



Planning & Community
Development

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Accessory Structures

All residential accessory structures including “temporary” storage or carport structures are regulated in the same manner as site-constructed “permanent” accessory structures on residential property. The City of Shoreline Development Code and the International Residential Code define specifically which structures are subject to the permitting and the location standards.

Permit Requirements

If the structure is over 200 square feet, over ten feet in height, or attached to another structure (regardless of square footage), a building permit is required to construct it on your property. It must comply with all of the pertinent regulations such as setbacks and ability to resist wind, earthquakes, and snow loads. There may also be energy requirements that look at the thermal envelope of a heated structure, the mechanical and lighting systems. Please see Permit Exemptions Development Handout for more information.

If you need a building permit, you must provide details for the foundation, framing, attachment and anchorage, and design loads. This information is available from the manufacturer for a prefabricated structure. Please see the Residential Building Permit Checklist for more information.

Location

Typically, structures over 200 square feet or over ten feet high will need to be set back from the property line a minimum distance, which is the “yard setback”. Yard setbacks are determined based on the zoning designation for your property.

Typical yard setbacks for single family residential zones are as follows:

- Front/street: 20 feet from front/street property line
- Side: 5 feet minimum from either property line to the eave
- Rear: 15 feet from rear property line

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



Exception: One uninhabited detached accessory structure less than 200 square feet in area (footprint) and less than 10 feet high, such as a storage shed or greenhouse, may be located within the required rear or side yard setback. The structure must maintain a fire separation distance from other structures consistent with the adopted building codes. To be considered “detached” the structure must be located a minimum of 5 feet from other buildings on the same lot.

If a detached accessory structure, which is less than 200 square feet in area and less than 10 feet high, is located in the side yard, the structure must be setback at least five feet further than the house from any street.

Size Restrictions

The International Fire Code regulates enclosed tent-type structures that are over 200 square feet. A separate permit from the Shoreline Fire Department is necessary and the structure may only be used on a temporary basis (not more than 180 days within a 12-month period on a single property). Canopies over 400 square feet also require a permit. These requirements should be verified with the Shoreline Fire Department (206) 533-6500. Though structures of this type are only to be used on a temporary basis, they may still require a building permit and accordingly must meet yard setbacks and other applicable provisions of the Development Code.