory of Inspectors](#) link.

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

A: No, unless the inspection is a Final inspection. All reinspection fees must be paid before any of the 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 (FBC) 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 (FBC) 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).

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 (FBC) 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 2017 Florida Building Code, 6th Edition, 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 the Utilities Department at 941.764.4300 or Administrative.Assistants@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Their website is charlottecountyfl.gov/dept/utilities/Pages/default.aspx.

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 30 days before a permit will expire.

Q7.7: For a mobile or manufactured home, is a permit required for window, exterior door or like-for-like roof replacements?

A: No. A permit is not required for mobile or manufactured home repair or remodel such as the structure, roof system, walls, floor system, windows, exterior doors, etc. However, the use of materials and design must be equivalent to the original construction.

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 weather proof, 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. Exception: face changes only cost \$22.

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

A: The [Fee Schedule Brochure](#) for permits and associated services is found at CharlotteCounty.gov. In the left column below "Popular Links", click the "Permitting & Licensing" link. Next, in the left column below "Building Construction", click on the "[Fee Schedule Brochure](#)" link.

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

A: Fee payments may be made as follows:

1. *In-Person:* payments may be made by cash, check, Mastercard or Visa credit/debit cards.
2. *Phone 941.743.1201:* payments may be made by Mastercard or Visa credit/debit cards.
3. *Online (licensed contractors):* go to secureapps.charlottecountyfl.gov/CitizenAccess. Contactor's must first enroll for an account to use this service.

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 Is a drainage as-built survey required for a shed?

A: If the shed is greater than 250 sq. ft., then a drainage as-built survey from a professional surveyor is required. In addition, if this size shed is in a flood zone, then an Elevation Certificate would be required also.

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

A: Visit the Property Appraiser's website ccappraiser.com 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 "Taxing District" field. If tax districts 149 through 156 are displayed, the property is in the city limits.

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 nor plumbing and which also complies with the Zoning Ordinance. Please contact the Zoning office at 941.743.1964 or PlanningZoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

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 application package is found by visiting CharlotteCountyFL.gov and in the left column click on "Permitting and Licensing" and then in the left column click on "Forms & Documents." Next, scroll down the page to the "Zoning Forms & Documents." Click this link: charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Documents/AppTempUsePermit.pdf for the TUP application package as well. The review process begins with the submittal of the TUP application package to the Zoning Section of Community Development located at 18400 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. For more information, please contact the Zoning Section at 941.743.1964 or PlanningZoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Please also contact Public Works at 941.575.3600 for information about road or street closing authorization.

Q7-21: Where on your website can forms be found?

A: Forms for permitting, licensing, zoning and planning are found at CharlotteCountyFL.gov and below "Popular Links" in the left column click Permitting & Licensing and then in the left column click "Forms & Documents."

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

A: Please follow these instructions:

1. Visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov.
2. In the left column under "Popular Links", click "Online Permits, Licensing & Code Violations."
3. In the middle column, at the bottom, click the elongated button "Online Services: Permits, Licenses & Code Violations."

4. Scroll down to the “What would you like to do today?” heading and under the “Building” heading click “Search Permits.” This takes you to the “Search for Permits” page.
5. Permits can be searched by the following: Permit Number, Street Number & Street Name (i.e. Address), Contractor’s Business Name, or Contractor License Number.
6. Helpful Hint! If searching by street address, only type the Street Number in the first Street Number field (with the word “From” in it). For the Street Name field, only type the first 3 or 4 letters of the street name.
7. Scroll down the left side of the page and near the bottom, click the green “Search” button.
8. If the search was made by Permit Number, information about that permit will be displayed. Click the “Record Info” tab (upper left of the page) which will display a drop-down list of options such as:
 - a. To view or track plan review status, click “Review Status.”
 - b. To view attachments or documents, click “Attachments.”
 - c. To view or track inspections, click “Inspections.”
 - d. To check if an inspection is scheduled as well as the inspector’s name, click “Inspections” and review the “Upcoming” list. To check inspection results, review the “Completed” list.
9. To view Plan Review Comments, scroll down the page & click the teal colored button on the left labeled “View Review Status/Comments.”
10. If the search was made by other search options, e.g. by “Address”, a downloadable (Excel spreadsheet) list of all permits at that address will be displayed. From the “Permit Number” column, click any permit number (teal colored) for information about that permit.

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

A: Please visit our website at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Then in the left column below “Popular Links,” click on “Permitting & Licensing”. Next, in the left column below “Building Construction,” click on “[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 Florida Regulations 61G15-23.004). 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, Entrust, Globalsign and Verisign or another provider approved by the Florida Engineer’s Board (see Florida Regulations 61G15-23.004).

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 as 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: What is needed for Solar PV System permits?

A: Please click this link for required documents:

www.charlottecountyfl.gov/services/buildingconstruction/Pages/PermitType.aspx?PermitType=Residential%20Solar%20Photovoltaic. Please note that 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, FSEC certification of PV system and components or engineered signed and sealed plans are required.

Q7.29: 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.

Q7.30: 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.

Section 8 – Planning.

Q8.1: What is the Comprehensive Plan?

A: The County's Comprehensive Plan, "Smart Charlotte 2050," was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 20, 2010. 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. The County's Comprehensive Plan can be viewed at CharlotteCountyFL.gov. Then in the left column below "Popular Links" click the "Departments" link. Then

in the left column below “Departments” click the “Community Development” link. Then below “Community Development” click on the [“Comprehensive Planning”](#) link.

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

A: Please visit our Interactive Map Gallery page. Go to [CharlotteCountyFL.gov](#) and in the left column under “Popular Links,” click on “Departments.” Next, in the left column below “Departments click on “Community Development.” Next, in the middle column, click on “Special Projects Division.” Then in the middle column, click on the elongated button named [“Interactive Map Gallery.”](#) Lastly, look for and click on the “New Development” app button.

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 [ccmpo.com/wp/](#).

Section 9 – Septic Tanks.

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

A: Septic tank permits are issued by 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 in Port Charlotte. Their website is [charlotte.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-disposal/index.html](#).

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 in Port Charlotte. Their website is [charlotte.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-disposal/index.html](#).

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. The Health Department 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](#). Severe pruning, such as tree "topping," "hatracking," and "lollipopping" 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.

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 Section staff at 941.743.1964 or PlanningZoning@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: Buffers, Landscaping and Tree Requirements of the [Code or Laws and Ordinances](#) for more information about exemptions and requirements

Section 11 – Zoning.

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

A: No. The Zoning Ordinance does not allow occupancy in a temporary structure or vehicle (e.g. RV, shipping or storage container, tent, etc.) until the primary structure (home) is completed and issued a Certificate of Occupancy.

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

A: No. However, they are allowed on agriculturally zoned property.

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

A: This is handled at the Property Appraiser’s office. Their office is in the five-story Administration Center Building at 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948. Their website is ccappraiser.com.

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 (MMTCDF's) any different than pharmacies, except for the 500-foot buffer around elementary, middle or high schools. Also, under state law, any MMTCDF must be vertically integrated with one of the approved licensed growing operations located in the State of Florida.

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

A: Call the Zoning Section at 941.743.1964. Zoning staff can look up the zoning district of the property and provide information about allowable uses and setbacks or direct the person to the [Code of Laws and Ordinances](#) to research on their own. Chapter 3-9 contains the Zoning and Land Development regulations by zoning district. Zoning districts can also be viewed online at the Charlotte County GIS (Geographic Information System) website. CharlotteCountyFL.gov/services/gis/ . In the middle column, select the "Enter Mapping Site" button. At the next page, select the "Continue" button to accept the "Disclaimer." In the upper left of the page, enter the address in the search field and the go to the "Layer Icon" (looks like three sheets of stacked paper) in the upper right of the page and scroll down and checkmark the "Zoning" layer. Then select the search icon to perform the search.

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

A: Yes. The same requirements for a new application apply to a renewal.

Q11.7: In AG zoning, can a metal building be placed exceeding 1500 sq. ft.?

A: Yes, if it doesn't exceed the 10% of the lot size.

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

A: Yes, if it is for agricultural purposes only and the property is certified as agriculture by the Property Appraiser.

Q11.9: Are shipping containers allowed on RSF or MHC zoned property for storage?

A: No.

Section 12 – Miscellaneous.

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

A: The 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 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.