

Accessory Dwelling Units

DOs and DON'Ts



A quick reference for anyone considering adding an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to their current house.

ADU is defined in 16-29.001(12)(a)(7) Dwelling: Accessory — A detached dwelling unit meeting the height requirement of section 16-28.004 and having a floor area of 750 square feet or less on the same lot as a primary dwelling. Accessory dwelling units are distinct dwelling units as defined in Section 16-29.001(10)(a) with independent kitchen facilities.

DO

Make sure that your property is zoned to have an ADU. To research more about these allowances, visit our **Research Tool** or our **Code of Ordinances** via the QR codes on the right.

- ADUs are allowed in the following districts: R-4, R-4A, R-5, SPI-3, SPI-4, and SPI-19 (certain subareas).
- Special Public Interest and certain Historic Districts allow ADUs and may have design controls that must be met.

Research Tool



DO

Verify allowable height, lot coverage, building setbacks and required parking. Verify if a Special Administrative Permit (SAP) is required with the Zoning Department. To research more about these allowances, visit our **Research Tool** or our **Code of Ordinances** via the QR codes on the right.

Code of Ordinances



DO

Consider consulting a design professional.

DO

Prior to applying for a permit for an ADU, provide a site plan or a signed, sealed survey that identifies the location of a principal structure on the lot.

DO

Provide the ADU with a maximum floor area of 750 square feet or less.

- The maximum floor area is 750 square feet OR the maximum floor area ratio of the lot according to the zoning of the property, whichever is less.
- Every space under the roof is counted towards the floor area on each floor, including spaces not conditioned or habitable, except porches and/or decks.

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Verify the ADU will not exceed the maximum average building height of 20 feet. This can be done when drafting plans for submission.

DO

Provide a full kitchen in the ADU. It shall have a permanent cooking element (stove, range, oven, etc.). This must be shown on the plans drafted for submission.

DO

Provide egress windows/doors in all sleeping rooms. Sleeping rooms and hallways must contain smoke detectors. Carbon monoxide detectors must be on each floor and in hallways of sleeping rooms.

DO

Provide manufacturer's specifications if you intend to install an elevator.

DO

Provide the following drawings:

- **Coversheet.** Must include scope of work, project team contact, heated/unheated square footage, applicable codes, address, and design criteria.
- **Floor plans.** One per floor. Must be scaled and dimensioned. Label all rooms, plus exterior spaces/structures.
- **Building section.** Indicate building envelope/extent of insulation.
- **Wall section.** Show roof to foundation.
- **Framing plans.** Floor(s), ceiling, and roof framing.
- **Foundation plan.** Include piers, foundation wall, grade beams, etc.
- **Roof plan.** Include roof slope, overhang dimensions, chimneys, crickets, scuppers, drains, skylights, and vents.
- **Exterior elevations (all 4 sides).** Include finished floor lines, ceiling lines, roof lines, all exterior materials, window and door types, and basement floor lines.
- **Stair section.** Include details.

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Provide the following drawings:

- **Deck (or balcony/porch) section.** Include the size of porches and decks, both covered and uncovered. Size cannot be greater than 20% of what the ADU floor area will be.
- **Site plan.** Must indicate property line, primary structure, driveways, walkways, retaining walls, fences, and proposed ADU.

DO

Provide an engineer's stamp on all items that require one, such as:

- Trusses
- LVL (laminated veneer lumber)
- Retaining walls taller than 4 feet
- Pools deeper than 8 feet
- Second-story additions on existing foundation
- Double-story balconies/decks/porches

DON'T

Submit drawings that are stamped by a licensed professional engineer/architect but are NOT **"released for construction."** All stamped drawings must be deemed **"released for construction"**.

DON'T

Assume that your property is zoned for an ADU. ADUs must be built in locations that are in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance. Confirm the zoning of the property before submittal.

DON'T

Submit a survey without a licensed professional stamp. Note that surveys are not required and site plans can be submitted in their place; however, if a survey is submitted, it **must** be stamped.

DON'T

Submit plans without properly labeled rooms for all interior spaces.

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DON'T Provide headroom of less than 7 feet in all habitable rooms.

DON'T Submit drawings for an ADU without an existing principal structure on the property. ADUs are not allowed on vacant land.

DON'T Submit deck plans without a ledger detail.