

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

- As late as 1960, 88% of all households in Knox County were traditional families, and 44% of households were comprised of a married couple with children under the age of 18.
- By 2000, the percentage of traditional families had fallen to 64%, and only 21% of households contained a married couple with kids. In fact, the total number of married couples with children remained virtually unchanged from 1960 to 2000, with 32,194 in 1960 and 32,803 in 2000.
- The fastest growing segment of households in Knox County over the last several decades has been single heads of households, with or without children, and non-family households made up of unrelated individuals sharing dwellings.

DEFINITIONS:

Family

Family means the heads of household plus persons who are related to the heads of the household. These relationships may be of the whole or half blood, by adoption, guardianship, including foster children, or through a marriage to a person with such a relationship with the heads of household.

Functional Family Determination Criteria

A functional family may be up to five people living in a household (one or more of whom are unrelated). Criteria include:

- Occupants must share the entire dwelling unit (living as separate roomers cannot be considered a functional family)
- Occupants must share expenses for food, rent, and utilities
- Occupants must have the same address for voter registration, drivers licenses, motor vehicle registration, and tax filing
- Occupants with school-age children in the household must enroll the children in local schools
- Occupants must share common ownership of the dwelling unit or its furnishings
- Occupants must have access to at least two (and possibly more) off-street parking spaces

Groups such as clubs, sororities, and fraternities are not considered functional families. Determination of family status shall be made annually by the appropriate permitting official.



A more complete definition can be found under Zoning Ordinances at www.knoxmpc.org.



Residential OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

A Strong Neighborhood Initiative

Residential Occupancy Standards



In 2006 the Metropolitan Planning Commission became aware of a growing problem in several communities—large groups of college students, temporary workers, and other unrelated individuals living together in single-family homes.

In response, MPC organized a task force of neighborhood representatives and other volunteer citizens to discuss the problem. The task force researched occupancy standards in some 20 communities throughout the Southeast, from Athens, GA to Winston-Salem, NC.

The goal was to find a better way of protecting the single-family character of neighborhoods while allowing for the continually evolving composition of today's households, including blended families, adopted and foster children, and gay and lesbian couples.

At the task force's recommendation, new residential occupancy standards were adopted by the Knoxville City Council and Knox County Commission to replace the previous definition of family as a sole means of managing residential occupancy. These standards took effect August 1, 2007.

In general, these standards limit the number of unrelated individuals that may live together in a house in a low-density neighborhood to three, in a condominium to four, and in an apartment in a high density neighborhood to five. There are no restrictions on the number of family members who may occupy a dwelling. In addition, a group of up to five unrelated individuals who are not students and live together in a stable relationship may occupy a house in a low-density neighborhood as a "functional family."

City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance

Residential dwelling units may be occupied by a family, a "functional family" consistent with the criteria established by this ordinance, or the following groups of persons unrelated by blood, marriage, adoption, or guardianship, including foster children:

1. A number of persons in accordance with the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated 13-24-102;
2. Two people and any of their children by blood, marriage, guardianship, including foster children, or adoption;
3. Up to three people in the A-1, R-1, R-1A, R-1E, or TND-1 zone districts and in houses, attached houses, and duplexes within any RP zone district and any other zone district that allows residential uses;
4. Up to four people in condominium multi-dwelling structures within any R-2, R-3, R-4, TC-1 or RP zone districts and any other zone district that allows residential uses, according to the following schedule
 - a. Up to two people in one or two-bedroom dwelling units,
 - b. Up to three people in a three-bedroom dwelling unit, and
 - c. Up to four people in a four or more bedroom dwelling unit; or
5. Up to five people in the R-2, R-3, or R-4 zone districts and in multi-dwelling structures (apartment complexes) or developments (except condominium multi-dwelling structures) within any TC-1 or RP zone district and any other zone district that allows residential uses.

Knox County Zoning Ordinance

Residential dwelling units may be occupied by a family, a "functional family" consistent with the criteria established by this ordinance, or the following groups of persons unrelated by blood, marriage, adoption, or guardianship, including foster children:

1. Two unrelated people and any of their children by blood, marriage, guardianship, including foster children, or adoption;
2. Up to three people in the A, E, RA, R-AE zone districts and in houses, attached houses, and duplexes within any RB, TC, or PR zone districts;
3. Up to four people in condominium multi-dwelling structures within any RB, TC or PR zone districts and any other zone district that allows residential uses, according to the following schedule
 - a. Up to two people in one or two-bedroom units,
 - b. Up to three people in a three bedroom-dwelling unit, and
 - c. Up to four people in a four or more bedroom dwelling unit; or
4. Up to five people in multi-dwelling structures (apartment complexes) or developments (except condominium multi-dwelling structures) within the RB, TC or PR zone districts and any other zone district that allows residential uses.