

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS SEATAC REGULATIONS

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

A habitable living unit created within, attached to, or detached from a single-family residence that provides the basic requirements of shelter, heating, cooking and sanitation within the unit.

15.465.100 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

A. **Purpose.** The purpose of this section is to allow for and regulate the establishment of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) within, attached to, or detached from single-family dwellings while preserving the character and property values of single-family neighborhoods. The purposes of accessory dwelling unit provisions are to:

1. Fully utilize residential housing supply in existing neighborhoods while preserving neighborhood character.
2. Improve cost efficiency of existing infrastructure.
3. Provide additional options for rental housing within a wide range of prices.
4. Increase opportunities for home ownership and allow older homeowners to remain in their homes and obtain extra income, companionship, and security.

B. **Authority.** This section is adopted under authority of RCW [43.63A.215](#).

C. **General Regulations.**

1. **Review and Approval.** To gain approval for an ADU, a property owner shall submit a registration form, sign an affidavit of owner occupancy, and apply for a building permit for necessary remodeling or construction. The Department and the Building Official shall review and approve or disapprove the application.

2. **Registration.**

a. An approved ADU shall be registered with the City of SeaTac, the registration certificate shall be recorded and filed as a deed restriction with the King County Recorder, and a certificate of occupancy shall be issued by the SeaTac Building Official.

b. Illegally created nonconforming ADUs, existing prior to the enactment of these requirements, shall be registered. The property owner shall submit an application, a signed affidavit of owner occupancy and bring the unit up to minimum standards set forth in the City's building code no later than twelve (12) months after the effective date of this code.

c. Owners of legal ADUs, created prior to the adoption of this chapter under the requirements set forth in SMC [15.205.040](#), shall register their unit and file a signed affidavit of owner occupancy with the Department.

d. Unless otherwise approved by the Director, ADU registration shall be cancelled as a result of an enforcement action due to violations of this chapter including: (1) unpermitted alteration of the ADU; (2) failure of owner to reside in either the primary or accessory dwelling unit; or (3) failure to maintain required off-street parking spaces.

D. General Standards and Criteria.

1. General.

a. **ADUs Per Lot.** Only one (1) ADU is allowed per residential lot as a subordinate use in conjunction with any new or existing legal, conforming or nonconforming, detached single-family structure.

b. **Applicable Standards.** The accessory dwelling unit must meet all technical codes and standards including standards for a one (1) or two (2) family dwelling unit, as referenced in SMC Title [13](#).

c. **Addresses.** The Building Division will assign an address to the ADU.

d. **Subdivision.** ADUs created within the single-family structure shall not be subdivided or otherwise segregated in ownership from the primary dwelling unit. Detached ADUs may be segregated in ownership from the primary dwelling unit if such segregation meets all minimum requirements for a separate legal lot under City of SeaTac zoning and subdivision standards.

2. **Owner Occupation.** An owner of the property must occupy either the primary single-family dwelling or the accessory dwelling unit.

a. **Qualifying as Owner Occupant.** In order to qualify as an owner occupant, a fee owner must physically reside on the property at least nine (9) months in any twelve (12) month period.

b. **Absences.** If an owner must be absent from the property for a longer period due to good cause, such as job dislocation, sabbatical leave, education, or illness, evidence must be submitted to the Director, and a waiver may be granted for up to three (3) months additional absence from the property.

c. **Affidavit/Certification.** An owner shall sign an affidavit verifying that one (1) of the dwelling units is the legal residence of said property owner. An additional form of documentation such as a driver's license or voter registration records shall be required to verify property owner occupancy of one (1) of the dwelling units. Falsely certifying owner occupancy or failure to comply with the terms of the owner certification shall result in loss of ADU registration and certificate of occupancy, and a penalty of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) as prescribed by SMC [1.15.100](#).

- d. **Violations.** If the owner occupancy requirement is violated, an owner shall:
 - i. Re-occupy the structure;
 - ii. Remove the accessory dwelling unit; or
 - iii. Submit evidence to the Director as specified in subsection (D)(2)(b) of this section for a waiver of this requirement for up to three (3) months.

E. **Building Setbacks.** ADUs shall conform to the setback requirements for a main structure.

F. **Size.**

1. **Detached ADU.**

- a. Minimum: two hundred twenty (220) square feet (not including bathrooms and closets).
- b. Maximum: eight hundred (800) square feet (including bathrooms and closets).

2. **Attached ADU – New.** Attached ADUs created through an addition or designed into a new structure at time of construction.

- a. Minimum: two hundred twenty (220) square feet (not including bathrooms and closets).
- b. Maximum: eight hundred (800) square feet (including bathrooms and closets).

3. **Attached ADU – Existing.** Attached ADU, created within an existing a single-family residence.

- a. Minimum: two hundred twenty (220) square feet (not including bathrooms and closets).
- b. Maximum: forty-five percent (45%) of the total square footage of the existing dwelling (including bathrooms and closets).

G. **Dimensional Standards when Combined with Accessory Structure.** Accessory dwelling units combined with an accessory structure, as defined under Chapter [15.105](#) SMC, Definitions, shall not exceed the following dimensional standards:

1. **Height.**

- a. Twenty (20) feet in height (to the highest point of the structure) if the ADU is one (1) story.
- b. Twenty (20) feet in height, as determined pursuant to SMC [15.110.070](#), if the ADU is two (2) stories.

2. **Size for ADU.** Eight hundred (800) square feet for the ADU.

3. **Size for Accessory Structure.** One thousand (1,000) square feet for the accessory structure.

H. **Maximum Occupancy.**

1. ADUs two hundred twenty (220) to four hundred (400) square feet: two (2) persons.
2. ADUs four hundred one (401) to six hundred (601) square feet: three (3) persons.
3. ADUs six hundred one (601) square feet and greater: four (4) persons.

I. **Design.**

1. **Appearance.** An ADU shall be designed to preserve or complement the architectural design, style, and appearance of the primary single-family home. Specifically, whether attached or detached, the roof pitch, siding materials, color, and window treatment of the ADU shall be the same as, similar to, or an improvement to the appearance of, the primary structure. Where attached garage space is converted to an accessory dwelling unit, the garage door shall be replaced with materials that complement the exterior of the house.
2. **Entrances.** A separate entrance for the ADU is necessary and shall be located on the side or rear of the structure. On a corner lot, no more than one (1) entrance shall be visible from either street.
3. **Exterior Stairs.** Any exterior stairs shall be placed in the rear or side yard and must comply with setback standards set forth in SMC [15.400.330](#). Exterior stairs shall be subject to the same setback standards applied to uncovered porches and decks which exceed eighteen (18) inches above the finished grade.

J. **Parking.**

1. **Minimum.** A minimum of one (1) off-street parking space is required for an accessory dwelling unit, in addition to the number of spaces required for the existing single-family residence.
 - a. A second parking space shall be required for units greater than six hundred (600) square feet in area.
 - b. **Waiver.** A waiver of the requirement for the parking space(s) may be granted by the Director if topography of the site or existing structure location make its provision physically or economically infeasible and it is demonstrated that on-street parking is available.
2. **Location.** The location for the parking space(s) shall be determined through consultation with the Department staff during plan review.
3. **Additional Parking.** If additional parking is necessary, new parking space(s) shall utilize existing curb cuts, when possible.

K. **Home Occupations.** Home occupations may be allowed in either the primary residence or the accessory unit, subject to the applicable provisions of the SeaTac Municipal Code. Special home occupation permits (SHOPs) shall not be granted for accessory dwelling units.