

Department of the County Attorney – Frequently Asked Questions

The County Attorney receives many questions from citizens on a regular basis. In an effort to assist citizens with common questions, the following list of Frequency Asked Questions has been composed:

I live in Carroll County and I would like a County Attorney to represent me for my divorce. Who can help me?

The County Attorney represents the Board of County Commissioners and is prohibited from representing or providing legal advice to individual Carroll County residents. A free legal services clinic is available for domestic cases on Tuesdays at the Circuit Court located in Westminster, Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. to noon. Additional information regarding family law services can be found on the Internet at <http://courts.state.md.us/family/carroll.html>.

I believe that my neighbor is violating the Carroll County zoning laws. Who should I call?

Contact the Office of Zoning Administration at 410-386-2980.

Does Carroll County have a noise ordinance?

Yes. Ordinance No. 05-08 became effective September 15, 2005, and is codified as Chapter 146 (Noise) in the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County. For information on how to file a complaint, please contact the Sheriff's Office at 410-386-2900.

I would like to use the Piney Run Nature Center, Bear Branch Nature Center, or Hashawha Environmental Center for a private party. Is that permitted?

Pavilions at parks and certain rooms at the Nature Centers may be reserved for private parties on a first come, first served basis. There is a fee for all rentals. To make reservations for Piney Run, call 410-795-5165; for Bear Branch, call 410-848-2517; and for Hashawha, 410-848-9040.

I am interested in buying a lot in Carroll County. How can I find out who owns the land?

Contact Land Records at 888-302-8927 or 410-386-2022 or access the State Department of Assessments and Taxation website at <http://www.dat.state.md.us/> and click on Real Property Data Search.

I would like a County Attorney to represent me in a criminal case. Who can help me?

The County Attorney represents the Board of County Commissioners and is prohibited from representing or providing legal advice to individual citizens. You may contact a private attorney or a Public Defender. You may contact the Office of the Public Defender at 410-871-3636, or the Lawyer Referral Service at 410-337-9100.

Do I need a permit to build a deck on my house?

For information on permit requirements, contact the Bureau of Permits and Inspections at 410-386-2674.

I live in Uniontown and I'd like to replace my windows. Are there any restrictions?

Uniontown is part of a Historic Preservation District. If you live in the boundaries of the District, you need to obtain permission from the Historic Preservation Commission before replacing the windows. Please contact Nancy David at 410-386-2094 for an application for permission.

My mother has questions about Medicare. Who can provide assistance?

Medicare is a federal program that most people over age 65 qualify for. In addition, people who are disabled for a period of 24 months (by Social Security) qualify and people with "End Stage Kidney Disease" qualify. Medicare is not means or asset based. The Carroll County Bureau of Aging may provide assistance at 410-386-3800 through SHIP (Senior Health Insurance Program), which helps seniors with issues such as Medicare, Medigap Supplemental Insurance, Long Term Care Insurance, claims and billing problems. For additional information, see the description at the following website link: <http://ccgov.carr.org/aging/services.html>.

I am planning a bingo or a raffle. Are there any restrictions?

Bingo and raffles are regulated by State law, which law contains many restrictions regarding the types of events that may be held, when they may be held, and who may hold the events. If you wish to conduct a bingo or a raffle, you need first obtain a permit from the County Tax Office. You may contact the Tax Office at 410-386-2971 for more information regarding your eligibility for a permit.

I have a complaint against my landlord or tenant. Who can help me?

If you have a complaint regarding lead paint, contact the Health Department at 410-857-5000. If you have questions about minimum living conditions, contact the Bureau of Permits and Inspections at 410-386-2674.

I live on a private driveway and there are six of us using the driveway, but only two of us are contributing to the costs of maintenance. Will the County enforce the DMO (Declaration of Maintenance Obligations)?

No. A DMO is a private agreement between individual private parties. You need to review your maintenance agreement and contact a private attorney for assistance.

My neighbor has not mowed his lawn all summer. What can I do?

If you live within a municipality, contact the municipal office for information regarding local municipal laws. In the County, you may contact the Health Department at 410-857-5000 to see if the situation constitutes a public health nuisance.

I have a question regarding a legal matter involving the Board of Education.

The Board of Education is a state agency and it is not represented by the County Attorney. You may contact the Board of Education directly at 410-751-3000.

I would like to have a yard sale. Are there any restrictions?

Yes. Under State law, you may hold only one yard sale not exceeding 14 consecutive days in a calendar year.

I closed my business but am still receiving tax bills. Why?

Specific forms must be filed with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) to properly close a business and the tax account. SDAT generates an annual assessment for all businesses on January 1 of each year, which assessment is forwarded to the County for collection. The County is unable to abate a tax assessment. If you want to contest your business tax assessment, you may contact SDAT at 301 West Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21201; phone 410-767-4991; 410-767-1150; 888-246-5941; TTY 800-735-2258. FAX 410-333-7937.

My neighbor's shed violates the restrictive covenants of our subdivision. Can your office send him a warning letter?

Covenants that govern the use of lots within subdivisions are private restrictions that must be enforced by a homeowners' association or a resident of the subdivision. The County is unable to enforce such private restrictions.

I receive unsolicited, unwanted, free newspapers. Who do I contact to stop delivery?

You may contact the following publishers directly:

Marketplace (published by the Carroll County Times)
877-228-4637
410-857-9413
410-875-0731

The Examiner
800-387-6090

The Gazette
301-948-3120 (choose option 7 for circulation)

The Merchandiser
800-673-2474 (ask for circulation)

I would like to research the County Code. How do I access it on-line?

The Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County can be accessed by following these steps:

Log onto the County's main page at <http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg>
Click the "Living Here" tab along the upper portion of the main page.
Scroll down to and click "County Code" and the search and browser options are located on both the side and bottom of the page.

I would like to purchase a copy of the County Code. Where is it available for sale and how much does it cost?

The Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County is available for sale in the Department of the County Attorney, 225 North Center Street, Room 301, Westminster, Maryland, 21157; phone 410-386-2030. The purchase price is \$60.00 plus shipping and handling, if you request that it be mailed to you, rather than picked up.

The purchase of the Code automatically puts you on the mailing list to receive supplements. Each supplement is invoiced separately and the cost is dependent upon the size of the supplement. The Code is supplemented approximately 3 to 4 times per year.

Who would I contact to make a complaint about animals, such as barking dogs, or dogs running at large, etc.?

The Humane Society of Carroll County, Inc. (<http://www.carr.org/humane>) responds to complaints such as at large animals, cruelty to animals, dangerous animals, etc. They can also answer questions regarding animal licensing and vaccination. The Humane Society is located at 2517 Littlestown Pike, Westminster, Maryland, 21158, phone 410-848-4810 or 410-875-5379.

I need information about my pending court case. Can the County Attorney help me with that?

The Department of the County Attorney is not directly affiliated with the court system and cannot provide information on pending court cases. For information on a pending District Court case, contact the District Court Clerk's Office at 410-871-3500, TTY 410-

735-2258. For information on a pending Circuit Court case, contact the Circuit Court Clerk's Office at 410-386-2026.

How do I reach the District Court Commissioner?

The County Commissioners have no direct relationship to the District Court Commissioners, who are judicial officers authorized to issue statements of criminal charges and perform other judicial functions for the District Court of Maryland. The District Court Commissioner is located at 101 North Court Street in Westminster, and can be reached at 410-871-3520.

Who can I contact with a complaint regarding the purchase of a faulty item or services rendered?

These complaints are handled by the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Maryland Attorney General (<http://www.oag.state.md.us/Consumer/index.htm>), which can be reached at 410-528-8662.

Do you prosecute criminal cases?

No. Generally, criminal cases are prosecuted by the Carroll County Office of the State's Attorney's Office. You may contact the State's Attorney's Office at 410-386-2671 (<http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/stateatt/about.htm>).