

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Accessory building?

An accessory building is a detached subordinate building, the use of which is incidental to that of the main building on the same lot or to the primary use of the land. Examples of accessory buildings include garages, carports, storage sheds, accessory dwelling units, and similar buildings.

When do I need a permit to build an accessory building in my backyard?

A Building Permit is required when an accessory building is more than 120 square feet in size (12' x 10' exterior dimensions). When utilities, i.e., electrical, plumbing, mechanical, etc., are present, permits will be required regardless of the size of the accessory building. If accessory structure is greater than 220 square feet, a Design Review approval is required *before* obtaining a building permit.

Can I build my accessory building up to the side and rear property lines?

Accessory buildings may be built up to the side and/or rear property lines when the building is located seventy-five feet (75') or more from the front property line. Walls located closer than three-feet (3') to a property line may have no openings and shall be of one-hour fire resistive construction.

All accessory buildings require a clearance of 6' from other buildings on the same property.

Can the accessory building cover my entire backyard?

If the required rear yard is 1,000 square feet or less, the accessory building may be permitted up to a size of 400 square feet. For properties with rear yards of 1,000 square feet or more, the accessory buildings may not occupy more than 40% of the rear yard. The "required rear yard" is usually within twenty feet (20') of the rear property line. Please check with planning staff to verify requirements specifically for your property.

What is the maximum height allowable for an accessory building?

Accessory buildings may have only one story and may not exceed fifteen feet (15') at a gable roof ridge or ten feet (10') at the top of the wall.

Can I add a second-story above an accessory building located in the required rear yard?

No. Accessory buildings are limited to one story. Any portion of an accessory building not located within the required rear yard is subject to main building coverage requirements.

What utilities may I have in my accessory building?

Typically, utilities may be permitted in accessory buildings. One sink may be permitted and work benches may also be allowed in utility accessory structures such as garages and sheds. However, such amenities may not displace existing parking spaces in a garage. All utilities are subject to zoning, building code, and other permit requirements for main buildings.

May I convert an accessory building into an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

Please review the Accessory Dwelling Unit Clearance Form to determine if your property is eligible for an ADU.