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## Zoning Overview

Zoning, as defined by Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, is "to arrange in or mark off into zones; specifically: to partition (a city, borough, or township) by ordinance into sections reserved for different purposes (as residence or business)". Hillsborough County's Zoning Ordinances are contained in a document known as the Hillsborough County Land Development Code. This Code regulates the development of properties, the uses of properties, landscaping requirements, and much more. To describe this document in great detail would far exceed the scope of this publication. However, April's Code Enforcement Tip of the Month provides a general understanding of land use classifications and their allowable uses.

### Q. What land use classifications exist in Hillsborough County?

There are over 50 different land use classifications in Hillsborough County each allowing for either different uses, greater densities, or more intensive uses of the land. Generally, there are three main land use categories: residential, commercial and agricultural. There are other special zoning classifications, such as planned developments and special interest overlays, that can be thought of as custom zones. These special classifications require intensive scrutiny over site plans and intended uses and require approval from Hillsborough County.

### Q. How do I know what my property is Zoned?

The easiest way to find the zoning of a piece of property is to do a "Property Record Search" on Property Appraiser's Web site at [www.hcpafl.org](http://www.hcpafl.org).

### Q. So what can I do on my property?

The answer to this question is far more complex than the question itself. In general, residentially zoned properties can be used for residential uses, commercial properties for

commercial uses, and agricultural properties for farming as well as residential uses. The improper use of land is among the most frequently complained-about violation. It is also the most misunderstood. Violations of this nature can range from farm animals being kept in residential districts to more complex matters involving site development review. A complete matrix of uses is available in the Land Development Code. However, even an extensive matrix cannot foresee every conceivable land use. Within the general classifications are more specific breakdowns. For example, to simply say that a property is zoned for commercial use is inadequate, there are six distinct commercial zoning designations in Hillsborough County ranging from the very light "BPO", or Business, Professional Office zoning to the high impact "M", or manufacturing classification. The 13 different residential zonings allow for varying lot sizes and densities, while the seven different agricultural classifications all have varying lot size requirements and define the intensity of the allowable agricultural use. While some uses may seem obviously prohibited in a zoning district, this cannot be assumed. For example there are certain home based businesses that can be approved in residential zones, as well as certain dwelling types that can be permitted in commercial zonings.

### Q. Can I receive approval for what I am doing with my property?

If your property is a non conforming use, meaning that it is used in a manner not normally allowed in the zoning, you may be able to apply for approval through the County's Planning and Growth Management Department. Some uses may be varied, while others may predate zoning laws. If you need more information on allowable uses, call the Planning and Growth Management Department at 813-272-5900 and schedule an appointment to speak with a land use counselor. LDC - Sec. 6.11.48. Home Occupation  
LDC - Sec. 6.11.16. Apartment/Commercial



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