

# HOME

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## USE OF PROPERTIES IN HALTON HILLS

There are two main documents that govern the way neighbourhoods are organized in Halton Hills – the Official Plan and the zoning by-law.

The Official Plan outlines how the Town makes decisions on land use, setting a strategy to manage future growth in a responsible manner while protecting the cultural heritage and natural environment of Halton Hills.

Zoning By-law 2010-0050 supports the development of harmonious neighbourhoods in Halton Hills. This is done by ensuring that incompatible uses are not allowed on adjacent properties (e.g. industrial manufacturing right beside residential houses) and by setting regulations related to lot size, building types, distances between structures and property lines, and so on. More specific information is provided in other sections of this guide.

All properties in Halton Hills are zoned for a specific type of use:

- Residential (areas where people live);
- Commercial (retail or service businesses);
- Industrial (manufacturing businesses);
- Institutional (hospitals, schools, places of worship);
- Agricultural (farms).

A property cannot be used for a different purpose than the one for which it is zoned. For example, most types of commercial businesses (e.g. auto repair garage) cannot be operated from a property that is zoned residential. The exception to this is when the use is allowed as a home occupation permitted under the zoning by-law.



Illegal truck terminal operating from an agricultural-zoned property

For more information about permitted use, requirements, and restrictions of the zoning by-law contact Zoning Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2320.

### Applying for a variance

There may be a circumstance where a property owner wants to ask for a variance to a regulation in the zoning by-law. To do so, an application for a minor variance must be submitted to the Committee of Adjustment.

The committee deals with requests for minor changes to the zoning by-law (e.g. structure setbacks, height, and size),

permissions to extend, enlarge, or alter a legal non-conforming use (legal non-complying structure), as well as the creation of new lots, lot line adjustments, easements, leases over 21 years, etc. The committee is comprised of members of the community appointed by Council, with assigned authority to deal with various applications. The hearings are held monthly, and are open to the public.

A legal non-conforming Use is the right to continue a particular land use that is no longer permitted under the current zoning regulations.

For more information or to get an application form, contact Planning & Development Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2292 or visit the [Committee of Adjustment webpage](#).

All complaints regarding zoning and the use of a property are investigated by Enforcement Services. To make a complaint, contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [enforcement@haltonhills.ca](mailto:enforcement@haltonhills.ca).

### ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Accessory dwelling units, often referred to as in-law suites or basement apartments, are dwelling units created in addition to a principal residence. Creating a second dwelling unit in your home helps provide housing options for people of all ages and incomes. It's also an opportunity to create a rental space in your home for added income.

A two-unit house (a house with a second dwelling unit) can be:

- A house containing two residential units.
- A residential unit consists of a self-contained set of rooms that:
  - Are located in a building or structure
  - Are used, or can be used, as a separate unit, and
  - Has a means of exit from the building (which may be shared with another residential unit).



### Are two-unit houses legal in Halton Hills?

Provincial legislation, the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, gives municipalities the authority to pass and enforce by-laws. In order to regulate the registration of two-unit houses the Town of Halton Hills passed By-law 2023-0060. The registration of a two-unit house legalizes its existence and ensures that a two-unit building complies with all applicable codes and standards.

The Building Services Division of the Transportation and Public Works Department is responsible for the registration process.

The registration process is designed to protect the owner as well as the inhabitants of the accessory unit from unnecessary hazards. Requirements for accessory dwelling units in a dwelling in non-urban zones include:

- A limit of one (1) accessory unit in a house
- At least one (1) additional parking space must be provided on the property for the accessory unit in addition to the parking or the main unit;
- The size of an accessory unit is limited to 40% of the dwelling or 110 square metres of floor area, whichever is lesser; OR the floor area of a basement.
- The entrance to the accessory unit can be located in the side yard or rear yard, as long as there is a 1.2 metre (4 foot) clear path of travel to the entrance from the front of the house;
- Septic assessment may be required; and
- Compliance with all applicable codes and standards.

Requirements for accessory dwelling units on residential properties in the Settlement Areas that are fully serviced by municipal water and sewage include;

- Maximum two (2) additional units
- At least one (1) additional parking space must be provided on the property for each accessory dwelling unit.
- The size of an accessory unit is limited to 40% of the dwelling or 110 square metres of floor area, whichever is lesser; OR the floor area of a basement.
- The entrance to the accessory unit can be located in the side yard or rear yard, as long as there is a 1.2 metre (4 foot) clear path of travel to the entrance from the front of the house; and
- Compliance with all applicable codes and standards.

Accessory dwelling units that do not comply with either the zoning by-law or other applicable codes and standards will not be permitted to register as a two-unit dwelling. A [list of all legal two-unit dwellings in Halton Hills](#) is available on our municipal website.

If you cannot find the property listed on the Two-Unit Houses Public Registry and suspect an illegal accessory unit, contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [enforcement@haltonhills.ca](mailto:enforcement@haltonhills.ca).

When raising a concern about a potentially illegal accessory unit, please have answers to the following questions:

- Have you ever been in the house or accessory unit?
- Has there been any new construction at the house?
- Did you observe a second kitchen in the house or 3-piece bathroom in the accessory unit?
- Was the accessory unit separated from the main house by a wall or locked door?

For more information visit the [permits and applications section of our Building Services webpage](#).

## BUILDING AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

The Property Standards By-law 2008-0137 outlines the minimum standards for living in and taking care of all properties within Halton Hills. These standards are enforced to ensure the safety and desirability of the community.

Items covered under the Property Standards By-law include, but are not limited to:

- Vacant, unoccupied and damaged buildings and accessory buildings;
- Roofs, eaves troughs, downpipes, soffits and fascias;
- Occupancy standards for buildings and dwelling units;
- Maintenance of yard areas;
- Interior and exterior doors and windows, walls and ceilings;
- Structural soundness, foundation walls and basement, cellar or crawl space;
- Snow removal for multi-residential, industrial, institutional and commercial properties;
- Dead, decayed or damaged trees, branches or other natural growth;
- Fences, retaining walls, sound barrier walls and other barriers;
- Garbage and debris storage and disposal;



Debris on a residential property

### Hiring a contractor

If you hire a contractor or tradesperson to complete work on your property (e.g. renovations, repairs, landscaping), the Town recommends you make sure the company or person has a licence to do the work. The Town's Business Licensing By-law requires businesses like contractors, fence installers and plumbers to have a licence to operate in Halton Hills. This helps protect consumers by ensuring that these businesses meet an established standard for safety and are properly insured.

### Making a complaint

To make a complaint regarding the standards of a property, contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [enforcement@haltonhills.ca](mailto:enforcement@haltonhills.ca).

## RENTAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Under the Town's Property Standards By-law, owners and landlords must ensure that residential buildings rented or leased meet the minimum standards for maintenance and occupancy of the property. Some of these minimum standards include:

The maintenance and/or repair of every exterior wall using the proper paint or treatment in order to prevent deterioration due to weather conditions, insects, or other damage;

- The maintenance and/or repair of every interior wall and ceiling as required to ensure there are no holes, cracks, or damaged and deteriorated surface material;
- An adequate supply of drinkable running hot and cold water from a source approved by the Medical Officer or Health or through a regional waterworks system;
- Adequate supply of hot water that is at least 450°C (1130°F) after running for 60 seconds;
- The maintenance of every heating and air conditioning system, unit, or part thereof so as to be in good repair, good working condition at all times, securely anchored, free from any defect that may cause unnecessary noise or vibration, and clean condition;
- Provision and maintenance of heat so that the room temperature in any area intended for normal use by tenants is at least 21°C (70°F);
- The connection to an approved electrical supply system in accordance with the Ontario Electrical Safety Code;
- The maintenance of every building so as to be kept free of mold; and
- The maintenance of every building or accessory building so as to be kept free of rodents, vermin, insects, and other pests at all times.

If a tenant has a concern about their living conditions as they apply to the Property Standards By-law contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [enforcement@haltonhills.ca](mailto:enforcement@haltonhills.ca). Depending on the nature of the concern, you may be referred to the [Landlord and Tenant Board](#) website.

### Confidentiality

Personal information collected by the Town is protected under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Your name and identifying details will be kept confidential, however, they may be disclosed if the case goes to court. Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

## DECKS, PORCHES, AND PATIOS

The Building Code Act requires that a building permit be obtained for the construction, demolition, or change of use of buildings. It is illegal to construct or demolish a building without first obtaining a permit. Building permits are issued to ensure that proposed work complies with the structural, fire, and health requirements of the [Ontario Building Code](#) and other applicable provincial and municipal regulations.

In addition, all decks, porches, or patios must be located and configured in compliance with the zoning by-law. Please contact the Zoning Officer at 905-873-2600, ext. 2320 to obtain the relevant requirements.

### Can I begin my project without a building permit?

Failure to obtain a building permit prior to beginning your building project may result in:

- Costly repairs to gain compliance;
- Removal of work not completed in compliance;
- Increased building permit application fee; and/or
- Legal action initiated to gain compliance and fines may be imposed.

### What do I need to apply for a building permit?

The following documentation is required for a building permit application for most small projects:  
A completed standard permit application form;

- An Owner’s Authorization Form (only if the applicant is not the owner);
- Building permit fee (must be paid at the time when application is submitted);
- Two copies of applicable design documentation/drawings;
- Two sets of site/plot plan drawings showing the location of proposed and existing buildings on the property;
- Other fees (damage deposit and development charges, if applicable); and
- Other project specific documentation/information.

### How long does it take to get a building permit issued?

After all required documentation is submitted, building permit fee paid and all applicable laws are met, the Ontario Building Code dictates that building permits be issued within a certain time frame, which varies between 10 and 30 business days depending on the type of permit.

### Making a complaint

If you suspect that a building project has commenced without a building permit or have building safety concerns, contact Building Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2300 or [building@haltonhills.ca](mailto:building@haltonhills.ca).

## OPERATING A BUSINESS FROM HOME

The zoning by-law allows certain types of businesses to operate from home, but there are strict requirements under Part 4 of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-0050. These requirements specify permitted occupations may only occupy a certain percentage of the floor area of a house, the number of employees and signage are restricted, and all related parking must be accommodated on the driveway within the property lines. These home businesses are sometimes called home occupations.

### Operating licence required

The Municipal Act allows municipalities to determine which businesses require an operating licence. The Town’s Business Licensing By-law regulates those licenses. The Clerks Office issues business licenses where applicable for certain types of home occupations (e.g. catering) if they meet the requirements of the zoning by-law.

Enforcement Services ensures that business owners continue to meet requirements under the Town’s Business Licensing By-law after licenses have been issued by conducting inspections. These inspections ensure that businesses meet established standards for consumer protection, health and safety, are located in areas permitted under the zoning by-law, and are properly insured.

### Making a complaint

If you suspect that a business is operating illegally, contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [enforcement@haltonhills.ca](mailto:enforcement@haltonhills.ca). Please note that we require your assistance to effectively address your concern, which includes providing specific dates and times of business activity.

## PETS AND ANIMALS

In Halton Hills, the Responsible Pet Owners By-law 1994-077 regulates the keeping of dogs and other animals within the Town. Licensing is an important part of being a responsible pet owner. Not only does it help connect an owner to a lost dog, but it helps keep all dogs and residents safe.

Dog licenses are the fastest way to reunite you with your lost dog. Each year, dogs are quickly reunited with their owners in Halton Hills because they were found wearing a town issued identification tag. Registration information is updated regularly, so that Canine Services can respond promptly.

As a dog owner, you are required to obtain a dog licence:

- Within seven (7) days from the date you become a dog owner; or
- Within seven (7) days from the date you move to Halton Hills if you already own a dog; or
- Within seven (7) days from the date your puppy is eligible to be vaccinated for rabies.

Please note that a maximum of three (3) dogs is permitted at one location, unless the location is licensed as a boarding and breeding establishment. The keeping of more than three (3) dogs is a violation of the Responsible Pet Owners By-law and may result in a fine up to \$5,000.



### How do I purchase or renew a dog licence?

Purchasing and renewing dog licenses can be completed online. View our Canine Services webpage to find a link to our [dog license application and renewal form](#). The Halton Hills identification tag must be affixed at all times. Dog licensing fees are as follows:

Duration	Price
One year	\$34
Two year	\$55
Three year	\$81
Seeing/hearing assist dog	No fee
Therapy dog	No fee
Replacement tag (lost or stolen)	\$7

### Dogs off-leash

All dogs within the Town of Halton Hills must be kept on a leash and under the control of their owner unless in a designated off-leash area. Dog owners share parks, trails and open spaces with many other residents, visitors and wildlife, and must abide by the regulations set out in the Responsible Pet Owners By-law to help protect all users and the natural environment. While many dogs are obedient, there is a possibility that they may forget some of their training in unfamiliar surroundings with enticing scents or wildlife. Owners and dog walkers are responsible for any injuries or damage caused by any dog in their care as a result of being off leash.

Letting your dog off leash in undesignated areas poses many risks, including becoming lost, having a dangerous encounter with another animal, exposure to an animal carrying diseases or poisonous plants, and/or becoming the victim of a road accident. Allowing your dog to run at large is a violation of the Responsible Pet Owners By-law and may result in a fine up to \$5,000.

The Town of Halton Hills offers three (3) designated leash free parks where dogs are permitted to be off leash:

1. Cedarvale Park located at 181 Main Street South, Georgetown;
2. Trafalgar Sports Park, 11494 Trafalgar Road, Georgetown; and
3. Prospect Park located at 30 Park Avenue, Acton.

### Stoop and scoop

As a pet owner, the Responsible Pet Owners By-law requires that you remove and sanitarily dispose of any excrement left by your dog(s) forthwith from any public or private property, including your own yard. Failure to clean up after your dog(s) is a violation of the By-law and may result in a fine of up to \$5,000.

### Dog boarding and breeding establishments

The Town does not permit the operation of a boarding and breeding establishment without a licence. A Pet Care and Breeding Service Establishment Licence is valid for a period of up to one (1) year and expires on February 28 each year in accordance with the date set for this class of business. All properties operating as a pet care and breeding service establishment must ensure the use is permitted under the Town's Zoning By-law 2010-0050.

The [Business Licence Application Form](#) is available online. For more information on business licensing, contact Business Licensing Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [businesslicensing@haltonhills.ca](mailto:businesslicensing@haltonhills.ca).

### Making a complaint

Omega Canine Control is a 24-Hour Emergency Service that can be contacted at 905-877-6235. You may call Omega Canine Control Services where:

- You want to report a dog off-leash or running at large;
- You want to report excessive barking;
- You or your pet has been bitten by another animal;
- You suspect an animal has rabies; or
- You have found a stray dog.

### Other animals

The Responsible Pet Owners By-law does not require owners to register or licence their cat. However, no more than three (3) cats can be kept at any one location in Halton Hills.

In addition, the by-law only permits (3) rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs, non-venomous snakes or lizards, or other small animals to be kept at any one location in Halton Hills.



### Urban Hens

In 2022, Town of Halton Hills Council passed an amendment to the Responsible Pet Owner's By-law allowing residents to keep up to four (4) urban hens in most urban areas where the approved regulations can be adhered to. Enforcement of the new provisions fall under the responsibility of the Town's Canine Control Contractor as enforcing the Responsible Pet Owner's By-law is the primary function of the service. Eligible residents are required to complete an application form and pay a licensing fee.

Applying to keep urban hens will result in your property being inspected by a municipal by-law enforcement officer to ensure compliance prior to a license being issued. Also, properties with licenses to keep urban hens are subject to inspection at any reasonable time by a municipal law enforcement officer for the purposes of investigating a complaint and/or to ensure compliance with the by-law.

For more information on the benefits of having urban hens or to view the regulations, visit our [Urban Hens webpage](#).



### Pigeons

The Responsible Pet Owners By-law allows residents to keep a total of four (4) pigeons per single family dwelling. There are exceptions to this section of the by-law for owners of racing or snow pigeons. For more information related to these exceptions, contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or view Schedule E of the by-law.

### Prohibited animals

Residents are not permitted to keep any exotic animal, venomous reptile, venomous insect, or wild animal in Halton Hills. Non-venomous reptiles or insects that are permitted by the Responsible Pet Owners By-law must be kept in an escape-proof enclosure.

Unless the land is zoned and lawfully used for agricultural purposes, residents are not permitted to keep the following animals in Halton Hills: horse, donkey, pony, mule, cow or steer, goat, swine, sheep, duck or goose.

For more information on the Responsible Pet Owners By-law or to report a violation, contact Enforcement Services at 905-873-2600, ext. 2330 or [enforcement@haltonhills.ca](mailto:enforcement@haltonhills.ca)