

Dorchester County Planning & Zoning  
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**How to measure the Front Yard Setback**

As a general rule, the front yard setback is measured from the front line of your property. The front lot line is the property line running along the front of your lot, separating it from the public or private road. If you don't know where your front line is located, arrange to have a Maryland licensed land surveyor establish the line for you. ***Remember, it is your responsibility to know where your property lines are located.***

Property owners should be aware that the following method of measuring a front yard setback may not apply to their particular lot or parcel. There are certain older parcels, known as "lots of record", where the front yard setback is determined based on a different method. To know if your property is a "lot of record", you must know when it was originally created. A lot of record is one that was originally created prior to September 15, 1963. You may need to check your deed or survey to verify if you have a "lot of record".

If you plan to build on a lot of record and your property fronts on a road having less than a 50 feet right-of-way, the zoning code requires that you measure in 25 feet from the centerline of the paved road in front of your property. Once you have established the "assumed" 25 feet right-of-way, you can then apply the minimum front yard setback required under the zoning code for your particular zoning district. ***(Note: State road right-of-ways are typically wider than 50 feet; you should contact the State Highway Administration for assistance in determining the location of a state road right-of-way.)***

In certain circumstances, the front yard setback requirements for lots of record can be modified (reduced) based on the established building lines of your neighboring parcels. If you believe that you might be eligible for this reduction, ask for assistance.

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Owner/Applicant Signature

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Date