



Accessory Structures

Public Information Handout

What is an accessory structure?

An accessory structure is a building that is secondary to the primary use of the property. The primary use of a property is usually a residence. An accessory structure may be attached or detached from the primary structure. Examples of accessory structures include: garages, carports, decks, fences, trellises, flagpoles, stairways, heat pumps, awnings, and other structures.

What are the development standards?

Standards provide for necessary access around structures, help maintain privacy to adjoining lots, and maintain open front yard setbacks. The following apply to all accessory structures:

- Property must already have a residence (primary building) built on the site before an accessory structure can be built.
- An accessory structure shall not contain space for living, sleeping, eating, cooking or sanitation.

Where can the structure be located?

Covered Accessory Structures:

This category includes greenhouses, storage buildings not used to cover motor vehicles, sheds, workshops, covered decks, covered porches, gazebos, and covered recreational structures.

- Not allowed in the front or side building setbacks.
- Side yard waivers, used to reduce the side yard setback are not allowed for this type of accessory structure.

Detached Accessory Structures:

This category includes garages, carports and other structures used to cover motorized vehicles. These structures are not attached in any way to the residence.

- Not allowed in the front setback (20 feet).
- If the structure has an entrance that faces a street, it is required to be setback twenty feet from the property line. This applies to a front street or a side street lot line.
- Side setback is five feet or a waiver may be signed by the neighbor to reduce this setback.
- May be built to the rear property line if on an alley (or with a signed waiver from the neighbor).

Attached Accessory Structures:

This category includes structures that are connected by a common wall to the primary structure. The attached accessory structures can be garages, carports or other structures used to cover motorized vehicles.

- Not allowed in front building setback (20 feet).

- If the structure has an entrance that faces a street, it is required to be built twenty feet from the property line. This applies to a front street or a side street lot line.
- May be built to within five feet of the rear property line.
- Side setback is five feet and cannot be reduced with a waiver from the neighbor

How much of the building site can be covered with structures?

The combined building coverage of all detached accessory structures and covered accessory structures may not exceed fifteen percent of the total area of the site, and when combined with all other structures on-site shall not exceed the maximum building coverage allowed in that zone.

How tall can the accessory structure be built?

Covered Accessory Structures:

- Maximum Wall Height: 15 feet, measured where the roof intersects the wall
- Maximum Roof Height: 20 feet, measured at the height of the ridge of the roof

Detached Accessory Structures:

- Maximum Wall Height: 15 feet, measured where the roof intersects the wall
- Maximum Roof Height: 20 feet, measured at the height of the ridge of the roof

Attached Accessory Structures:

- Check requirements for the zone in which the property is located.

Are there any other requirements?

- Building permits can be obtained through the Building Department.
- Applicant needs to provide site plan showing dimensions of the proposed building and property, and the proposed setbacks from the property lines.
- Plans must be provided showing the floor plan, footings, wall section and truss detail.
- Building permits are not needed for detached structures less than 120 square feet in size.
- Runoff must be controlled on-site.
- The structure must have a one-hour firewall construction on any wall less than three feet from an adjacent property line. Refer to the Building Department's handout (SFR13) for more details.
- For more information contact:

Planning Services Department
3rd Floor, City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, Washington 99201
(509) 625-6060
www.spokaneplanning.org