



Accessory Dwelling Units Frequently Asked Questions

2024

The City of Calistoga recognizes that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) can provide affordable housing, accommodate extended family members and facilitate live-in caregivers.

The following information answers common questions about ADUs and JADUs. Further information is provided in the ADU & JADU Regulations Summary document. Please contact the Calistoga Planning Department for further information at planning@calistogaca.gov.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Q. What is an ADU?

- A.** An ADU is a dwelling unit located on the same parcel as an existing or proposed primary residence that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation. “Accessory dwelling unit” includes a manufactured home.

Q. Must an ADU be attached to the single-family dwelling?

- A.** No. An ADU may be a stand-alone structure. An ADU may also be created through the conversion of space within an existing single-family dwelling if it is provided with independent exterior access, or conversion of an existing accessory building, such as a garage or pool house.

Q. What is the difference between an ADU and a guest house?

- A.** A guest house doesn’t have a fully-equipped kitchen, and cannot be rented or otherwise occupied as a separate dwelling. It is intended for temporary use by guests of the premises’ permanent occupants.

Q. Can an illegal building, conversion or addition be converted to an ADU?

- A.** Yes, if it is legalized by obtaining a building permit and bringing it into conformance with all applicable codes.

Q. May an ADU be rented?

- A.** Yes, for periods of 30 days or more, if a business license is obtained by the property owner.

Q. What permits are required for an ADU?

- A.** Generally, only a building permit is needed for construction of an ADU. However, depending on a particular parcel’s circumstances, other permits may be required, such as a tree removal permit or an encroachment permit (to allow work in the public right-of-way).

Q. Are fire sprinklers required for an ADU?

- A.** Fire sprinklers are not required for an ADU if they are not required for the lot’s primary unit. For example, if the existing primary residence does not have fire sprinklers, the ADU need not install a fire sprinkler system. However, installation is strongly encouraged to protect its occupants.

Q. What utility connection fees must be paid for an ADU?¹

- A.** Utility connection fees must be paid for a newly constructed attached or detached ADU. The ADU must have a separate or enlarged water meter and have a separate lateral(s), as determined by the City Engineer. Water and wastewater connection fees are based on the either the square feet of the dwelling unit or the number of drainage fixture unit (DFU) values.

Q. What development impact fees must be paid for an ADU?²

- A.** Development impact fees must be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit for an ADU that is 750 square feet or more in size. Development impact fees charged for an ADU of 750 square feet or more is charged proportionally in relation to the square footage of the primary dwelling unit.

Q. Can I develop an ADU if they're not permitted by my homeowners association CC&Rs?

- A.** Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions (CC&Rs) are binding recorded agreements between private parties that regulate the use of property. Commonly, the parties to CC&Rs are a homeowners association (HOA) and individual owners in a neighborhood. Some CC&Rs prohibit accessory dwelling units on lots where City zoning allows them. State and local laws require the City to issue a permit when an ADU building permit application meets all building and zoning standards, but constructing an accessory dwelling unit that is prohibited by the applicable CC&Rs may result in legal action by the HOA against the property owner. The City does not have a role in that dispute because the CC&Rs are a private agreement between private parties. Accordingly, if there are CC&Rs that apply to your lot, you should review the CC&Rs and consult your HOA before you submit a building permit application to the City. If your CC&Rs do not permit accessory dwelling units, you may wish to work with your HOA to amend the CC&Rs.

Junior Accessory Dwelling Units

Q. What is a JADU?

- A.** A JADU is a dwelling unit that is no more than 500 square feet in size, and contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family structure. A JADU must include a cooking facility with appliances, and a food preparation counter and storage cabinets that are of reasonable size in relation to the size of the unit. It may include separate sanitation facilities, or may share sanitation facilities with the existing structure.

Q. What fees must be paid for a JADU?

- A.** No development impact fees are charged for JADUs of any size. Water and sewer connection fees are charged for a JADU only if the dwelling is expanded by more than 150 square feet.

Q. What is the owner occupancy requirement for a property with a JADU?

- A.** The property owner must reside in either the primary dwelling or the JADU.

Q. May a JADU be rented?

- A.** Yes, for periods of 30 days or more, if a business license is obtained by the property owner.

¹ Check with the Planning Department for the most recent Water and Wastewater Connection Fee Schedule

² Check with the Planning Department for the most recent Development Impact Fee Schedule