

VISITOR AND WEB SITE POLICIES

Douglas County Board of Commissioners

Visitor Policy

This web site is provided to you by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. This visitor agreement is a binding legal contract between you and us. Please read this visitor agreement; by using this service, you accept its terms. The Internet is an evolving medium; we may change the terms of this agreement from time to time. By continuing to use the service after we post any such changes, you accept this agreement, as modified.

We reserve the right to deny access to this web site, or any service provided via this web site, to anyone who violates this visitor agreement or who, in our judgment, interferes with the ability of others to enjoy this web site, or infringes the rights of others.

We invited you to send in your questions or comments about this web site, or to bring to our attention any material you believe to be inaccurate. Please send such comments, including a copy of any material you wish to discuss to webmaster@co.douglas.ga.us.

Copyright

While the Douglas County Board of Commissioners provides the information on this web site to anyone, we retain copyrights on all text, graphic images, and other content shown on the web site. This means that you may not distribute the text, graphics and images to others without the expressed written permission of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners; "mirror" this information on your server without our permission; or modify or re-use the text, graphics, and images on this system. However, you may print copies of the information for your own personal use. Any other use of the materials is prohibited without the prior written permission of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. Requests for permission to reproduce or distribute materials found on this web site may be sent to webmaster@co.douglas.ga.us, who has the authority to make such decisions on behalf of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

Disclaimer

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners works hard to make this web site an interesting, informative and enjoyable place. We cannot guarantee, however, that our visitors will always find everything to their liking or all of the information they request.

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners provides this web site for informational purposes and for ease of receiving certain services. Visitors may only use the material and the services through this web site for your personal and non-commercial use.

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners has made every effort to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of the information provided on this web site. However, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners does not warrant or make any representation as to the quality, content, accuracy, or completeness of the information, text graphics, links and other items contained on this web site or any other web site. Such materials have been compiled from a variety of sources and are subject to change without notice from the Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

If you rely on any information or service available through this web site, you do so at your own risk. You understand that you are solely responsible for any damage or loss you may incur that results from your use of any service or any material and/or data downloaded from or otherwise provided through this web site.

We cannot and do not review every posting made on this web site. You may well read any given posting before the webmaster does. We do not endorse or guarantee the accuracy of any posting, regardless of whether the posting comes from a user, from an "expert", or from a member of the County staff.

This web site and all materials, information and services available through it, are provided to the visitor "as is", "with all faults", and "as available". We cannot and do not warrant that the materials, information, and services will be error-free, continuously available, or free of viruses of other harmful components.

Under no circumstances shall we be liable to you or anyone else for any damages arising out of the use of this web site or any service available through this web site, including, without limitation, liability for consequential, special, incidental, indirect, or similar damages, even if we are advised beforehand of the possibility of such damages.

Because of the volume of e-mail messages sent by us and users of this web site, we cannot and do not always monitor such e-mail messages and attachments. You acknowledge and agree that such e-mail messages may contain certain viruses, worms or other harmful components. You also acknowledge and agree that you are solely responsible for screening the e-mail messages and attachments for viruses, worms, and other harmful components. You agree to indemnify and hold us harmless from any claim that may arise from your use of any e-mail service available through this web site.

Web Site Policy

The purpose of the Douglas County web site is to provide the public with convenient and efficient information about Douglas County's agencies, programs and services.

External Links

Douglas County links to external web sites in the hope that users will find reference materials and information on community-related subjects. We feel that providing external links using the guidelines below will assist visitors to the County web site to find as complete information as possible. These external links may be to other web or computer sites that are not owned, regularly reviewed or controlled by the County.

While we recognize our primary service is to our citizens, property owners, and businesses, it is evident that many of our web site's users are visitors and companies exploring business opportunities. We further recognize that economic development in Douglas County necessitates the need to link to outside agencies that gather data in this arena.

The County's web site is not intended to function as a public forum. The inclusion of these links are not to be construed as an endorsement or sponsorship of these external web sites, their content, products, services, or their hosts. Additionally, the County shall not be liable for any losses caused by a user's reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. The County specifically disavows responsibility for what a user may find on another site or for the personal opinions of individuals on any site, whether or not operated by Douglas County. The views and opinions of the authors of documents published on or linked to the County's web site do not necessarily state or reflect the opinion, policies or position of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

Douglas County allows entities meeting any of the following criteria to request a link to that entities' web site on the County web site:

- other governments, special purpose districts, hospitals, and public educational institutions in the State of Georgia;
- not-for-profit agencies and organizations that provide social and institutional services to Douglas County citizens; and
- organizations and agencies that are financially supported by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

Douglas County specifically disallows links to the following entities on the County web site except possibly via the Community Directory (where noted):

- for-profit businesses and organizations (Community Directory);
- churches, synagogues, temples and other religion-based entities, clubs, organizations, and programs, regardless of beliefs (Community Directory);
- not-for-profit organizations that are not directly financially supported by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners (Community Directory);

- political parties, candidates, or organizations; and
- individual citizens or families.

If you host a web site, you are free to establish a hypertext link to the County web site so long as the link does not state or imply any sponsorship of your site by us, or vice versa.

Prohibited Content

Offensive Materials

All postings shall respect the human dignity of all people and shall not contain materials that may reasonably be considered offensive. Offensive content would include, but not be limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, derogatory gender-specific comments, or any comments that would offend someone on the basis of age, sexuality, religious or political beliefs, national origin, and/or physical attributes.

Political or Religious Issues

The Douglas County web site shall not advocate support of or opposition to political candidates, parties, or ballot issues at any level of government, or promote any religious belief.

Advertisements

The Douglas County web site shall not carry any advertisement for a business, web site, service, institution or any other non-governmental entity.

Framing

Without our prior written permission, you may not frame, or inline link, any of the content of this web site, or incorporate into another web site or other service any of our intellectual property.

Trademarks

We do not want anyone to be confused as to which materials and services are provided by us and which are provided by others. You may not use any trademark or service mark appearing on the County web site without the prior written consent of the owner of the mark.

Jurisdiction

The visitor agreement and web site policy has been made in and shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia. By using this service, you consent to the exclusive jurisdiction of the State and Federal Courts covering Douglas County in all disputes arising out of or relating to this agreement or this web site.

Privacy Policy

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners respects the privacy of visitors to our site. This Privacy Policy governs the use and collection of information from you by Douglas County ("we" or "us") through your use of this web site. This Privacy Policy does not apply to any information you may provide to us through other means; for example, via mail, e-mail, or telephone. Please read this Privacy Policy carefully so that you understand our on-line privacy practices. By visiting this web site, you agree that your visit, and any dispute over our on-line privacy practices, is governed by this Privacy Policy and our Visitor Agreement. Questions regarding privacy issues should be directed to webmaster@co.douglas.ga.us.

Children's Privacy

Children should always get permission from their parents before sending any information about themselves (such as their names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers) over the Internet, to us or to anyone else. We will not knowingly allow anyone under 13 to register with our site or to provide any other personally identifying information. If you are under 13, please do not provide us with any personally identifying information about yourself.

Types of Information We Collect

The information we gather falls into two categories: (1) information (for example, your name and address) that you voluntarily supply when you register or initiate transactions, and (2) information gathered on

usage patterns and preferences as visitors navigate through our web site, use our services such as e-mail, or read our e-mail newsletters. In some cases, it is an agent or affiliate of ours that collects the information on our behalf. Third-party providers featured on or linked to by our site, such as agencies with which we cooperate, may be gathering the same kinds of information.

Registration Information

To make use of certain features on our site (such as to receive e-mail newsletters), visitors need to register and to provide certain information as part of the registration process.

E-mail Newsletters

We may also offer you the opportunity to subscribe to e-mail newsletters on topics that we believe are of interest to our visitors. If you have opted to receive a particular newsletter, you may always unsubscribe later if you decide not to receive further mailings of the newsletter from us.

Cookies

To help make our web site more responsive to the needs of our visitors, we use a standard feature of browser software, called a "cookie", to assign each visitor an unique, random number, a sort of User ID, that resides on your computer. The cookie doesn't actually identify the visitor, just the computer that a visitor uses to access our web site. Unless you voluntarily identify yourself, we won't know who you are, even if we assign a cookie to your computer. The only personal information a cookie can contain is information you supply. A cookie cannot read unrelated data off your hard drive. We use cookies to help us tailor our site to your needs, to deliver a better, more personalized service. For example, we use cookies to track the pages on our web site visited by our users. We can build a better web site if we know which pages our users are visiting and how often. Of course, you can set your Internet browser not to accept cookies.

Other Methods of Collecting Information

Our web pages may contain electronic images (called "single-pixel GIFs" or "web beacons") that allow us to count users who have visited particular pages or to access certain cookies. We may use these tools and other technologies to recognize which pages users visit, and which links on which they click. These features may also be included in our e-mail newsletters so that we can learn which messages have been opened and acted upon.

Browser Level Information and IP Addresses

Our web server automatically collects limited information about your computer configuration when you visit our web site, including the type of browser software you use, the operating system you are running, the resolution of your computer monitor, the web site that referred you, and your IP address. Your IP address is a numerical address that is used by computers connected to the Internet to identify your computer so that data such as the web pages you want to view can be transmitted to you. We also use IP address information for systems administration and trouble-shooting purposes. Your IP address does not tell us who you are. We use this information to deliver our web pages to you upon request, to tailor our web site to the interests of our users, and to measure traffic within our site.

Third Party Advertising

We do not allow third-party advertising on our web site. If a for-profit business or organization is mentioned on our web site, it is in a context other than advertising that business or organization.

Disclosure of Information

Advertisers

We do not allow third-party advertising on our web site, and we do not provide information we collect to advertisers or other for-profit organizations for their use.

Service Providers

To make our web site more valuable to our visitors, we may offer some features in conjunction with other providers. All service providers must either be (1) other governmental or quasi-governmental agencies; (2) State- or Federal-chartered municipal corporations; and/or (3) agencies and/or organizations that are partially sponsored by Douglas County.

Statistical Information

Much of the information we collect is in the form of aggregated statistics, such as the traffic that visits various pages within our sites, and the habits and preference of our audience. Such aggregated information does not include any information that would identify you personally. We may use such aggregated information and disclose it to third parties as we see fit.

Sites to Which We Link

Our web site includes links to other web sites, and provide access to services, and possibly products, offered by third parties whose privacy policies we don't control. When you access another site or purchase products or receive services or conduct other transactions via these links, use of any information you provide is governed by the privacy policy of the operator of the linked web site you are visiting or the provider of such products or services, even if it appears that you are still on the Douglas County web site.

Other Disclosures

We may occasionally release information about our visitors when release is appropriate to comply with law, to enforce our Visitor Agreement, or to protect the rights, property or safety of visitors to our sites, the public, our customers, or our government and its employees, agents, partners and affiliates.

Douglas County, as a governmental entity, is bound by the Freedom of Information Act, and, upon proper request under this Act, may be required to release information not normally available to the Public.

Storage of Information

All information gathered on our site is stored within a database operated by us or by a contractor on our behalf. Sensitive information, such as your password, is encoded for storage. Encryption scrambles your personal information. However, as effective as encryption technology is, no security system is impenetrable. We cannot guarantee the security of our database, nor can we guarantee that information you supply won't be intercepted while being transmitted to us over the Internet.

Accessibility Guidelines

Douglas County has developed consistent and strategic guidelines for the construction of on-line pages and services that appear as part of this web site. These guidelines are used to help ensure a positive user experience and easier accessibility by maintaining a consistent page layout, information architecture, and navigational structure. These guidelines include:

- all images on this web site contain alternative text descriptions for the benefit of the user's utilizing assistive technologies;
- all navigational image maps contain alternate, text-based hyperlinks in a clearly defined area;
- all on-line forms as also available for request in other formats, such as hard copy and can be faxed or e-mailed;
- the web site is accessible without the use of a mouse (tab-enabled);
- frames are never used as they are not interpretable by assistive technologies such as screen readers, and can often cause severe navigational breakdowns; and
- this web site uses Adobe Acrobat to create .pdf files to provide on-line access to County documents in their original formatting, and a free Acrobat Reader link is provided on all pages for ease of downloading and accessing these documents.

Changes to this Agreement and Policies and Posting

Douglas County reserves the right to change this Agreement and Policies at will, with or without advance notification to web site users. This Agreement and Policies, and any subsequent changes or additions, will be posted on the Douglas County web site at all times.