

Residential Care Facilities – Private Well and Septic System Permitting Guidance

The following items are to serve as preliminary general guidance for anyone seeking to operate a residential care facility that will be served by a septic system and/or private well.

The applicant must check with the appropriate Planning and Zoning department regarding information on allowed property uses. Planning and zoning jurisdiction is based on property location within the County. For properties within Wake County Planning jurisdiction, a pre-submittal meeting may be recommended. This meeting will provide the applicant with pertinent information and permitting requirements from various Wake County departments.

Septic System Requirements & Guidance

- Wake County regulations have a separate flow rate designation of 120 gallons per day per bed (not bedrooms) plus a separate flow rate of 60 gallons per day per caregiver designated in State regulations. Since septic systems are site specific, we recommend contracting with a private licensed soil scientist or professional engineer to evaluate the property prior to application submittal. This evaluation will determine if the existing septic system can support the proposed residential care change of use or if the property can support required upgrades to the septic system.
- The applicant must apply for a “Wastewater Commercial Permit” or “Wastewater Private Option Permit*” through the [Wake County Permit Portal \(www.wake.gov/permit\)](http://www.wake.gov/permit). The applicant must upload a site plan along with any site evaluation reports or system design work completed by the contracted licensed soil scientist or professional engineer.
*Note: “Wastewater Private Option Permit” application is only for a permit completed through licensed wastewater professionals or engineers.
- Wake County will notify the applicant of wastewater permit issuance or permit denial and make documentation available through the Wake County Permit Portal. The applicant must contract with a licensed septic installer to complete septic system installation or modification detailed in the issued permit.
- Other state and local authorities may require the applicant to provide documentation of the completed wastewater permit prior to issuance of other state or local permits or approvals pursuant to the residential care facility change of use.

Well Requirements & Guidance

- The applicant must apply for a permit to “Approve Existing Well” through the [Wake County Permit Portal \(www.wake.gov/permit\)](http://www.wake.gov/permit). The applicant should include a note in the application that they are seeking approval of a residential care facility. Wake County Groundwater staff will contact the applicant to assess needs for upgrades to the well and establish water sampling requirements for the proposed residential care facility.
- A private well serving a residential care facility must meet certain requirements that are more stringent than a private well serving a single-family house.
 - For wells drilled on or before July 1, 1993, the well must:
 - Be at least 50 ft from all septic system components.
 - Be at least 25 ft from any building foundation.
 - Have casing that extends at least 6 inches above grade.
 - For wells drilled after July 1, 1993, the well must:
 - Be at least 100 ft from all septic system components.
 - Be at least 50 ft from any building foundation.
 - Have a concrete slab extending 3 ft horizontally, 4 in thick sloping away from casing.
 - Have casing that extends at least 12 inches above grade and have vent stack, sample tap and back flow preventer.
 - For all wells:
 - The private licensed soil scientist or professional engineer contracted by the owner is to verify and demonstrate required setbacks as part of the change of use site evaluation.
 - Two bacteria samples taken at least 48 hours apart, with no positive result.
 - Any water samples required to satisfy other permits required for the proposed facility.
- Wake County will notify the applicant of well permit issuance or denial and make documentation available through the Wake County Permit Portal.
- Other state and local authorities may require the applicant to provide documentation of the completed well permit prior to issuance of other State or Local permits or approvals pursuant to the residential care facility change of use.