



ACCESSORY UNIT ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

What is an accessory unit?

The City of Santa Clara defines an accessory unit as one additional dwelling unit that includes a single kitchen, sleeping quarters, not more than one bathroom, and not more than two bedrooms on a lot 6,000 square feet or greater or one bedroom on a lot less than 6,000 square feet, on a lot with an existing single-family dwelling. The accessory unit may be attached to or part of the existing single-family unit or may be a detached structure and shall meet all other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, including design compatibility with the main residence in accordance with the City's design guidelines.

Can I establish an accessory unit on my property?

Accessory units are permitted by right in the R1-6L – Single-Family Zoning District and R1-8L – Single-Family, Larger Lot Area Zoning District on lots that have an existing single-family dwelling.

What is the permitting and approval process?

Building permits are required for the construction of an accessory unit. The Planning Division will review the application for conformance with the relevant zoning regulations as part of the Building Division permitting process.

SUMMARY OF ACCESSORY UNIT REGULATIONS

LOT SIZE	< 6,000 SQUARE FEET		≥ 6,000 SQUARE FEET	
	ATTACHED UNIT	DETACHED UNIT	ATTACHED UNIT	DETACHED UNIT
SQUARE FOOTAGE	50% of the living area of the main dwelling (up to 1,200 square feet)	1,200 square feet	50% of the living area of the main dwelling (up to 1,200 square feet)	1,200 square feet
LOT COVERAGE	40% total lot coverage			
REAR YARD COVERAGE	40% total rear yard coverage			
FLOOR AREA RATIO	.40 for all structures		N/A	
NUMBER OF STORIES	One story	One story	Up to two stories	One story
HEIGHT	25 feet	14 feet	25 feet	14 feet
SETBACKS	20 feet	5 feet beyond the front setback of the main dwelling unit	20 feet	5 feet beyond the front setback of the main dwelling unit
<i>Front</i>				
<i>Interior Side</i>	5 feet	3 feet*	5 feet	3 feet*
<i>Side Corner</i>	15 feet	15 feet	15 feet	15 feet
<i>Rear</i>	20 feet	5 feet	20 feet	5 feet
PARKING	No additional parking is required.			
PARKING CONVERSION	If the required covered parking is demolished to develop an accessory unit, two replacement parking spaces (covered, uncovered tandem, individually accessible) must be provided.			
MAX NUMBER OF BEDROOMS	One bedroom		Two bedrooms	
MAX NUMBER OF BATHROOMS	One bathroom			
DESIGN	Roof, siding and windows must be consistent with the roof slope, materials and design of the main dwelling unit. Additional regulations apply to attached second-story accessory units.**			

*Verify California Building Code requirements for openings along property lines.

**Design criteria applying to second-story accessory units:

- Enclosed or internal staircases to access attached second story accessory units are required.
- Second-floor area of the building shall not exceed 66% of the first floor building area (including the garage area).
- Five-foot front step back from the front wall of the main dwelling unit. 10-foot step back if the garage is closest to the front property line.
- Three-foot side and rear setbacks from the walls of the first floor, or clerestory windows with five-foot sill height are required.
- Second-floor balconies must be located on rear elevations and setback 15 feet from a side property line, with a maximum depth of four feet.
- The floor to ceiling height must be equal to or less than the average floor to ceiling height of the first floor (7-foot minimum).

***Properties designated on the City's Historical Properties List shall be subject to additional review; reference General Plan Appendix 8.9