City of Fredericksburg, Virginia
Residential Occupancy

How is the number of people who can live in a dwelling determined?

The City has adopted a Zoning Ordinance which regulates who and how many people may occupy a dwelling unit.

What is the City’s definition of a dwelling unit?

_Dwelling unit means one or more rooms in a residential building or residential portion of a building which is or are arranged, designed, used, or intended for use as a complete, independent living facility for no more than one family, and which includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation._ [Sec. 72-8]

What is the City’s definition of a family?

_Family means one person or two or more persons related* by blood, adoption or marriage, living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit, with no more than two boarders, or a group of not more than three unrelated persons living together as a single housekeeping unit._ [Sec. 72-8] _Or any group identified in § 15.2-2291 of the Code of Virginia, (e.g. mental illness, intellectual disability, or developmental disabilities)._  

* Persons who are related, may, by official public records such as government issued identification, birth or marriage certificates or by affidavits, demonstrate that they are related to one another.

Why does the City of Fredericksburg regulate the number of people living in a dwelling unit?

As the population of the City grows, the demand for housing increases and many people search for affordable housing options. During the past several years, the City has received an increasing number of complaints from its citizens regarding overcrowding in single-family dwellings. In its worst state, overcrowding results in a threat to public safety and the welfare of the occupants of the homes, as well as the neighborhood.
Health studies indicate that:

*Overcrowding* increases a negative effect on children by restricting the exercise and play areas.

*Overcrowding* increases a negative psychological effect on the occupants by reducing privacy.

*Overcrowding* increases physical and mental fatigue when performing routine household tasks.

*Overcrowding* increases the risk of spreading infection and disease between occupants.

**Who do I contact for more information or to make a complaint about residential overcrowding?**

You can contact the Zoning Administrator via:

- E-mail at jdnewman@fredericksburgva.gov
- Regular mail – City of Fredericksburg  
  Attn: Zoning Administrator  
  P.O. Box 7447  
  Fredericksburg, VA 22404

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This information has been prepared by the

**City of Fredericksburg**
**Community Planning & Building Department**