

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Accessory building?

An accessory building is a detached subordinate building, any part of which is within a required minimum yard of the subject Zoning District, and the use of which is incidental to that of the main building on the same lot, or to the use of the land. For properties within a Residential zone, or with a Residential use, the uses of such accessory buildings are restricted to garages, carports, storage sheds, and similar buildings which are found by the Building Official to conform to the "U" (utility) occupancy classification.

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

A Building Permit and Design Review 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.

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

Garages, sheds, and other 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.

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 the shed?

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 within the required rear yard are limited to one story. Accessory buildings not located within the rear yard would be subject to requirements for main buildings.

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. 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.