

Understanding Waterloo bylaws



Great neighbourhoods start with you.



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NEIGHBOURHOODS WEBSITE

Check out the [neighbourhoods website](#) to find more how-to guides, find your neighbourhood and subscribe to the e-newsletter.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This material is available in alternative accessible format upon request. Please contact us a minimum of 3-5 business days before it is required.

GUIDE VERSION

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What are bylaws and why do we have them?

Bylaws are created to regulate and maintain safety and visual standards in the City of Waterloo. These detailed documents describe specific expectations for activities that happen across the City, such as removing snow, maintaining your lawn, or starting a business.

In order to help community members understand different bylaws, the neighbourhoods team has created this how-to guide. Bylaws can be complicated and difficult to understand, which is why we encourage neighbours to learn about Waterloo bylaws together.

This guide does not include all of the details on bylaws in Waterloo, as some information can change. If you are interested in reviewing full versions of bylaws, visit the [online directory](#). Failure to follow the regulations set out in each bylaw may result in penalties which are given at the discretion of the Municipal Bylaw Enforcement Officer and the City of Waterloo.

If you have any questions about the bylaws, contact the [Municipal Bylaw Enforcement Team](#). For neighbourhood-specific questions, the [neighbourhoods team](#) is here to help.



Who is responsible for support?

This guide was created to help community members understand the City of Waterloo and the Region of Waterloo's bylaws.

The City of Waterloo and the Region of Waterloo have different roles and responsibilities when it comes to bylaws. Some bylaws are created and enforced at the City level and apply to Waterloo residents. Other bylaws are created at the Regional level and apply to all residents throughout the Region (Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and the Townships).

Refer to the information in this guide and other local resources like the [City of Waterloo](#) and [Region of Waterloo](#) webpages, social media, and bylaws for further details on topics.

Animals

LIVESTOCK

The [Animal Control Bylaw](#) regulates the kinds of animals that are permitted in the City and the residential use of non-domestic animals.

Keeping farm animals such as cattle, horses, mules, goats, swine, sheep, mink, chickens, hens, roosters, fox, nutria, and others, is not permitted outside of areas zoned for

agriculture. If you have questions about agricultural zones in your area, refer to the [zoning map](#), or you can email the [zoning department](#).

Roosters are strictly prohibited outside of areas zoned for agriculture.

Hens

Backyard hens are permitted in residential areas with exceptions and regulations under the [Animal Control Bylaw](#) and [Animals and Pets Regulations](#).

People who wish to keep hens in their backyard can register up to 4 hens for a fee. Registrations must be renewed each year. Hen registry can be done via mail or in person by downloading the [application](#), or through the [online form](#) on the City of Waterloo website.

All hens must be kept on residential properties only, with the permission of everyone living on the property.

Habitats:

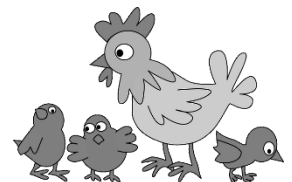
Hen coops are regulated for the protection of people and the animals. All hen coops and runs must:

- Be fully enclosed.
- Be in the rear yard, set back 1.5 metres from property lines
- Provide protection from weather and predators.
- Have an accessible dust bath area.
- Be lined with straw or shavings.
- Be cleaned daily and disinfected twice a year.

Hen regulations:

- All hens must be banded with the owners contact information.
- They must be enclosed at all times, have access to an enclosed run area. Hens may not roam free on the property.
- They must be disposed of at a livestock facility.
- They cannot be slaughtered on your property.
- The sale of eggs and hen products is not allowed.

It is important to do the right research before purchasing any hens, especially about maintenance standards, preventing illness and disease, and avoiding pests and predators. Check out this [Facebook group](#) to connect with other owners and learn more about raising and caring for hens.



Honeybees

Backyard honeybees can be a sweet source of homemade honey! Although there is no official bylaw in Waterloo about keeping honeybees, the Government of Ontario has released the Bee Act which regulates honeybees and hives within the province.

All honeybees and bee keeping equipment must be registered each year with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs' Apiary Program.



Did you know that the City of Waterloo is the 12th Bee City in Canada? This means the City is committed to preserving and creating pollinator habitats and populations!

Regulations from the Bee Act:

- All bee hives are to be located at least 30 metres from any property, including residential dwellings, parks, and other public gathering/recreation areas). Hives cannot be within 10 metres of a highway, whether or not they contain bees.
- Any pests or diseases in the colony must be reported to a local apiary inspector.
- All hives must have movable frames to allow easy access to the interior of the brood nest.
- Beekeepers must post a sign within each apiary that identifies the beekeeper and/or the inspector. Signs must be at least 24 centimetres high and 50 centimetres wide, with the beekeeper's name and address.

DOG LICENCES

Dog licences help the City reunite dog owners with lost pets. The Animal Control Bylaw is designed to have a list of registered dogs for the safety of the animals and people.

All dogs older than 12 weeks must be licenced, and their tag must be worn on the collar at all times. Cats do not have to be registered, but they are expected to be kept in a manner that does not impact neighbouring properties.

To learn more about dog licenses and how buy one, check out this webpage.

PET NUISANCES

Pet nuisances can be a disturbance to a neighbourhood. The Animal Control Bylaw outlines how to report pet-related issues, such as strays and animals locked in cars. To learn more about reporting animal issues, check out this webpage. Concerns about pet nuisance and animal well-being, contact the following:

Contact the Humane Society at 519-745-5615 to report:

- Off-leash or stray pets
- A lost/found pet

- A dog bite
- A dead domestic animal
- Dead wildlife on public property (no pickup fee)
- Dead wildlife on private property (pickup fees may apply)

Contact the Province of Ontario at 1-833-926-4625 to report animals that:

- Are injured, in pain, sick, suffering, or abused
- Lack proper care, water, food, or shelter

Contact the municipal enforcement at 519-747-8785 to report:

- Excessive barking or other dog noise

Contact the Waterloo Regional Police non-emergency line at 519-570-9777 to report:

- A pet locked in a hot vehicle (have location, licence plate, make and model of the vehicle ready)

If a dog is deemed a danger, appropriate measures may be taken to ensure public safety.

Around the City

ANTI-IDLING

The Anti-Idling Bylaw regulates the idling of vehicles in the City. Idling is when a vehicle is parked but the engine is still on. It is prohibited to leave a vehicle idling for more than 3 minutes (with some exceptions).

BOULEVARDS

The Highway Occupancy Act regulates the construction, maintenance, and protection of boulevards within the City.

If a person wants to alter the boulevard connected to their land, they may have to obtain a permit.

- Permits are not required for planting approved herbaceous plants that do not exceed a height of 76 centimetres. Height restrictions encourage safe driving and make sure sight lines are maintained.
- Planting herbaceous plants within a buffer strip is not allowed. A buffer strip is the 76 centimetres of land on the boulevard between a driveway, curb, sidewalk and/or boulevard infrastructure.

The following visual changes are not permitted:

- Placing herbaceous plants within a buffer strip.
- Placing inorganic ground covers consisting of stone or gravel that exceed 19 millimetres in diameter within the buffer strip or boulevard.
- Installing irrigation systems in the boulevard without written permission from the City.



Herbaceous plants refers to any plant with flexible, green stems with little to no woody parts. Some examples include: wild geraniums, switch grass, heath asters, and bloodroot.

CITY TREE PROTECTION

City trees are good for the environment, create shade, and add to the beauty of the city. The City Tree Bylaw protects City trees from damage from activities, such as pruning or gardening. It also prevents residents from planting trees on city property without permission.

Any changes or treatment to City trees must be approved by the City. If any changes occur without a permit, fees and penalties may apply.

GRAFFITI

Graffiti is defined as vandalism that is the result of etching, painting, or placing a mark of any kind on public or private property. The City's Anti-Graffiti Bylaw prohibits graffiti on a property, by the property owner or the public, and outlines the powers of inspection and compliance options.

Individuals who are found guilty of graffiti may be subject to financial penalties such as fines, and charges may be laid.

Hate graffiti is a serious offence that should be reported to the Waterloo Regional Police at their non-emergency line 519-570-9777. For non-hate or gang related graffiti, contact the bylaw office at 519-747-8785 or municipal-enforcement@waterloo.ca.

PARKING

The Traffic and Parking Bylaw outlines rules around parking, stopping, and driving in Waterloo.

Fire Route

The Fire Route Bylaw outlines how the City designates fire routes and establishes the rules around parking, stopping, and signage. You can find a list of all fire routes in Waterloo the bylaw.

If a fire route sign has been posted, no person is allowed to:

- Park or stop a motor vehicle in the fire route
- Place an object in the fire route; and
- Interfere with, deface, cover, or remove a fire route sign except with permission from the city.

It is also illegal to post any signage that resembles a fire route sign except for along an actual Fire Route.

The City has the right to remove any motor vehicle that is in the way of the Fire Route at the cost of the owner of the vehicle. Other penalties may apply, at the discretion of the Municipal Bylaw Enforcement Office and the City of Waterloo. See an image of a Fire Route sign below:



Fire Route sign

Parking on Private Property

Parking on private property, such as businesses and commercial properties is dependent on the permission of the property owner.

Parking without consent can result in the vehicle being towed and impounded at the cost of the owner of the vehicle, fees, and other penalties that are subject to change at the discretion of the City. Where signs are posted, the owner of the vehicle will have to follow the rules on the sign, and understand they are responsible under the conditions posted on the sign.

Parking in Yards

The Parking in Yards Bylaw prohibits parking on organic matter (like grass, dirt, etc.) in front and back yards. Parking on the grass damages the soil and makes it hard for plants to grow in the future.

Street Parking

Parking on residential streets is permitted, with restrictions, under the Traffic and Parking Bylaw, unless signs stating otherwise are posted (e.g. “No Parking”).

During the day, vehicles are permitted to park for 3 hours straight, unless signs are posted. Vehicles cannot block a sidewalk or curbs, and they cannot be within 1.5 metres of a driveway.

Overnight parking on City streets and lots is prohibited from 2:30 am to 6:00 am. Overnight parking exemptions are permitted 15 times per year, per license plate on City streets or in select lots, listed below:

- [Station Lot](#) (free)
- [Waterloo Town Square North Lot](#) (free)
- [Waterloo Town Square South Lot](#) (free)

You must register your vehicle by 2:15 am on the night of the exemption. Apply for an overnight parking exemption on the [City's webpage](#).



Did you know that there are a number of parking lots in Uptown Waterloo for community use? Check out the map and lot details [here](#).

Winter Street Parking

Snow events are declared during the winter months when the City expects a large amount of snow that will need to be cleared. During a snow event, parking is not allowed on any street at any time, even if the road has been plowed.

During a snow event, residents must remove cars from the streets by midnight, or they risk being ticketed and towed. Parking on the streets is strictly prohibited unless the snow event has been cancelled. Snow bans last a minimum of 24 hours, but can be extended longer if necessary. You can sign up for service alerts [here](#) or visit the City of Waterloo's [social media](#) for updates during snowy weather.

PUBLIC PARKS

Public parks are great places to host events, enjoy the weather, and spend your time outdoors. To promote community safety and the maintenance of our parks there are rules that impact activities that can take place at public parks in the City of Waterloo. One key rule is that parks are closed between 11 pm to 6 am and cannot be used during these hours.

Parks are owned by the City of Waterloo and are public property for the community to enjoy. If you are organizing an event in a park, you are required to reserve the space and purchase necessary insurance coverage. To do this, complete this [online booking form](#) and staff at the City will help support this process. If you are just meeting some friends for a walk, playing on the playground with family, or casually gathering to enjoy the greenspace, no reservation is required.



If you are looking to host a neighbourhood event in a public park, contact the [neighbourhoods team](#) to find out more information about event planning. You can also check out the [Planning a Neighbourhood Event](#) guide.

The City expects all people in the park to respect the space, wildlife (including nests, dens, or spawning grounds), vegetation, and the people in it. This means not engaging in harmful, disruptive, violent, or threatening behaviour of any kind, including the removal or destruction of park equipment and graffiti. Disturbing, hindering, or obstructing the operation of an authorized event in a park space is also not allowed.

Open fires and burning solid fuel is not allowed, unless you are following the community campfire permits and [process for neighbourhood events](#). Propane BBQs are permitted in certain rented park areas. Please discuss details with City staff when booking an event. Charcoal BBQs are not permitted per the city's [Open Air Fire Bylaw](#).



The City of Waterloo has a community campfire kit that can be reserved for neighbourhood events in parks. For more information and to apply for this, please reach out to the [neighbourhoods team](#) at least 30 days before your event. We can help you explore the possibility of using this kit in your local neighbourhood park.

Certain recreational activities are prohibited in parks, including archery, axe throwing, hunting, fishing and skateboarding outside of skate parks. Check out the [Municipal Parks Bylaw](#) for a full list of restricted and prohibited activities in public parks.

Events

FIREWORKS

Fireworks can be a fun addition to a holiday event. The sale and use of fireworks is regulated by the [Fireworks Bylaw](#). For information about fireworks in the City of Waterloo, check out the [fireworks website](#).

Fireworks can only be used during Victoria Day, Canada Day, Lunar New Year, and Diwali. Fireworks can only be used between 9 pm and 11 pm on Victoria Day and Canada Day and 8 pm and 10 pm on Lunar New Year and Diwali.

Fireworks must be set off on private property where you are the owner, or have written permission from the owner. Persons setting off the fireworks must be 18 years of age or older.

If you are interesting in planning a display firework show at a neighbourhood event, refer to the [City of Waterloo Fireworks](#) webpage for more information.



NOISE

The [Noise Bylaw](#) sets out minimum standards for noise and vibrations in the City of Waterloo, and it provides general regulations on sound levels and the sources of sound. This includes sounds coming from residential air conditioning or pool pumps, gatherings (yelling, shouting, hooting), or musical instruments, especially in any house, apartment house, hotel, other residence, or a business.

It is important to be respectful of the people around you, especially when it comes to noise. Some people are more sensitive to sounds, or they have small children or animals. Be considerate of the level of noise you are creating.



If you know you will be creating a loud noise, let your neighbours know ahead of time. This will encourage positive relationships with your neighbours, and reduce complaints related to the noise.

Some City events and activities are exempt from noise restrictions, and noise restrictions vary depending on the activity. Examples include emergency vehicles, City traffic maintenance like painting machines and street cleaners, and bells or chimes from public buildings.

If you are interested in hosting an event that violates the noise bylaw, you must apply for a noise exemption and get additional approval from the municipal enforcement team. Check out this [webpage](#) to learn more about applying for a noise exemption. If you are unsure if you will need a noise exemption, reach out to [municipal services](#) to chat about your event or activity.

To file a noise complaint, call 519-747-8785. If the noise is taking place on a University campus, call:

- 519-888-4911 for University of Waterloo
- 519-885-3333 for Wilfrid Laurier University

NUISANCE

The [Nuisance Bylaw](#) sets out minimum standards in relation to:

- Foul odours in public places
- Excessive smoke, dust, or airborne particulate matter in public places
- Spitting, vomiting, urinating, or defecating in public places
- Dumping or littering in public places
- Blocking the passage of a pedestrian on a highway or public property

Nuisance complaints can be made by calling municipal enforcement at 519-747-8785.

OUTDOOR FIRES

Outdoor fires and burning solid fuels (such as firewood, coal) are not permitted in the City of Waterloo, according to the [Open Air Fire Bylaw](#). This includes backyard campfires and bonfires.

Fire pits are not permitted in the City of Waterloo, except for gas powered outdoor fire places (like fire bowls and tables). Fire pits may be built with a valid permit, but approval is not guaranteed.

Any person may apply to the Chief Fire Prevention Officer (CFPO) to be granted an exemption, but an application is not guaranteed to be approved. Applications for an exemption should be made in writing to the CFPO at least 30 days before the start of the proposed fire using solid fuel. Applications must include:

- Name and address of applicant; and of the organization represented by the applicant (if applicable)
- The purpose of having a fire using solid fuel
- The date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the proposed fire
- The name of the contact person(s) who will be supervising the fire
- Any applicable fees
- Any other information that the CFPO might request

SIGNS

The [Sign Bylaw](#) regulates where and what types of signs can be placed in public areas.

A [permit](#) is required for both permanent and temporary signs that are put up, located, or displayed within the City of Waterloo, with some exceptions. To apply for a permits for temporary signs, an application must be submitted in person at the municipal enforcement counter at Waterloo City Hall.

Temporary signs, like election or real estate signs, are signs that are put up with the intention of removing them after a certain deadline. Temporary signs must:

- Be directly in front of whatever is being advertised (home for sale, business being promoted)
- Not block the public right of way

Signs can be added to private property, like front lawns, as long as they follow sign rules like size, location, and time period. Below are some common sign guidelines for signs you may see throughout your neighbourhood:

- Election signs cannot be illuminated and should be removed 72 hours after the election.
- Real estate signs can be posted for the duration of the property or unit for sale, rent or lease, plus two weeks for a sold sign.
- Neighbourhood associations signs are an accessory sign placed on the City of Waterloo boulevard by a recognized neighbourhood association advertising a neighbourhood event. They are permitted for a maximum of 10 days prior to the

event start date and a maximum of 1 day after the event end date. For these events, neighbourhood associations can have a maximum of 1 sign per major road entrance into the neighbourhood.

- Murals must get approval from the public art advisory committee.
- Poster signs must be attached to a poster sleeve and must be smaller than 35.56 centimetres wide and 53.34 centimetres long. Signs cannot be adhered to poles, trees, bus shelters, Canada Post boxes, traffic signs, and parking signs. Signs must be removed at the end of each month.

Failure to adhere to the rules set out in the bylaw may result in the removal of the sign or other penalties which are subject to change. If you want a sign back that was removed by the City, owners may visit the Municipal Enforcement Services office within 30 days to collect their sign and pay any applicable fees. Signs stored longer than 30 days may be disposed of without notice.

To report a sign, fill out the [form](#) on the City of Waterloo's website.

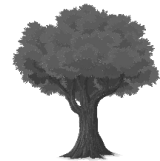
Household

HEDGES AND TREES

The City of Waterloo regulates the height and placement of hedges and trees. When planting hedges and trees, it is important to consider visibility and driver safety. For more information about this, visit the [Tree Bylaw](#).

Trees in the City do not have maximum height restrictions, as long as they are not touching power lines or posing a risk to the neighbouring houses.

The City has partnered with Reep Green Solutions to encourage planting trees in backyards at a reduced price. If you are interested in learning more about requesting a backyard tree, refer to [Reep's Website](#).



HOUSEHOLD WASTE

The [Household Waste Bylaw](#) is a Region of Waterloo bylaw that outlines the classifications of curbside material and how to properly dispose of household waste. There are certain bylaws that are region-wide, and others that are for the city. For details on regional bylaws, check out the [Region of Waterloo website](#).

Curbside material is either recyclable material or non-recyclable material. All owners expected to separate collectible material according to its class.

Recyclable Material:

- Blue box material (paper, plastic, metal)
- Christmas trees
- Green bin material (organics, paper towel, biodegradable substances)

- Large metal items
- Yard waste material

Collectable green bins can only include natural, biodegradable materials, such as:

- Food scraps
- Paper products
- Household plant waste
- Wood ashes
- Pet waste that is wrapped in paper or a certified compostable bag

Non-Recyclable Material:

- Bulky items (carpets, rugs, mats, underlay, drywall, counter tops, flooring, and wood)
- Garbage



Some items are restricted to certain days for pickup throughout the year. Check out the Region of Waterloo's [waste management website](#) for details on collection days, report a collection issue, or use the [Waste Whiz](#) app to search an item to learn how to sort, recycle, or dispose of it.

All collectible material should be placed at the curb by 7am on collection day. Garbage should not be placed at the curb any earlier than 5pm the day prior.

Complaints regarding waste collection can be directed to the [Region of Waterloo](#).

The following waste facilities are available for waste drop-off during their operating hours. Fees to deposit material will apply and are subject to change at the discretion of the Region of Waterloo.

- 925 Erb Street West, Waterloo
- 201 Savage Drive, Cambridge

INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive plants can damage native plant and animal species in Ontario. Invasive plants tend to take over, killing other plants. The best way to protect our native biodiversity is by removing all invasive species, and only planting native plants. Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has created a [list of invasive plants](#) that are not allowed to be planted across the province.

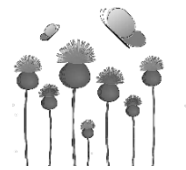
Noxious weeds are a harmful weed that damages crops, natural habitats, ecosystems, and can injure humans and animals. According to the [Lot Maintenance Bylaw's](#) section regarding [trees, weeds, and yard regulations](#), individuals are required keep their yard free from noxious weeds, such as [giant hogweed](#), [poison ivy](#), and ragweed.

If you find an invasive plant that is not classified as a noxious weed, you can report it through the Province's [invasive species webpage](#).

Giant hogweed is one of the primary invasive species that the City of Waterloo is working to combat. It is dangerous to pets and people, which is why it must be removed. For more information about safely removing giant hogweed, refer to the Province's [Giant Hogweed Disposal page](#). If you believe you have spotted giant hogweed on public property:

- Use this [reference guide](#) to confirm that it is giant hogweed.
- Confirm the location is in the [City of Waterloo](#).
- Take a picture of the plant and send it to the [Environmental team](#) along with location details.

If you are looking to enhance the native biodiversity on your property, check out to the Province's [Grow Me Instead Guide](#) or [visit Bee City Canada](#) for information on native plants for pollinators!



LOT MAINTENANCE

The [Lot Maintenance Bylaw](#) regulates the basic standards for grass cutting, garbage, wood storage, weed control, and material disposal standards. This bylaw encourages safe neighbourhoods.

Regulations include:

Outdoor storage of compost:

- When using a composter on a private property, compost must be kept in a proper compost container with a sealed lid to prevent odours from disturbing other residents. Food waste must be covered with yard waste, soil, or compost.
- Bones, meat, dairy, other fat products, domestic animal waste cannot be added to a backyard composter. These can be included in your green bin for household waste pick up.
- Composters must be located at least 60 centimetres away from a property line.

Vehicle storage:

- Vehicles that do not have a valid license plate and cannot be driven must be parked in a building like a garage. These vehicles can only be parked in certain areas where it is permitted by the [Zoning Bylaw](#). Check out the [interactive zoning map](#) for more information.
- Machinery, vehicles, boats, trailer, or parts of them that are unusable, wrecked, discarded, dismantled, partially dismantled, or abandoned cannot be stored on a lot by an owner or occupant unless it is permitted by the Zoning Bylaw.

Wood storage:

- Firewood is to be stored in a side or rear yard, at least 60 centimetres from every property line.
- Wood cannot exceed 60 centimetres in length.
- Firewood must be stacked in an orderly pile.

- On properties that are less than 0.4 hectares, firewood piles cannot exceed 1.5 metres in height or cover an area larger than 6 square metres.
- On properties that are equal to or greater than 0.4 hectares, firewood piles cannot cover an area greater than 15 square metres.

The City is allowed to enter a property to inspect the conditions and make sure the property adheres to the conditions in the bylaw.

GRASS AND WEEDS

The Lot Maintenance Bylaw sets out regulations about the length of the grass and condition of a person's lawn.

Did you know that grass or weeds that are higher than 20 centimetres is a violation of the lot maintenance bylaw? Failure to cut your grass or let it grow past the maximum height can result in an officer ordering the owner to cut their grass or having the city cut it at the owner's expense.



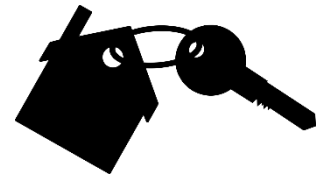
PROPERTY STANDARDS

The Property Standards Bylaw defines the standards for maintaining a property in the City of Waterloo. All properties are expected to be maintained, and all dwellings should be in a state of good repair. The bylaw includes regulations for the outdoor environment of a property, building standards (general, non-residential, residential, rental properties, heritage sites), construction, and fire/storm damage. Refer to sections 4.0-12.0 for full information about the items covered in the bylaw.

The bylaw covers information about, but not limited to:

- Air quality (air conditioning, heating, ventilation)
- Mould
- Unsafe conditions
- Driveways, ramps, and parking garages
- Lighting
- Accessory buildings
- Fences
- Interior, exterior, and retaining walls, floors, and ceilings
- Indoor and outdoor storage of refuse or recyclable material
- Sign installation and maintenance standards
- Swimming pools
- Stairs, handrails, and guards
- Pest prevention

You can check out the [Being a Good Landlord](#) how-to guide for more information on ensuring a safe and welcoming property that can be enjoyed by owners and renters.



WATER DRAINAGE

Draining water away from your property will help to prevent water damage to the home. It is important to consider where your water is draining, and how your house is set up to prevent flooding and water damage. The [Property Standards Bylaw](#) outlines proper drainage maintenance.

Water can be drained from eaves troughs, downspouts or sump pump discharge lines, but cannot be directed at neighbouring houses. Contact the [Municipal Bylaw Enforcement team](#) if you have any questions.

The Ministry of the Environment has created a [guide](#) to understanding stormwater management, which outlines different ways of managing stormwater on your property.

Stormwater is runoff that flows over hard surfaces, like your roof, and then goes into creeks, ponds, and wetlands. Because stormwater is untreated water, it can be damaging to wetlands and ecosystems in the City.

To help reduce the impacts of stormwater, the City offers a discount on the stormwater fee on your utility bill, dependent on the runoff control measures on your property. Some examples of approved management practices include:

- Rain barrels and cisterns
- Trees
- Infiltration galleries, soakaway pits, dry wells, and French drains
- Permeable pavers
- Rain gardens

For more information and to apply, check out the [apply for a stormwater credit](#) webpage.

SPORTING EQUIPMENT

Sports equipment, including basketball nets, hockey nets, and more, are not allowed to be on a boulevard or roadway because they can cause damage to other people's property, and can be dangerous for children to play on the road. Information about sporting equipment on the road along a boulevard is included in the [Highway Occupancy Bylaw](#).

If a complaint is made to a Municipal Bylaw Enforcement Officer, the owner of the equipment may be ordered to remove the equipment from the street or boulevard.

SNOW AND ICE

The [Snow and Ice Removal Bylaw](#) states that property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from the sidewalks adjacent to their property within 24 hours of accumulation. Snow also cannot be placed on a road or highway.

A person who does not shovel the snow and ice from their sidewalk, and fails to protect the sidewalk from ice (e.g., placing salt on the sidewalk), may receive a notice from the City to remove the snow/ice. If a person fails to follow a notice to remove snow and ice, the City may perform the clean-up at the property owner's expense. View more details on the [snow removal webpage](#). If you see a neighbour struggling to clear their snow and ice, offer to help!

Waterloo Region relies on groundwater for drinking water. Over time, the salt we put on the ground can end up in our drinking water. Review the [Snow and Ice Clearing Tips for Homeowners](#) guide for resources on what to use instead of salt, tips for when you do use salt, and other resources about salt.



SWIMMING POOLS

Swimming pools are a fun addition to backyards, and pool enclosures make them safe and private. It is important to make sure pool enclosures meet the proper requirements set out in the [Pool Enclosure Bylaw](#).

Before building a pool and enclosure, a permit from the City is required. If your pool had an enclosure built before 2013 that adhered to previous bylaws (i.e., Bylaw 05-88), a new permit is not required. However, if your pool enclosure needs replacement or alterations, the new enclosure must be constructed according to this bylaw and a permit is required.

Pool enclosure permit forms can be accessed [here](#), but the permits must be submitted in person.

You cannot construct a pool in your backyard without a Pool Enclosure Permit, and all pools and hot tubs must be completely enclosed by a pool enclosure in accordance with the bylaw. Requirements include:

- Enclosures must be at least 1.52 metres high.
- Enclosures cannot have an opening that is greater than 3.8 centimetres (big enough for a 4 inch sphere to enter).
- Enclosures cannot be more than 5 centimetres above the ground, and the ground beneath cannot be loose gravel or other material that can be removed to access under the pool enclosure.
- Horizontal structural members must be located inside (pool side) of the enclosure to prevent easy climbing.
- All gates must be able to support 200lbs (90.72 kg) in body weight and must be equipped with a self closing or self-latching device and a lock.

For information about chain link fences, wooden lattices, and horizontal slats, refer to the [Pool Enclosure Bylaw](#).

Enclosures are not required for:

- Above ground pools with a guard that aligns with section 15.0 of the bylaw
- Pools that cannot hold more than 0.6 metres in depth

Temporary fencing is required during construction of an existing enclosure (if not already in place).



Did you know that the City of Waterloo offers a variety of swim lessons to help support swim skills and safety? Find out registration dates and program details on the [register for programs and activities](#) page.

Licensing

BUSINESS LICENSING

All businesses in Waterloo require a licence to operate, unless they are regulated by a different governing body (for example, doctors). The [Business Licensing Bylaw](#) outlines rules and steps required to operate a legally licensed business in the City. All businesses must comply with the Business Licensing Bylaw, applicable fire, zoning regulations, and all other municipal, provincial, and federal regulations.

Licences are non-transferrable if a business is sold or moves to a new location.

Licence applications require:

- A completed application, either through the [online form](#) or a hard copy
- Business owner authorization letter, if applicant is not the business owner
- [Certificate of insurance form](#) completed by an insurer or insurance broker
- Proof of business status, depending on the kind of ownership (sole proprietor, partnership, corporation)

Various applications require additional documents, which are outlined on the application form. Businesses that require multiple licenses must apply for each separately.

Some businesses require an original copy of a criminal records check issued in the past six months. These can be obtained at your local police service or [online](#).

For a full list of licences required for different businesses, check out the [Business Licensing Bylaw](#).

You must renew your business licence annually. To help you remember, the city will email the address associated with your business a reminder of the upcoming expiry. You can renew your licence through the City's [online portal](#).

HOME-BASED BUSINESS

Home-based businesses require a business licence. A home-based business occurs when a permanent resident of a home conducts business out of their home, by providing a good or service from their residence.

In order to apply for a home-based business licence, you will need the following:

- Copy of [criminal record check](#)
- Proof that the applicant lives in the house associated with the business
- A floor plan of the entire dwelling unit with accurate measurements
- A parking plan showing the location of employee and customer parking

LOTTERY SALES

Lottery sales are done in partnership with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), which regulates lottery licenses. Lottery licences are required for raffles, betting, bingo, bazaars, and break-open tickets.

Want to learn more about charitable gaming lottery licensing? Visit the [AGCO](#) webpage.



Lottery licences are only available in person. If you have any questions about the application process, contact the [Municipal Enforcement team](#).

MARKETS

Flea Markets and Farmers Markets are a place where a group of people sell or offer to sell goods or services to the general public. The [Business Licensing Bylaw](#) outlines the licence requirement to operate markets in the City of Waterloo.

All markets must be registered with the City according to the Business Licensing guidelines. Applications should be completed alongside:

- The names of all vendors operating at the market
- A description of goods or services offered by the vendors
- A certificate of insurance form completed by an insurer or insurance broker

If you are interested in planning a market in your neighbourhood, reach out to the [neighbourhoods team](#) for support.

Renovations



Looking to start a renovation project? [Reep Green Solutions](#) offers resources for healthy yards, available incentives, and local contractors that can help you take steps towards living sustainably.

DECKS

Decks are regulated by [Zoning Bylaw section 3.D.2](#) the construction, destruction, and modification of decks greater than 0.6 metres above grade, and the construction of a roof over a deck. Building a deck requires a permit and inspections of the plans, footings, frame, and final deck. All construction must adhere to the [Zoning Bylaw](#). Check out the [interactive zoning map](#) to see the zoning requirements for your area.

Permits can be submitted [online](#) or in person. For more information about how to submit an application, check out the [apply for a building permit](#) page.

Regulations around residential decks:

- Decks must be attached to the principal building, but not the front of the building façade.
- The flankage line (side of an exterior lot that borders a street) and side yard setbacks applied to the principal building shall apply to the deck.
- Decks can extend to the rear yard setback by a maximum of 3 metres excluding stairs.
- Decks are prohibited within 4 metres of the rear lot line.
- The area below a deck can be enclosed but not habitable.
- The walking surface of the deck cannot be higher than the floor of the upper story of the primary building.
- The walking surface of the deck that extends into the rear yard is to be a maximum three metres above grade.

Decks with roofs:

- Roofs are permitted above the deck, as long as it complies with the same setbacks applicable to the principle building on the lot
- The area of the deck that is roofed is to be included in the lot coverage calculation. They can be excluded from impervious area calculations if:
 - The spacing between each deck board is at least 3 millimetres.
 - The deck boards are no bigger than 30 centimetres in width.
 - The deck is not roofed.
- No solid material is stored or installed beneath the deck that restricts the drainage of water (e.g. concrete, asphalt).

DRIVEWAY EXTENSIONS

Driveway extensions do not require a permit unless curb cuts are required. Residents are not allowed to alter curbs and will be charged if they do. To request a curb cut, residents must:

- Call 519-886-2310 to book an inspection 2 weeks before construction or landscaping.
- An inspector will come to review the property, and if the request is approved they will leave a permit for the owner to fill out.
- Completed permits can be submitted at the [Waterloo Service Centre](#).

Curb cuts are arranged by the City and work will be complete within two weeks of receiving payment for curb cuts. Prices and fees are subject to change at the discretion of the City.

Some properties have water valves underneath the driveway. Before working on your driveway, the City has to locate the water valves. If your valve needs to be repaired, it can be done so with minimal damage to your driveway.

Driveway extensions cannot be placed in front of a habitable floor space on the first storey of the building, with some exception.

FENCES

The [Fences Bylaw](#) outlines regulations around fence placement, height, material and quality.

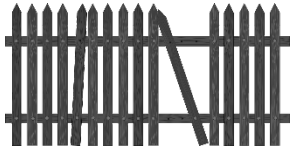
Height:

- The height of a fence in a residential area cannot be higher than:
- 2.44 metres in height in the rear and side yard.
- 0.9 metres in driveway Visibility Triangles and the front yard.
- 1.83 metres in the side of the yard on an exterior lot that borders a street.
- Gates are allowed to exceed height restrictions by a maximum of 1 foot (0.3 metres).

General regulations:

- Fences cannot have any barbed wire or electrified areas.
- Fences made of brick, stone, cement, or masonry that are greater than 0.6 metres in height require a permit from the Chief Building Official of the City.
- Fences must be made with wooden or metal posts of 10 centimetres by 10 centimetres at intervals of no greater than 4.88 metres and sunk into the ground at least 0.6 metres.

Fences do not require permission unless they are made from brick, stone, cement, or masonry and exceed 0.6 metres in height.



Fences impact both you and your neighbours. Consider reaching out to your neighbours if you are thinking about adding a fence, because they might be interested in sharing the cost. Collaborating on these types of projects could be a great way to connect!

PRIVACY SCREENS

According to the [Fences Bylaw](#), privacy screens are allowed as long as they meet the requirements set out in the bylaw.

- They must be at least 0.9 metres from any property line.
- Privacy screens can have a maximum height of 2.44 metres, with some exceptions dependant on placement.
- Privacy screens are not allowed in residential areas for multiple attached dwelling units except on a deck or platform in a rear yard. The maximum height is 2 metres measured from the floor of the deck or platform.
- Privacy screens can only project from a building for a maximum of 3.66 metres.

Privacy screens that do not meet the standards in the bylaw may be given a notice to comply with the bylaw or charges may be laid.

RETAINING WALLS

Retaining walls are covered under the [Property Standards Bylaw](#). A retaining wall is a structure that holds or retains soil behind it.

A guard must be placed on a retaining wall that is taller than 0.6 metres and has an exit, unless access is restricted to the retaining wall.

SHEDS AND ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

Sheds and accessory buildings such as a detached garage may need a building permit if:

- A shed is greater than 15 square metres in area.
- A detached garage exceeds 10 square metres in area.
- The building contains plumbing (this applies to structures of any size).

To learn more about sheds and detached garages, check out this [webpage](#). Permit applications require drawings and documentations, fees, and inspections. For information about obtaining a building permit, check out the City's [Building Permits](#) page.

Accessory buildings, as per the [property standards bylaw](#), are to be:

- Protected by paint, preservative, or other weather-resistant material.
- Structurally sound, upright, and vertical, unless specifically designed to be other than vertical.
- Maintained in a good state of repair and free of accidental hazards.

Rental Properties

Check out our [Being a Good Landlord](#) how-to guide for more information about operating a residential rental property.



ADEQUATE HEAT

The minimum temperature for a rental unit in the City of Waterloo is 21° Celsius, according to the [Adequate Heat Bylaw](#). Owners of a rental unit, which is heated by or at the expense of the owner, must provide minimum heat. Space heaters cannot be used as the main heating source.

An owner who fails to provide minimum heat for their residents may be legally required to improve the heating source to make sure the renters have adequate and suitable heating.

An owner who ignores notices to improve the heating conditions of the unit may be charged and fined, and may be required to pay for repairs conducted by the City.

The bylaw does not regulate maximum heat levels.

RESIDENTIAL RENTAL LICENCES

The [Rental Housing Licensing Bylaw](#) regulates the business of operating low-rise rental housing in the City.



Did you know that low-rise residential rental units require an annual licence to ensure safe accommodations? This includes Airbnb's that are located in a low-rise residential building.

For a full list of required documentation for first time applicants, check out the [residential rental license webpage](#).

Rental licences are required to be renewed yearly. A renewal notice is sent to the registered applicant in advance to remind them that they have to renew. An updated gas/oil inspection form and completed renewal notice is required yearly. Every five years, licensees must additionally submit an updated police criminal record check and an electrical system inspection form. Licences can be revoked, denied, or have conditions placed on it at any time. The Clerks Department is open to appeals on conditions and revoked or denied licences.

SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL

The [Snow and Ice Removal Bylaw](#) outlines information about snow and ice removal. According to the City's [property standards bylaw](#), landlords are responsible for snow and ice removal on private property and sidewalks connected to the residence unless a separate service agreement is in place. Snow and ice must be removed within 24 hours of a snowfall.

BYLAW EDUCATION

Bylaws can be complicated and difficult to understand, which is why we encourage neighbours to learn about Waterloo bylaws together. Some ways you and your neighbours can learn and educate others include:

- Develop a door hanger or social media post to let neighbours know about important bylaws and standards.
- Host learning opportunities to educate neighbours about seasonal bylaws, like snow removal, invasive plant species removal, water drainage, and more.
- Encourage neighbours to be kind when sharing details about bylaws, especially when trying to bring attention to a common issue in your neighbourhood (such as shovelling the sidewalk in the winter).
- When having work done on your property, make sure you understand the regulations and standards set out in the bylaws. Encourage neighbours to do the same.
- Reach out to the [Municipal Enforcement Team](#) if you have any questions or are unsure about something in a bylaw.
- Share this guide with neighbours!

NEED SUPPORT IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

The City of Waterloo is full of neighbours who work together to create a welcoming, inclusive community; however, sometimes it can be difficult to come to an agreement with a neighbour. There are many options to help resolve conflicts and bring the focus back to creating positive, healthy relationships.

Check out our [Preventing and Working through Neighbourhood Conflict](#) guide for information about how to prevent and mediate conflict between neighbours. If you have tried to address a conflict and need additional support, reach out to resources below.

- If you need mediation support between yourself and a neighbour, the City offers mediation services through the [Community Justice Initiative](#).
- Complaints and problems can be reported through the City's [online portal](#) or by contacting the [Municipal Enforcement Team by email](#) or by phone at 519-747-8785.