

Accessory Dwelling Unit Checklist

To make sure your plans for a new accessory dwelling unit (ADU) comply with the applicable regulations, use the checklist below. Bring this checklist and a rough sketch of your property showing dimensions and the location of the primary residence and location of the proposed ADU to the Permit Center and meet with representatives from all divisions of Permit Sonoma. This free consultation can help you avoid designing plans that will not be approved. Other standards apply to junior accessory dwelling units; [visit our website](#) for more information.

[Visit our website to get a parcel report](#) to find your parcel's zoning and other information needed to answer many of the following questions.

| Question | Y | N | Outcome/Action |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>1. Primary Residence. Is there an existing or proposed primary residence on the parcel?</p> <p><i>ADUs are only allowed on properties with an existing or proposed legally permitted single-family or multifamily dwelling.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, an ADU is allowed.</p> <p>If no, an ADU is not allowed.</p> |
| <p>2. Zoning. Is the parcel in an agricultural, residential, or mixed-use zone (LIA, LEA, DA, RRD, AR, RR, R1, R2, R3, PC, CO, C1, C2, LC, WH, AH)?</p> | | | <p>If yes, an ADU is allowed.</p> <p>If no, an ADU is not allowed.</p> |
| <p>3. Is the parcel in the Z (Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion) Combining District, or is your property under a Williamson Act contract (agricultural preserve)?</p> <p><i>ADUs are not allowed on parcels with the Z zoning designation or subject to Williamson Act contracts.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, an ADU is NOT allowed.</p> <p>If no, an ADU is allowed.</p> |
| <p>4. Easements and Building Envelopes. Does the property have any dedicated easements or building envelopes?</p> <p><i>Easements are most accurately described on the Title Report that came with the purchase of your home or parcel maps. Building envelopes are shown on parcel maps, available at the County Assessor's Office.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, ADU development must comply with the requirements of the easement, which may include a prohibition on construction within easements. ADUs must also be located within designated building envelopes and/or meet other standards required by parcel maps, if applicable</p> <p>If no, ADU must only meet setback requirements as shown below.</p> |
| <p>5. Historic District. Is the parcel zoned HD (Historic) Combining District?</p> <p><i>Construction in the HD district may need to be approved by the County Landmarks Commission and, if applicable, may need to meet historic district design guidelines.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, speak with a Planner.</p> |
| <p>6. Scenic Resources Combining District. Is the parcel zoned LG (Local Guidelines) Combining District or SR (Scenic Resources) Combining District?</p> <p><i>ADUs located in the SR district may need to meet certain objective standards contained in the applicable SR district.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, speak with a Planner.</p> |
| <p>7. Riparian Corridor Setbacks. Is the parcel zoned RC (Riparian Corridor) Combining District?</p> <p><i>Development on parcels with RC zoning must comply with the designated streamside conservation area setbacks. The minimum streamside conservation area is listed within a parcel's zoning designation followed by the minimum setback for agricultural cultivation (e.g. RC50/25). The setback is measured from the top of bank on either side of any designated stream, creek, river, or drainage channel. Find out more information on the RC ordinance.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, demonstrate that ADU is located outside of the setbacks established by the RC ordinance.</p> |
| <p>8. Geologic Hazard Combining District. Is the property located in the G (Geologic Hazard) Combining District?</p> <p><i>ADUs may not be located across the trace of an active fault or within 50 feet of the surface trace of any fault.</i></p> | | | <p>If yes, demonstrate that ADU meets location requirements.</p> |

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| <p>9. Flood Zones. Is the parcel zoned F1 (Floodway) Combining District or F2 (Floodplain) Combining District?</p> <p><i>Construction is prohibited in the area zoned F1, and construction in F2 must meet additional construction and design standards.</i></p> | | | If yes, demonstrate that ADU meets F1 and F2 standards. | | | | | | |
| <p>10. Water and Sanitation. Are all required Well & Septic permits or public water and sewer connections established?</p> <p><i>If property is served by public sewer and/or water:</i> Prior to applying for a building permit, you must obtain evidence from sewer and water providers that they will provide sewer and/or water service to the ADU. Evidence should be provided to Engineering division at the time of applying for the building permit.</p> <p><i>If property is served by septic system and/or well:</i> You must obtain all required septic and/or well permits prior to applying for a building permit for an ADU. Permit status must be "Issued."</p> | | | If yes, you may submit an application for a building permit. If no, obtain all other required permits before submitting an application for a building permit. | | | | | | |
| DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>11. Location. Is your proposed ADU located as follows?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="147 737 894 1024"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Unit</th> <th>Setbacks</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>New construction, detached</td> <td>4-foot rear and side yard setbacks Front yard setback established by base zoning district</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attached to the main residence or accessory structure (garage, office, pool house, etc.)</td> <td>4-foot rear and side yard setbacks Front yard setback established by base zoning district Setbacks reduced to zero feet if converting existing structure</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Note: Greater setbacks may be required by the Building or Fire Code. Please have your plans reviewed by those divisions for compliance with those codes.</i></p> | Type of Unit | Setbacks | New construction, detached | 4-foot rear and side yard setbacks Front yard setback established by base zoning district | Attached to the main residence or accessory structure (garage, office, pool house, etc.) | 4-foot rear and side yard setbacks Front yard setback established by base zoning district Setbacks reduced to zero feet if converting existing structure | | | If yes, your planned location for the ADU is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved. |
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| <p>12. Size. Does the size of the proposed ADU comply with the maximum limits as follows?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="147 1188 894 1430"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Unit</th> <th>Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>New construction, detached</td> <td>Size of ADU limited to 1,200 square feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attached to or converted from a portion of the main residence or an accessory structure (garage, office, pool house, etc.)</td> <td>Size of ADU limited to 50 percent of the floor area of the primary residence If converted from a portion of an accessory structure, total combined floor area shall not exceed what is allowed per Policy 1-4-6 Detached Residential Accessory Structures</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Type of Unit | Size | New construction, detached | Size of ADU limited to 1,200 square feet | Attached to or converted from a portion of the main residence or an accessory structure (garage, office, pool house, etc.) | Size of ADU limited to 50 percent of the floor area of the primary residence If converted from a portion of an accessory structure, total combined floor area shall not exceed what is allowed per Policy 1-4-6 Detached Residential Accessory Structures | | | If yes, the size of your ADU is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved. |
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| <p>13. Height. Does the height of the ADU comply with the base zoning district height limits?</p> <p><i>Note: A detached ADU is limited to 16 feet in the R1, R2, and R3 zones.</i></p> | | | If yes, the height of your ADU is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved. | | | | | | |
| <p>14. Kitchen and Bathroom. Does your proposed ADU comply with these rules for the kitchen and bathroom?</p> <p><i>Kitchen:</i> Must meet standards in Permit Sonoma's Policy and Procedure 1-4-5, Definition of a Kitchen</p> <p><i>Bathroom:</i> Must include a sink, toilet, and shower and/or bath facilities.</p> | | | If yes, your ADU is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved. | | | | | | |

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| <p>15. Parking Requirements. Does your proposed ADU comply with either the requirement to provide one parking space OR qualify for an exemption?</p> <p><i>Exemptions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within ½ mile walking distance to transit stop • Parcel is zoned HD (Historic District) Combining Zone • ADU is part of proposed or existing primary residence or existing accessory structure • On-street parking permits are required, but not offered to ADU • Located within one block of a car share program <p>If required, parking space may be located in setback areas or in tandem. No replacement parking may be required if parking is eliminated due to construction of the ADU (i.e., if a garage is converted to an ADU).</p> | | | <p>Your project will be evaluated for compliance with parking requirements. Either provide a space or demonstrate that it qualifies for an exemption.</p> |
| FIRE SAFETY & EMERGENCY ACCESS | | | |
| <p>Your ADU project will be reviewed for compliance with the California Fire Code (CFC) so that projects are built for safety and ease of access during an emergency. For questions relating to fire requirements and safety, contact the Fire Prevention Division.</p> | | | |

