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Development Services

Accessory Dwelling Unit/Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit

INFORMATION

BULLETIN

400

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Feedback

This Information Bulletin provides guidance on the City of San Diego's requirements for obtaining a Building Permit to construct Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADU). General Regulations for ADUs and/or JADUs can be

 **Editor's Note:** Some of the regulations and guidelines outlined below are not effective within the Coastal Overlay Zone.

On Sept. 12, 2024, the Coastal Commission certified ADU regulations associated with Housing Action Package 1.0 (O-21439 [PDF](#)). ADU projects in the Coastal Overlay Zone are now subject to the setback and landscape requirements established in Housing Action Package 1.0 [PDF](#).

The regulations and guidelines outlined below will become effective within the Coastal Overlay Zone when the California Coastal Commission certifies Ordinance Numbers O-21618 [PDF](#), O-21758 [PDF](#), O-21836 [PDF](#), and O-21989 [PDF](#).

Here are notable ADU/JADU regulations that are NOT in effect in the Coastal Overlay Zone:

A. Housing Action Package 2.0 (O-21758 [PDF](#))

- Accessible ADU home incentive program
- A JADU home may only be constructed within an existing or proposed single dwelling unit, or an attached garage

B. 2024 Land Development Code Update (O-21836 [PDF](#))

- Street tree requirements for ADUs in the Open Space-Residential Zone or on a lot with environmentally sensitive lands is based on the allowable development area.
- The interior side yard and rear side yard setbacks for ADU structures over 16 feet in height that are adjacent to a residential use may use the base zone regulations if they are less than the ADU minimum 4-foot setback.

C. 2025 ADU and JADU Regulation Amendments (O-21989 [PDF](#))

- Adjustments to the ADU Home Density Bonus Program.
- Alignment with state law.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

What is an ADU?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is an attached or detached residential dwelling unit that:

- Is 1,200 square feet in size or less; and
- Provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation; and

- Is located on a lot with a proposed or existing single-dwelling unit or multiple-dwelling units.

Development of multiple ADUs, including Bonus ADUs, are required to comply with the base zone development regulations limiting structure height, lot coverage, and maximum floor area ratio.

ADUs Allowable Locations

ADUs are permitted in Zones where Use Regulation Tables identify ADUs as allowable Limited Uses. Generally, ADUs are allowed in Zones that permit Residential Uses.

- Base Zone Designations: Use Regulation Tables in [SDMC Chapter 13, Article 1, Divisions 1 through 7](#) (/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code/chapter-13)
- Planned District Ordinance Zone Designations: Use Regulation Tables in [SDMC Chapter 15, Articles 2 through 20](#) (/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code/chapter-15)
- Find your Zone Designation by visiting the [Zoning and Parcel Information Portal \(ZAPP\)](#) (/zapp)

Number of Allowed ADUs

A. Single Dwelling Unit Zone A single dwelling unit zone is a zone that allows a maximum of one dwelling unit on a single lot. Dwelling units permitted within single dwelling unit zones:

- 1 Single Primary Dwelling Unit; and
- 1 Accessory Dwelling Unit attached to or detached from an existing or proposed dwelling unit; and
- 1 Accessory Dwelling Unit converted from the existing or proposed space of a single dwelling unit or an existing accessory structure; and
- 1 Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit

B. Single Dwelling Unit Zone Exception for Existing Multi-Dwelling Unit Buildings
Within single dwelling unit zones, where a legally permitted, previously conforming multi-dwelling unit structure exists, ADUs may be constructed in accordance with the multiple-dwelling unit zone provisions outlined below in **Multiple-Dwelling Unit Zones**.

C. Other Allowances In addition to the Primary and Accessory Dwelling Units, Guest Quarters and Non-Habitable Accessory Structures are also allowed.

ADUs proposed in conjunction with the City's implementation of [California Senate Bill 9 \(2021-2022\)](#) (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB9) are subject to the provisions in [SDMC Chapter 14, Article 3](#).

Division 13 (reference §143.1305(c)) [PDF](#). If the project proposes an Urban Lot Split in accordance with §143.1315 [PDF](#), a signed affidavit from the Record Owner will also be required.

Multiple-Dwelling Unit Zones

A multiple-dwelling unit zone is a zone that allows more than one dwelling unit on a single lot.

A. Conversions or Interior Alterations of Existing Structures

Existing Non-Habitable Area: The maximum number of ADUs permitted within the existing non-livable space of an existing multiple-dwelling unit structure is 25% of the total number of existing dwelling units. Examples include storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, and garages. One ADU is permitted where the percentage calculation yields less than one ADU.

B. Construction of New Detached Structures

A maximum of eight detached ADUs are permitted on a premises with an existing multiple-dwelling unit structure, but the number of detached ADUs shall not exceed the number of existing units on the lot. A maximum of two detached ADUs are permitted on a premises with a proposed multiple-dwelling unit structure. Attached ADUs are not permitted on premises with an existing or proposed multiple-dwelling unit structure.

C. Multiple-Dwelling Unit Zones with an Existing Single-Dwelling Unit Building

Within multiple-dwelling unit zones, where a legally permitted single-dwelling unit structure exists, ADUs may be constructed in accordance with the **Single-Dwelling Unit Zone** provisions outlined above.

The premises may construct the ADU(s) without a requirement to construct any other additional primary dwelling units.

ADU Size Regulations

- A. The minimum gross floor area for an attached or detached ADU is 150 square feet.
- B. The maximum gross floor area for an attached or detached ADU is 1,200 square feet.
- C. The gross floor area of an ADU is included in the total gross floor area of a premises and is subject to the floor area ratio of the underlying zone, with the following exceptions:
 1. When a lot contains existing dwelling units that exceed the maximum allowable FAR of the zone, one ADU up to 800 square feet in size may nevertheless be constructed.
 2. When a lot contains existing dwelling units that do not exceed the maximum allowable FAR, one ADU up to 800 square feet in size may be constructed even if the resulting FAR exceeds the maximum allowable FAR of the zone. Additions

or expansions to the existing dwelling units may be included in the same application as the ADU if the total FAR of the existing dwelling units plus the proposed additions or expansions does not exceed the maximum allowable FAR of the zone, excluding the gross floor area of the ADU.

3. When a project proposes new dwelling units that will comply with the maximum allowable FAR, one ADU up to 800 square feet in size may be constructed regardless of whether the gross floor area of the ADU causes the project to exceed the maximum allowable FAR of the zone.

D. Minimum room dimension requirements contained within the California Building Standards Code are applicable.

E. The conversion of an existing accessory structure or a portion of the existing primary residence to an ADU is not subject to the 1,200-square-foot maximum gross floor area limitation.

F. An ADU constructed within an existing accessory structure or a portion of the existing single dwelling unit may construct an additional 150 square feet to only allow for ingress and egress.

ADU Height Regulations

- A. On lots that permit single-dwelling unit development but not multiple-dwelling unit development, detached ADU structures and ADUs attached to an existing accessory structure shall not exceed two stories.
- B. ADUs shall comply with the overall maximum structure height of the underlying base zone and overlay zone.

ADU Setback Regulations

A. Conversions or Interior Alterations of Existing Structures

Where an existing structure is converted to an ADU, the ADU may continue to observe the setbacks of the existing structure.

B. Demolition and Reconstruction of Existing Structures

Where an existing structure is demolished and reconstructed as an ADU, the ADU may continue to observe the setbacks of the original structure. The reconstruction must be at the same location and to the same dimensions as the original structure.

C. Addition of Floor Area to Existing Structures

Where an addition to an existing structure is proposed for an ADU, the ADU must observe the Front Yard Setback of the Zone. The ADU must observe the Street Side Yard Setback of the Zone, or a minimum Street Side Yard Setback of 4 feet, whichever is less. The ADU may encroach into the Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks of the Zone, including up to the Property Line, unless requirements in the California Building Standards Code apply, including requirements for fire separation distance, opening protection, allowable height, and allowable area.

If the side or rear property line abuts another premises that is residentially zoned or developed with exclusively residential uses, an ADU with a structure height that exceeds 16 feet shall observe a minimum 4-foot Interior Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks, or the minimum Interior Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks of the Zone, whichever is less.

If the premises is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the ADU must observe a minimum 4-foot Interior Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks, regardless of structure height.

The Fire Code Official may require greater setbacks for an ADU to ensure compliance with the California Fire Code and the International Fire Code. Additional setbacks may also be required if the site is located within the Brush Management Zone.

D. Construction of New Detached Structures

Where a new structure is proposed as an ADU, the ADU must observe the Front Yard Setback of the Zone. The ADU must observe the Street Side Yard Setback of the Zone, or a minimum Street Side Yard Setback of 4 feet, whichever is less. The ADU may encroach into the Side and Rear Setbacks of the Zone, including up to the Property Line, unless requirements in the California Building Standards Code apply, including requirements for fire separation distance, opening protection, allowable height, and allowable area.

If the side or rear property line abuts another premises that is residentially zoned or developed with exclusively residential uses, an ADU with a structure height that exceeds 16 feet shall observe a minimum 4-foot Interior Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks, or the minimum Interior Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks of the Zone, whichever is less.

If the premises is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the ADU must observe a minimum 4-foot Interior Side Yard and Rear Yard Setbacks, regardless of structure height.

The Fire Code Official may require greater setbacks for an ADU to ensure compliance with the California Fire Code and the International Fire Code. Additional setbacks may also be required if the site is located within the Brush Management Zone.

Exterior staircases, decks, and balconies must conform to the base zone setback.

E. Front Yard Requirements

ADUs must observe the Front Yard Setback of the Zone. However, a maximum of one ADU of 800 square feet or less may encroach into the Front Yard Setback.

F. Street Side Yard Requirements

ADUs must observe the Street Side Yard Setback of the Zone, or a minimum Street

Side Yard Setback of 4 feet, whichever is less.

ADU Parking Regulations

- A. No parking spaces are required for ADUs outside of the Coastal Overlay Zone. No parking is required within the Coastal Overlay Zone except if the property is located within the Beach Impact Area of the Parking Impact Overlay Zone and outside of a transit priority area. In this instance, one off-street parking space is required unless any of the following apply:
 - The ADU is 500 square feet or less;
 - The premises is located within a historical district that is a designated historical resource;
 - The ADU is attached to the proposed or existing primary dwelling unit or accessory structure;
 - The premises is located within a residential permit parking district; or
 - There is a car share vehicle located within one block of the premises.
- B. The conversion or demolition of a garage, carport, or covered parking structure does not require the replacement of parking spaces, except if the property is located in the Coastal Overlay Zone and within the Beach Impact Area of the Parking Impact Overlay Zone and outside of a transit priority area.
- C. The demolition or conversion of uncovered parking spaces does not require the replacement of those parking spaces.
- D. If the construction of an ADU causes an existing driveway curb to no longer comply with City standards, the driveway shall be closed to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- E. Where off-street parking spaces are provided, parking spaces may be within setback areas and may include tandem configurations and mechanical lifts.
- F. Where off-street parking spaces are provided, parking spaces must be entirely within the property line of a premises, and must conform to the dimension standards of SDMC Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 5 [PDF](#).

Other Regulations

- A. The property owner is not required to live on-site.
- B. An ADU may not be leased for a term of less than 31 consecutive days.
- C. ADU(s) development is subject to Refuse, Organic Waste, and Recycle Material Storage Regulations in SDMC §142.0801 [PDF](#). Development will need to conform to Table 142-08B [PDF](#) enclosure square footage and screening requirements.
- D. ADU(s) development exceeding four dwelling units is subject to the Mobility Choices Regulations in SDMC §143.1103 [PDF](#).

E. Building Code Requirements

ADUs must comply with all requirements in the California Building Standards Code, including requirements for fire separation distance, opening protection, allowable height, and allowable area. **These requirements may result in increased setback requirements for ADU development.**

F. On sites with an existing multiple dwelling unit structure, existing landscaping must be preserved or replaced to the extent feasible.

ADU Fire Sprinkler Systems

- A. An ADU shall not be required to provide automatic fire sprinklers if they are not required for the primary dwelling unit.
- B. An ADU shall be required to provide an automatic fire sprinkler system if it is located on a premises where the primary dwelling unit is protected with an automatic fire sprinkler system.
- C. The construction of a detached ADU shall not trigger a requirement for automatic fire sprinklers to be installed in the existing primary dwelling unit or multiple dwelling unit structure, unless required by the California Building Standards Code.

Reference [Technical Bulletin RESD 3-4](#)  for fire sprinkler requirements in ADUs.

ADU Solar Photovoltaic Systems

- A. Newly constructed ADUs are subject to the California Energy Code requirement to provide solar panels if the unit(s) is a newly constructed, non-manufactured, detached ADU. Per the California Energy Commission (CEC), the panels can be installed on the ADU or the primary dwelling unit.
- B. ADUs constructed within existing space or as an addition to existing homes, including detached additions where an existing detached building is converted from non-residential to residential space, are not subject to the California Energy Code requirement to provide solar panels.

ADU Home Density Bonus Program

Bonus ADUs shall be permitted in accordance with the following requirements.

Reference [SDMC §141.0302\(d\)](#)  for program details.

Locational Requirements

- A. To qualify for Bonus ADUs, the portion of the premises where the additional ADUs are proposed must not be within any of the following base zones: RS-1-1, RS-1-2, RS-1-3, RS-1-4, RS-1-8, RS1-9, RS-1-10, or RS-1-11, unless the premises is in an area identified as a High or Highest Resource California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) Opportunity Area and the premises is identified as residential in the applicable land use plan.

- Only the portion of the premises that satisfies these criteria is eligible for Bonus ADUs and Affordable ADUs.

B. If the premises is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the lot must front an improved public street with at least two evacuation routes.

C. Bonus ADUs are not permitted in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone if the lot fronts a cul-de-sac or if the lot is located on a premises that only has one point of ingress or egress.

Number of Affordable and Bonus ADUs

A. Within Sustainable Development Areas, for every qualifying on-site deed-restricted ADU ([Table 141-03A PDF](#)), one additional non-deed-restricted bonus ADU is allowed.

B. Outside of Sustainable Development Areas, a maximum of one Bonus ADU and one qualifying on-site deed-restricted ADUs ([Table 141-03A PDF](#)) is permitted.

C. The maximum number of permitted ADUs and JADUs in Single Dwelling Unit Zones, including Bonus ADUs, shall be based on the lot area (excluding any environmentally sensitive lands) as follows:

Lot Area (square feet)	Maximum Number of ADUs and JADUs
8,000 or less	4
8,001 to 10,000	5
10,000 or greater	6

Affordable and Bonus ADUs are subject to the standards applicable to other ADUs, with the following additional requirements.

Development Regulations

A. The maximum permitted floor area ratio shall be determined by using only the area of the lot that does not contain environmentally sensitive lands.

B. Within a Single Dwelling Unit Zone, no more than 8,000 square feet shall be used for the lot area for the purposes of determining the maximum permitted floor area ratio.

C. Within the RS-1-1, RS-1-2, RS-1-3, RS-1-4, RS-1-5, RS-1-6, and RS-1-7 base zones, the applicable floor area ratio shall be determined in accordance with Table 131-04J using the area of the lot that does not contain environmentally sensitive lands, and in no case more than 8,000 square feet.

Fire Sprinklers

A. All Affordable ADUs and Bonus ADUs in the development shall include an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with the California Building Code.

Parking Requirements

A. One off-street parking space is required for each Affordable ADU and Bonus ADU located outside of a Transit Priority Area.

Landscape Requirements

A. Development using the ADU Home Density Bonus Program shall provide a minimum of one tree on the premises.

B. Two trees shall be provided on the premises for every 5,000 square feet of lot area.

- If the premises is located in the OR Zone, the lot area used to determine the tree requirement shall be based on the allowable development area as described in Section 131.0250.
- If the premises contains environmentally sensitive lands, the lot area used to determine the tree requirement shall be based on the allowable development area as described in Chapter 14 Article 3 Division 1.

C. If planting of a new tree is required to comply with this section, the tree shall be selected in accordance with the Landscape Standards of the Land Development Manual ([/planning/programs/landdevcode/landdevmanual](#)) and the City's Street Tree Selection Guide [PDF](#) and shall comply with the street tree requirements of SDMC §142.0409(a) [PDF](#).

Other Requirements

A. ADU Home Density Bonus Agreement. The affordable ADUs shall be guaranteed through a written agreement and a deed of trust securing the agreement, entered into by the applicant and President and Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Housing Commission, or their designee, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit for the first Affordable ADU or Bonus ADU, whichever occurs first.

B. The Affordable ADUs shall be comparable in bedroom mix and amenities to the Bonus ADUs in the development.

C. ADU Home Density Bonus Program Community Enhancement Fee. An applicant using the ADU Home Density Bonus Program shall pay a Community Enhancement Fee calculated based on the gross floor area of the Affordable and Bonus ADUs. The gross floor area of any Affordable ADUs that meet the following criteria shall not be included in the calculation:

- The Affordable ADU is deed restricted to very low income or low income households; and

- The premises is located in an area identified as a High or Highest Resource California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) Opportunity Area.

D. The Climate Action Plan Consistency Regulations apply to ADU Home Density Bonus projects that result in three or more total dwelling units on a premises ([SDMC §143.1403 PDF](#)).

E. In addition to the affordable ADU bonus, one additional market rate accessible ADU is allowed when at least two affordable ADUs are proposed on a premises in accordance with [SDMC §141.0302\(e\) PDF](#). The bonus accessible ADU must meet the requirements of Chapter 11A of the California Building Code. The accessible ADU shall include at least one accessible bathroom, one accessible kitchen, and one accessible bedroom, and shall be located on an accessible route, as defined by the California Building Code.

Sale or Conveyance of ADUs

New or existing ADUs may be subdivided into condominiums and sold or otherwise conveyed separately from the primary residence in accordance with the requirements of [SDMC §141.0302\(f\) PDF](#).

- A. The following ADUs shall not be subdivided into condominiums and sold or otherwise conveyed separately from the primary residence for the duration of the deed restriction or affordability covenant term:
 - ADUs that have received financing or other forms of assistance from the San Diego Housing Commission.
 - Rental ADUs that are rent restricted by law or covenant to persons and families of very low income, low income, or moderate income.
- B. All structures and buildings included as part of a condominium development shall conform to the requirements of the Zone.
- C. The condominium development shall comply with the subdivision requirements of Chapter 12, Article 5.
- D. The condominium development must be located on a single parcel or lot that was previously mapped and monumented in a manner satisfactory to the City Engineer.
- E. If any of the ADUs in the development were previously occupied, the condominium development shall comply with the Condominium Conversion Regulations in Chapter 14 Article 4 Division 5.
- F. The condominium subdivision shall be created pursuant to the Davis-Stirling Common Interest Development Act.
- G. The condominium subdivision shall be created in conformance with the Subdivision Map Act.

H. Neither a subdivision map nor a condominium plan shall be recorded without each lienholder's written consent. Written evidence of the lienholder's consent shall be provided to the Office of the County Recorder prior to recordation of, or subsequent modifications to, the condominium plan.

I. Before recordation of the condominium plan, the ADU must have final approval of all inspections for work authorized under its building permit and associated permits.

J. The applicant must notify utility providers of the condominium creation and separate conveyance.

K. For a minimum of 30 days from the date an ADU condominium is first listed for sale, the owner shall offer the ADU through at least two publicly accessible real estate websites or databases with a disclosure stating the ADU is being offered for at least 30 days to buyers intending to use the ADU as their primary residence. A covenant shall be recorded on the property prior to completion of the subdivision mapping process to ensure compliance with this requirement. A fillable covenant is available [here \(/sites/default/files/2025-10/template-covenant_adu-sale_fillable.docx\)](/sites/default/files/2025-10/template-covenant_adu-sale_fillable.docx).

Nonprofit corporations may sell or convey an ADU separately from the primary dwelling unit in accordance with the requirements of SDMC §141.0302(g) [PDF](#).

Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU)

What is a JADU?

A Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) is a dwelling unit that is not less than 150 square feet and no more than 500 square feet within an existing or proposed single dwelling unit or an attached garage on a residential single dwelling unit lot. A JADU may include separate sanitation facilities or may share sanitation facilities with the single dwelling unit. The JADU shall provide a kitchen or efficiency kitchen.

JADU Allowable Locations

JADUs are permitted in Zones where Use Regulation Tables identify JADUs as allowable Limited Uses. Generally, JADUs are allowed in Single Dwelling Unit Zones.

- Base Zone Designations - SDMC [Chapter 13 \(/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code/chapter-13\)](#), Article 1, Divisions 1 through 7.
- Planned District Ordinance Zone Designations - Use Regulation Tables: SDMC [Chapter 15 \(/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code/chapter-15\)](#), Articles 2 through 20.
- Find your Zone Designation by visiting the [Zoning and Parcel Information Portal \(ZAPP\) \(/zapp\)](#)

Number of JADUs Allowed

A. Single Dwelling Unit Zones. A Single-Family Zone is a zone that allows a maximum of one dwelling unit on a single lot. Permitted within Single Dwelling Unit Zones:

- 1 Single Primary Dwelling Unit; and
- **1 Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit;** and
- 1 Accessory Dwelling Unit attached to or detached from an existing or proposed dwelling unit; and
- 1 Accessory Dwelling Unit converted from the existing or proposed space of a single dwelling unit or an existing attached accessory structure.

One JADU may be constructed within an existing or proposed:

- Single Primary Dwelling Unit; or
- Garage attached to a Single Primary Dwelling Unit.

Other Allowances: In addition to the Dwelling Units, Guest Quarters and Non-Habitable Accessory Structures are also allowable.

B. Multiple-Dwelling Unit Zones. A Multiple-Dwelling Unit Zone is a zone that allows more than one dwelling unit on a single lot.

- JADUs are not permitted within Multiple-Dwelling Unit Zones.

JADU Size Regulations

- The minimum gross floor area for a JADU is 150 square feet.
- The maximum gross floor area for a JADU is 500 square feet.
- The gross floor area of a JADU is not included in the total gross floor area of the premises.
- Minimum room dimension requirements contained within the California Building Standards Code are applicable.
- Construction of the JADU may expand the floor area of the existing single dwelling unit up to 150 square feet to only allow for ingress and egress.

JADU Parking Regulations

- No on-street or off-street parking spaces are required for a JADU.
- The conversion or demolition of a garage, carport, or covered parking structure into a JADU does not require the replacement of parking spaces, except if the property is located in the Coastal Overlay Zone and within the Beach Impact Area of the Parking Impact Overlay Zone and outside of a transit priority area.
- Where off-street parking spaces are provided, parking spaces may be within setback areas and may include tandem configurations and mechanical lifts.

- D. Where off-street parking spaces are provided, parking spaces must be entirely within the property line of a premises and must conform to the dimension standards of SDMC [Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 5](#) [PDF](#).
- E. If the construction of a JADU causes an existing driveway curb to no longer comply with City standards, the driveway shall be closed to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.

JADU Regulations

- A. A JADU shall maintain the same setback requirements of an existing or proposed Single Primary Dwelling Unit.
- B. A JADU shall have a separate exterior entry from the Single Primary Dwelling Unit.
- C. A JADU shall provide a separate independent kitchen or efficiency kitchen from a Single Primary Dwelling Unit. The kitchen shall include the following:
 - A cooking facility with appliances; and
 - A food preparation counter of a reasonable size in relation to the size of the JADU; and
 - Storage cabinets that are of a reasonable size in relation to the size of the JADU.
- D. A JADU may include separate independent sanitation facilities or may share sanitation facilities with an attached Single Primary Dwelling Unit or attached ADU.
- E. Where a JADU exists on a premises, the property owner is required to live on-site, unless the owner is a government agency, land trust, or qualified housing organization.
- F. The property owner may live in any of the on-site dwelling units.
- G. JADUs are not subject to rental term limitations.
- H. A JADU shall not be sold separately from the primary dwelling unit.

JADU Fire Protection Systems

- A. Where a primary dwelling unit is provided with a fire sprinkler system, the JADU will be required to install a fire sprinkler system. The JADU may be required to fire rate the walls that are shared with the primary unit, or ensure that the sprinkler system in the primary dwelling unit communicates with the sprinkler system in the JADU.
- B. Where a primary dwelling unit is not required to provide a fire sprinkler system, a proposed JADU will not be required to install a fire sprinkler system. However, the JADU may be required to construct a fire rated wall when sharing a wall with an existing or proposed single-family dwelling when the JADU includes an independent kitchen and independent sanitation facilities.

JADU Solar Photovoltaic Systems

JADUs are not required to provide a solar photovoltaic system.

JADU Agreement Required

Before issuing a Building Permit, a Junior Unit Agreement [PDF](#) is required that neither the primary dwelling unit nor the junior unit may be sold or conveyed separately and that the record owner shall reside in either the primary dwelling unit, ADU or JADU.

Permit Application Process and Requirements

Building Permit Requirement

A Building Permit is required to create an ADU or JADU. There are no exemptions.

Depending upon the number of dwelling units created by the ADU(s), either a Combination Building Permit or a Building Permit will be issued.

Refer to Information Bulletin 125 ([/development-services/forms-publications/information-bulletins/125](#)) to confirm the appropriate permit type.

Coastal Development Permit Requirement

- A. A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) is required for the creation of all ADUs and JADUs that are not completely contained in the existing primary structure or include increases in habitable area, or include conversion of non-habitable space within the Coastal Overlay Zone.
- B. As of Sept. 7, 2022, ADUs and JADUs proposed in the non-appealable area of the Coastal Overlay Zone are eligible for a City-issued Coastal Development Permit, provided that specific administrative findings are made to ensure that the ADU/JADU(s) conform to the Local Coastal Program.
- C. If the administrative findings outlined in §126.0708(c) [PDF](#) are satisfied, the Coastal Development Permit shall be issued as a Building Permit in accordance with Process One as specified in §112.0502 [PDF](#) and Chapter 12, Article 9, Division 2 [PDF](#).
- D. The creation of a JADU within the Coastal Overlay Zone does not categorically require a CDP. Qualifying JADU projects within the Coastal Overlay Zone meeting the exemption criteria of SDMC §126.0704 [PDF](#) may be permitted without a CDP.

Other Permit Requirements

- A. Single Primary Dwelling Units with ADUs or JADUs (R3 Occupancy Classifications):
Project Submittal Manual Section 2A [PDF](#)
- B. Multiple-dwelling units with ADUs or JADUs (All Other Occupancy Classifications):
Project Submittal Manual Section 2 [PDF](#)
- C. Minimum submittal requirements for each ADU or JADU include the following:
 - I. **Plans / Calculations:**
 1. Site Plan and Vicinity Map (See Information Bulletin 122 [PDF](#)).
 2. Floor Plans and Roof Plans.

3. Elevations and Sections (as applicable).
4. Structural plans and details.
5. Structural calculations and/or truss calculations (as applicable).
6. Title 24 Energy calculations.

II. Forms

1. General Application [PDF](#), DS-3032
2. Water Meter Data Card [PDF](#), DS-16
3. Storm Water Applicability Checklist [PDF](#), DS-560

Preapproved ADU Plans

Per California Assembly Bill (AB) 1332 (Carillo 2023)

(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1332), applicants may apply for a permit using preapproved plans. Applications that utilize preapproved plans will be subject to a 30-day review and must comply with the development regulations contained in the SDMC. **Note: In order to utilize a preapproved plan, applicants must directly reach out to the ADU provider to find the cost to license the preapproved plan for their own ADUs.** For a list of preapproved plans, please visit the Accessory Dwelling Unit/Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit webpage (</development-services/news-programs/programs/companion-junior-units>).

Applicants may also apply to have their plans preapproved for use by others. Applications for plan preapproval will be processed in accordance with the master plan production process outlined in Information Bulletin 114a (</development-services/forms-publications/information-bulletins/114a>). Once a plan is preapproved, it will be posted on the DSD website with the applicant's contact information alongside other preapproved plans.

Fees

- A. For a complete list of all applicable fees, reference Information Bulletin 501 [PDF](#) and visit the Fees (</development-services/fees>) page.
- B. ADUs and JADUs are subject to payment of School Fees. For detailed information of when this fee applies, reference Information Bulletin 146 [PDF](#).
- C. Beginning Aug. 9, 2022, the General Plan Maintenance Fee applies to all ADU and JADUs.
- D. ADUs are subject to Development Impact Fee requirements in accordance with SDMC §142.0640(b)(1) [PDF](#).
- E. Projects proposing more than one ADU will be required to pay the Regional Transportation Congestion Improvement Program Fees.

F. ADUs/JADUs are not exempt from the City's Inclusionary Affordable Housing Regulations ([SDMC Ch. 14, Article 2, Division 13 PDF](#)). Projects proposing one or more ADU that results in 10 or more total dwelling units (or five or more total dwelling units in the Coastal Overlay Zone) are subject to Inclusionary Housing requirements.

1. Projects that propose to pay the Inclusionary In Lieu Fee are subject to the requirements of §142.1306.
2. Affordable ADUs proposed in accordance with §141.0302(c)(2)(D) are NOT exempt from the net building area calculations of the In Lieu Fee unless the units are deed restricted for 55 years at 60% of the area median income (or lower).

G. ADU Home Density Bonus Program Community Enhancement Fee. ADUs constructed through the ADU Home Density Bonus Program shall pay a Community Enhancement Fee calculated based on the gross floor area of the Affordable and Bonus ADUs. The gross floor area of any Affordable ADUs that meet the following criteria shall not be included in the calculation:

1. The Affordable ADU is deed restricted to very low income or low income households; and
2. The premises is located in an area identified as a High or Highest Resource California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) Opportunity Area.

H. Fee Payment Options

1. Customers are encouraged to make [online payments \(/development-services#invoice-modal\)](#) by e-check or credit card. Bank and processing fees apply. There are no minimum or maximum credit card transaction amounts when making payments online.
2. Customers can also drop check payments into the payment drop-off safe located on the first-floor lobby of the downtown Development Services Center [during business hours \(/development-services/locations-hours\)](#). All payments must be made out to "City Treasurer."
3. Customers can also [request a Payments appointment \(/development-services/virtual-appointments\)](#) to make credit card or check payments in person at the Development Services Center. With in-person payments, the minimum credit card transaction amount is \$10, and the maximum is \$99,999.99. Payments with an "SAP Invoice Number" are not accepted here. Instead, these invoices can be paid with the City Treasurer; Learn more.

How to Apply

Applications for Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units are now being accepted in digital paperless formats through an [Online Permitting Account](https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Default.aspx) (<https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Default.aspx>).

Digital Application Portal

1. Navigate to the [Development Services Application Portal](https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Default.aspx) ([http://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Default.aspx](https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Default.aspx)).
2. For new Permit Applications, within the Building Applications section, select "[Building Construction](#) [PDF](#)."
3. For changes to existing issued Permits (under construction), request: "[Construction Change to a Building Permit](#) [PDF](#)."

Previous Versions

- [November 2024](#) [PDF](#)