



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS INFORMATION PACKET

For more information, call 770.278.7100 or visit us at:
1117 West Avenue, Conyers, M-F 8-5

WELCOME TO ROCKDALE COUNTY

Dear Business Owner,

We would like to thank you for choosing Rockdale County as the home for your business. We're excited to have you here! This information packet is designed to provide key details relevant to your business and help you get started with confidence. We hope you enjoy operating your business in our community as much as we enjoy living and working here!

This packet contains general information about the area and services provided by our department, including:

- Occupational Tax & Permits
- Sign Ordinances
- Common Business Violations
- Department Contacts



Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to visit us in-person, contact us at 770.278.7100, or access our website ([Planning & Development](#)). Rockdale County also posts community information and notices on our County Facebook page ([Rockdale County Government](#)).

Once again, thank you for choosing our community as the home of your business!

Rockdale County Planning & Development
Please take a moment to complete our customer
satisfaction survey.



ROCKDALE COUNTY HISTORY

Rockdale County was founded on October 18, 1870, and received its name from Rockdale Baptist Church (est. 1846), which was named after the granite strata that rests under the county's red clay topsoil. A bill introduced by John F. Hardin and John Harris carved Rockdale out of the northern portion of Newton County; parts of Rockdale County also came from neighboring Henry, Walton, Gwinnett, and DeKalb counties.

Conyers, Rockdale's only incorporated town and urban center, became the county seat. Conyers was home to the prosperous mill community known as Milstead. The Village of Milstead, located two miles north of Olde Town Conyers, was once home to Milstead Manufacturing Company, later known as Callaway Mills. In its day, it was a bustling, closely-knit, industrial town located on the banks of the Yellow River.

With the construction of Interstate 20 through Rockdale County in the 1960s, the community began to change again. Olde Town Conyers gave way slowly to development along West Avenue and the I-20 access roads, then south along Georgia Highway 20/138, creating a business district of bright signs and national chains. During the 60s, the team of Gus Barksdale and Clarence Vaughn joined other influential citizens and the Chamber of Commerce in bringing numerous major businesses to Rockdale County. With new schools and the highest paid teachers in the area, Conyers and Rockdale County became a draw for young families.



Access to Atlanta became quick and easy for Rockdale residents. The summer of 1996 was an exciting time in Conyers-Rockdale County's history. Over 600,000 visitors visited the community during the period of the Centennial Olympic Games. Visitors thrilled to equestrian events, first-ever mountain bike competition and the final two events of the modern pentathlon at Conyers' Olympic venue, the Georgia International Horse Park. The Olympics put Conyers and Rockdale County not only on the map, but in the minds of thousands that soon began relocating their homes, families, and businesses to the area. It is a combination of small town and big city, of rural scenes and urban shopping.

Today, that momentum continues as Rockdale County grows into a dynamic hub for economic development – attracting entrepreneurs, expanding industries, and fostering a business-friendly environment built for long-term success; creating a vibrant and welcoming place to live, work, and thrive.

OCCUPATIONAL TAX & PERMITS

OCCUPATIONAL TAX CERTIFICATE & PERMITS

Every business needs one or more federal, state, or local licenses or permits to operate. Licenses can range from basic operating licenses to very specific permits (e.g. health department permits) depending on your business needs. The following are common types of local permits and licenses:

Occupational Tax Certificate:

Rockdale County requires all organizations conducting business within the county to pay an occupational tax. Upon payment of occupational taxes, the business owner will receive an Occupational Tax Certificate as proof of payment. Each Occupational Tax Certificate is valid for one calendar year (January 1 - December 31), and the tax may vary on the type of business and number of employees. **Occupational Tax Certificates expire each year on December 31st.** Businesses who do not renew their Occupational Tax Certificate by January 31st of the new year are subject to a 1.5% late fee per month until the tax certificate is renewed. Contact us at 770.278.7100 or businesslicense@rockdalecountyga.gov with questions about occupational tax.

Building Permit:

A building permit may be required if you are constructing or modifying your place of business. A permit is required for any plumbing, mechanical, and/or electrical work. Contact us at 770.278.7100 or by email at inspections@rockdalecountyga.gov with any questions about permitting.

Alcohol License:

An alcohol license will allow you to sell & serve alcohol at your new business. Rockdale County is the local licensing authority. Call our Planning & Development Department at 770.278.7100 or by email at businesslicense@rockdalecountyga.gov for more information on alcohol licenses.

Alcohol Beverage Handling Permit:

The alcohol licensee must ensure that all managers and employees involved in the sale or service of alcoholic beverages, whether at package stores or businesses serving on premises, obtain an alcoholic beverage handling permit.

Special Event Permit:

A special event permit is an official authorization required to hold events that may disrupt normal activities or need special arrangements. It ensures the event adheres to local regulations and standards. Please apply for your Special Event Permit as least 30 days prior to your event. Visit our Code of Ordinances for more information on Special Event Permits ([Special Event](#)).

Special Use Permit:

A special use permit is an official approval that allows a property to be used in a way that is not typically permitted under current zoning regulations. It ensures the proposed use meets specific criteria and does not negatively impact the surrounding community. Contact Planning & Development at 770.278.7100 for more information or planningandzoning@rockdalecountyga.gov.

OCCUPATIONAL TAX & PERMITS (cont'd)

SIGNAGE

There are some signs that require a permit before they are allowed to be erected and some that must also require public review and Board approval.

Sign Permit:

A sign permit may be required before erecting a new sign. Chapter 230 of Rockdale County's Municipal Code lays out the requirements for signs within the County. Visit MuniCode at [Rockdale County Code of Ordinances](#) for more information about sign permits and requirements.

Do I Need a Sign Permit?

Yes, for any new business sign, and for most temporary signs. A list of signs exempt from permitting can be found in Chapter 230, Section 17 of [Rockdale County Code of Ordinances](#).

Home Occupation Business:

The rules governing a home business can be found in [Rockdale County Code of Ordinances](#) in Section 218-13(dd). Please review the Home Occupation forms and Home Occupation Application at [Planning & Development Permits & Applications](#).

Building Permits:

Any of the following requires a permit:

- New Construction
- Deck
- Remodel or Repairs
- Accessory Structures
- Plumbing
- Demolition
- Driveways
- Pools
- Electrical
- HVAC



Zoning:

Zoning is the process by which local government regulates how each section of land may be used. Zoning laws affect where certain types of businesses can operate, what kind of structures can be built, and how properties can be used. A zoning verification will be performed by the planning division upon receiving an occupational tax certificate application. Please refer to the County's [Zoning Map](#) and/or contact our planning division for more information at 770.278.7100 or by email at planningandzoning@rockdalecountyga.gov.

WINDOW & WALL SIGNS

DEFINITIONS

Window Signs:

A sign installed on the interior or exterior of a window and intended to be viewed from the outside of the building. Includes signs made of perforated film and other semi-opaque materials. Window signs are distinct from wall signs. Window signs do not need a permit.

Wall Signs:

A sign painted on, attached to or mounted to the wall or surface of a building or structure. Wall signs must be permitted. An application must be submitted with a set of building elevations, showing the proposed location of all signs and anchoring method used. Wall signs inside buildings or totally enclosed area shall be exempt from permitting.

Temporary Signs:

A sign not permanently embedded in the ground or not permanently affixed to a building or sign structure and displayed for a finite period of time.

MEASUREMENTS

Individual Sign Area:

- The area of a sign is computed as the surface of the smallest square, rectangle, circle, triangle or combination thereof that will encompass entirely the writing, representation, emblem or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, such as a cabinet.
- Individual sign areas shall be rounded to the nearest half square foot. (i.e., 12.3 sq. ft. = 12.5 sq. ft.)
- Minor appendages to a particular shape, as determined by the director or his/her designee, may be excluded from the computation. Such appendage shall not occupy more than ten percent of the individual sign area.

Wall Signs:

- Equal to the height of building
- Maximum aggregate wall sign area per tenant: 2 sq. ft per linear foot (straight line measurement of 1 ft = 2 sq. ft) of associated façade
- Max individual wall sign area: 100 sq. ft.
- All wall signs permitted exclusively on façades fronting a public road

WINDOW & WALL SIGNS (cont'd)

Window Signs:

- Max. aggregate area of all window signs on a building – including both permanent and temporary signs – may not exceed 30% coverage of the total window area.

Calculate 30% window coverage using the following formula:

Height of all windows within building= height

Width of all windows within building= width

$\text{Height} \times \text{Width} \times .30 = \text{Total square feet of windows allowed to have signage}$

Calculate total signage footage using the following formula:

Height of all signage on windows= height

Width of all signage on windows= width

$\text{Height (in feet)} \times \text{Width (in feet)} = \text{Total square feet of signage}$

Total sq. ft. of signage must be less than total sq. ft. of signage allowed



Signage **exceeds** 30% window coverage



Signage is **within** 30% window coverage

COMMON BUSINESS VIOLATIONS

A Guide to Understanding Rockdale County's Ordinances

Below you will find ordinances that businesses are frequently found to be in violation of. If you receive a violation notice and have additional questions or concerns, please contact our Code Enforcement office at 770.278.7103 between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday. We are happy to provide further information to assist you in bringing your business into compliance.

Sec. 10-47 Alcohol License Required - Every business operating in Rockdale County must have an active, valid license. It is illegal to sell or possess alcoholic beverages for sale without a county-issued license, or to sell or deliver alcohol outside the licensed premises

Sec. 10-48 Alcohol Underage Sales - Minors are prohibited from buying or being served alcoholic beverages, and it is illegal for anyone to permit, furnish, or serve alcohol to minors. Attempts to do so are also punishable by law.

Sec. 10-62 Alcohol Handling Permit - The alcohol licensee must ensure that all managers and employees involved in the sale or service of alcoholic beverages, whether at package stores or businesses serving on premises, obtain an alcoholic beverage handling permit.

Sec. 78-6 Parking Lot Cleanliness - Owners have a duty to ensure cleanliness of areas surrounding businesses: driveways, yards, parking lots and areas adjacent thereto.

Sec. 78-7 Waste Containers - Owners are to provide containers for litter generated by customers, licensees or invitees.

Sec. 78-10 Garbage Storage - All dumpster locations areas are required to be maintained in a clean condition and to ensure that all garbage is properly containerized.

Sec. 78-43 Trash and Debris - Trash and debris on property needs to be maintained/stored as to not cause blight.

Sec. 86-32 Occupation Tax Required - Every business in the unincorporated area of the county is required to pay an occupation tax under this Code and is required to have a Occupation Tax Certificate from the county for the privilege of engaging in a business, profession or occupation within the county if such licensing is not prohibited by state law.

Sec. 86-34 Display of Occupation Tax Certificate - All businesses must keep the Occupational Tax Certificate posted in a conspicuous place on the premises used for the business at all times.

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS



Department of Planning & Development

1117 West Avenue, Conyers, GA 30012

Tel: 770.278.7100

Office Hours: Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Code Enforcement Division

2570 Old Covington HWY SW, Conyers, 30012

Tel: 770.278.7103

Office Hours: Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Occupational Tax Certificate

businesslicense@rockdalecountyga.gov

Visit us online at:

[Rockdale County Planning & Development](#)

Building Permits & Inspections

inspections@rockdalecountyga.gov

Code Enforcement

code.violationsmailbox@rockdalecountyga.gov

Planning & Zoning

planningandzoning@rockdalecountyga.gov

Helpful Contacts

Local Utilities

Rockdale County Water Resources
(770) 278-7450

Atlanta Gas Light (800) 427-5463

Georgia Power (888) 660-5890

Snapping Shoals (770) 786-3484

Other Contacts

Chamber of Commerce (770) 483-7049

Secretary of State <https://sos.ga.gov/>

Sales Tax Resources

<https://dor.georgia.gov/taxes/taxes-business>