



Planning & Community  
Development

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# Accessory Dwelling Unit

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a separate dwelling unit/apartment that can either be rented out or used by family provided owner occupancy is maintained. One, legally established ADU is allowed for each residential lot and can be located in the same structure as the main dwelling unit/house or in a detached structure.

## Dwelling Unit

An ADU contains complete independent living facilities including living, sleeping, cooking, sanitation, and is served by a separate entry. If one of these elements is absent the space is not considered a dwelling unit.

An ADU must meet applicable Shoreline building codes. An attached ADU shall be separated from the main house by a one-hour fire rated assembly or have interconnected smoke alarms or fire sprinklers with the main house in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 13D. An ADU in a separate building must have an approved fire separation. Additionally, occupants of both the ADU and the main house must have unrestricted access to utility controls for systems (i.e. water, electricity, and fuel gas) in each respective unit or in a common area.



## **Hours of Operation:**

Monday 8:00 am–5:00 pm  
Tuesday 8:00 am–5:00 pm  
Wednesday 1:00 pm–5:00 pm  
Thursday 8:00 am–5:00 pm  
Friday 8:00 am–5:00 pm

*Permit Processing Ends at 4:00 pm Daily*

## Owner Occupancy

The owner of the property or an immediate family member must live in either the main house or the ADU. The ADU may not be subdivided or otherwise segregated in ownership from the main house. It is allowed only as an accessory use to the primary residence.

## **Size Restrictions**

Attached and detached ADUs are limited to half the size of the living area in the main dwelling/house. For instance, if the main house is 1,400 square feet, the ADU cannot be larger than 700 square feet.

*Exception: An ADU interior to the residence may be larger than 50 percent of the primary residence where the unit is located on a separate floor and shares a common roof (i.e. daylight basement).*

## **Parking**

One off-street parking space is required for an ADU in addition to the two parking spaces required for the main dwelling unit/house. This requirement may be met using tandem (end-to-end) spaces for the minimum parking for the main house

## **Converting a Nonconforming structure to an ADU**

Many older accessory structures, such as detached garages, do not meet current setback requirements. These structures are “nonconforming” and cannot be converted to an ADU.

## **Permit Requirements**

An ADU must meet applicable Shoreline building codes. An ADU building permit is required, in addition to any required plumbing, mechanical, or electrical permits. Building code requirements for unit separation must also be met. When establishing an ADU, all rooms designated as bedrooms must meet current building code emergency egress standards except where evidence is provided depicting a previously permitted bedroom. Permit applications for the ADU building permit will need to include a site plan (to scale) showing all existing and proposed buildings, parking, and driveway areas. Additionally, information on the total living area of the main house and the total living area of the ADU is required.

The new development will have to meet all of the zoning standards for your area, including building setbacks, building coverage, hardscape, and height limitation standards. An ADU is also subject to a Transportation Impact Fee. Please see the [Transportation Impact Fee Development Handout](#) for fees and additional information.

A notice on title must be recorded with the ADU permit as a permanent record that your ADU is legal for only as long as it conforms to the Code requirements. City staff will prepare the notice on title when you apply for the ADU permit and send it to you with instructions on how to record it at the King County Recorder’s Office. The notice on title must be recorded prior to issuance of the ADU permit.

