

## Maintenance and upkeep of donation drop boxes:

Donation drop boxes must be structurally sound, clean, and well-maintained. They should be emptied regularly to prevent overflow of materials onto surrounding areas, which would constitute an outdoor storage zoning violation. It is the property owner's responsibility for ensuring the upkeep of these boxes.



## What are the penalties for improper use or location of donation drop boxes?

Failure of a property owner to correctly use or locate a donation drop box on their property may be a violation of the Zoning Ordinance and is punishable by a civil penalty or subject to other legal action.

## For more information, contact:

**Department of Planning & Zoning  
Zoning Administration Division, Suite 807**  
12055 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, VA 22035  
703-324-1314, TTY 711  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz)

**Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance**  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/zoningordinance/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/zoningordinance/)

**Code of Virginia**  
<http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm>

## Complaints may be directed to:

**Department of Code Compliance**  
703-324-1300, TTY 711  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code)

Prepared in consultation with the Department of Planning and Zoning by:



Office of Community  
Revitalization  
Fairfax County, Virginia  
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Photographs by Joseph Bakos



This document is available in an alternative format upon request. For reasonable accommodations, please call the Office of Community Revitalization at 703-324-9300, TTY 711. Please allow ten working days for preparation of material.



# Donation Drop Boxes

Guidelines for Property Owners



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## Introduction

Donation drop boxes may be allowed on commercial and industrial properties in Fairfax County in accordance with certain Fairfax County regulations. This brochure provides a general overview of the pertinent county regulations and associated penalties which may be imposed for violation of these regulations. Property owners should familiarize themselves with these regulations and consult with the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, Zoning Administration Division, prior to permitting a donation drop box to be located on their property.



## What is a donation drop box?

A donation drop box is any receptacle used for the collection of used clothing, shoes, and small household items donated by the public for redistribution.



## How is a donation drop box treated under the county's Zoning Ordinance?

Donation drop boxes are considered an accessory use and are subject to the provisions set forth in Part 1, of Article 10, of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. As such they are not permitted as the sole use on a lot, but are only permitted in conjunction with a principal use, such as a shopping center or other commercial or industrial establishment.

## Are there restrictions on where a donation drop box may be placed on a property?

Yes. Provided there are no proffered or development conditions that would preclude or restrict them, the location of donation drop boxes is subject to the location regulations for accessory storage structures (see Par. 10 of Sect. 10-104 of the Zoning Ordinance). If there are proffered or development conditions, those must be adhered to.

In general, donation drop boxes are not permitted to be located anywhere in the front yard on lots

which are less than 36,000 square feet in area. On lots larger than that, they may be located in the front yard, but must be set back a distance equal to the minimum front yard requirement specified for the zoning district of the property in which the drop box is located; this is generally 40 feet in most commercial retail zoning districts.

Donation drop boxes may not be located in any transitional screening yard; landscaped open space, including parking lot landscaping; required parking spaces; in the public right-of-way; or, in any location that could impede vehicular or pedestrian circulation, vision, or access within a site. Also, if a donation drop box exceeds eight and one-half feet in height, additional limitations apply to the location of these structures.

If a donation drop box is located under a building awning or canopy, it is considered to be storage and the building would need to have an approved fire protection system (see Sec. 315.3 and 315.3.1 of the Virginia Fire Prevention Code).

A minor site plan is required prior to installation of donation drop boxes that, either individually or cumulatively on a site, are greater than 250 square feet in size.

