



# Community Development Department Planning Division

## ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

### WHAT IS AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE?

An accessory structure is a detached structure, which provides for a secondary use on a site. The term includes detached garages, gazebos, covered detached decks, sheds and similar buildings. It does not include portable spas or swimming pools, unless some type of structure encloses them. It also does not include accessory dwelling units, which are governed by a separate set of regulations (see the "Accessory Dwelling Units" information sheet).

### COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONES

In all commercial and industrial zones, accessory structures are subject to the same standards and regulations as the primary structure. See the "Property Development Standards" summary sheet for a list of standards applicable to each zone. Off-site accessory uses may be possible with the approval of a staff-level use permit. All projects in commercial and industrial zones are subject to design review. The location of accessory structures in a PD zoning district is governed by the adopted PD plan for that specific PD district, and may be subject to design review. The remainder of this information sheet applies exclusively to accessory structures in residential zones.

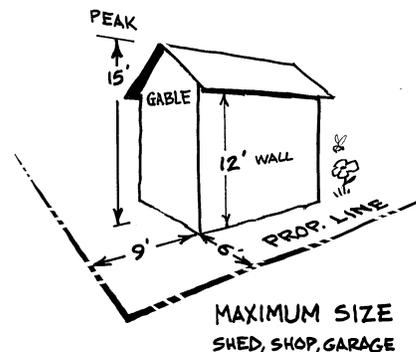
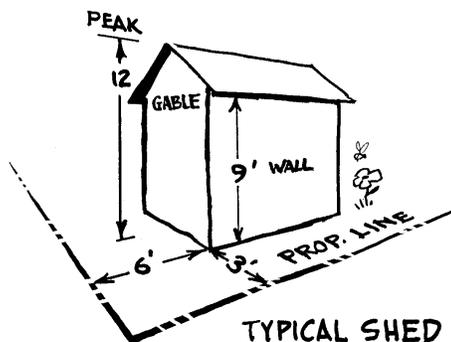
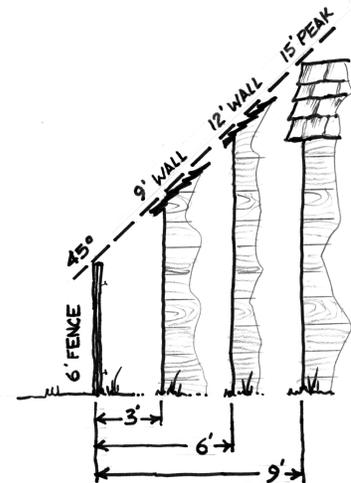
### RESIDENTIAL ZONES

The following information pertains exclusively to accessory structures in residential (RS, RM, RH) zones.

### WHERE CAN I PUT ONE ON MY LOT?

Accessory structures may be built behind the front wall of a primary structure in a rear yard, interior side yard, or corner side yard. In the RS zone, where the front yard area exceeds the 20-foot minimum setback, under certain circumstances a detached garage may be placed in front of the front wall of a residence. Overall, certain setbacks apply based on the height of the accessory structure, as listed below:

Accessory Structure Setbacks in Residential Zones	
<b>IF...the wall height of the structure, closest to a property line, is:</b>	<b>THEN...the setback from a side or rear property line is:</b>
6 feet or lower	Either 0 feet or 3 feet
7 to 9 feet	3 feet minimum
10 feet	4 feet minimum
11 feet	5 feet minimum
12 feet (max wall height)	6 feet minimum
<b>BUT, IF...the peak of the structure is:</b>	<b>THEN...the minimum setback from a side or rear property line is:</b>
13 feet	7 feet
14 feet	8 feet
15 feet	9 feet
16 feet to 20 feet (RS only)	10 feet to 14 feet (RS only)



## **HOW TALL CAN IT BE?**

An accessory structure can have a maximum wall height of 12 feet. However, a pitched roof may extend to 15 feet in height. In RS (Single-Family Residential) zones only, a pitched roof may extend to 20 feet in height, but only where necessary to match the architectural features of a residence on the same lot. Overall, for each additional foot of roof height above 12 feet, the setback requirement is increased by one foot. No second story, other than an unfinished storage area, may be developed for any accessory structure in a residential district.

## **HOW BIG CAN IT BE?**

The maximum size of an accessory building is governed by the size of the lot. The total amount of lot area covered by all roofed structures on the property cannot exceed 40 percent of the lot area (in the RS zoning district; the allowed lot coverage in RM zones is 45%, and 50% in RH zones). The percentage includes the house, garage, patio cover, or any other structures with roofs on the property, or decks more than 30 inches in height. In the RS zone, structures under 48 inches in height, such as doghouses or coops, and decks less than 30 inches in height, do not count toward that total. Also in the RS zone, the total area of any one accessory building on a lot cannot exceed the total area of the residence on the lot.

## **HOW CLOSE CAN IT BE TO OTHER BUILDINGS?**

An accessory structure must be placed at least 3 feet away from the primary structure on the lot. It may be placed directly against another accessory building or a fence, but additional fire protection regulations may apply (check with the Building Division for more details). If an accessory structure is not placed directly against another structure, then it must be at least 3 feet away from that structure.

## **GARAGES OR CARPORTS ON ALLEYS**

If you wish to construct a detached garage along an alley, then each garage door facing the alley must be placed at least 4 feet from the alley property line. A carport facing an alley must also be placed at least 4 feet from the property line. All regular setbacks listed above, based on the height of the structure, will still apply.

## **FREESTANDING DECKS**

Freestanding, uncovered decks of less than 30 inches in height may be located anywhere in a rear yard or interior side yard, and may project into the corner side yard setback by 4 feet. The deck area is not included in lot coverage calculations. However, any deck which is over 30 inches in height must meet standard setback requirements, which for a single-family residence are: 15 feet from the rear property line, 5 feet from an interior side property line, and 10 feet from a street side property line. The setbacks in RM and RH districts are higher; see the "Property Development Standards" summary sheet for those setbacks. Refer to the "Building Additions" information sheet for more information about attached decks.

## **FREESTANDING DECKS ADJACENT TO OPEN SPACE**

In the RS zone only, if a rear property line adjoins an area of permanent open space (such as the large open space areas in Southampton), a freestanding deck may be constructed closer to the property line than would normally be permitted. A detached deck which is between 30 inches and 48 inches high may be placed as close as 3 feet from the rear property line. However, a 5-foot side yard setback (or 10-foot corner side yard setback) is still required.

## **SWIMMING POOLS**

An outdoor swimming pool or spa may be constructed in a side or rear yard, but the pool, spa, and any related mechanical equipment must be placed at least 5 feet from the side and rear property lines. Pools and in-ground spas are not included in lot coverage calculations.

## **WHAT DOES IT NEED TO LOOK LIKE?**

Except in the historic districts, there are no design review requirements for accessory structures in the RS zone. Design review is required for all projects in RM and RH districts. It is always a good idea to be sensitive to the concerns of your neighbors when planning and locating an accessory building on your lot. In the Downtown and Arsenal Historic Conservation Districts, new accessory buildings on lots containing designated historic homes must undergo design review. See a member of the Planning staff for further information on design review in the historic districts.

**DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?**

The need for a building permit is based on the requirements of the Uniform Building Code. The City's Building Division makes that determination. You should contact the Building Division at 746-4230 and discuss your project with them; they in turn can tell you if a permit is necessary. Although a permit may not always be needed, accessory buildings must always meet the requirement of the Zoning Ordinance with regard to setbacks, coverage, and height. Even if your accessory structure does not require a building permit, you may submit the plans to the Planning staff for review prior to construction to verify that the plans meet zoning requirements.

**RELATED FORMS AND INFORMATION:**

- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Property Development Standards
- Building Additions in the RS zone