

# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) Informational Handout

## WHAT IS AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is defined as a dwelling unit that is accessory to the primary dwelling unit located on the subject property, and which either:

- (a) is a freestanding detached structure or part thereof, or
- (b) has one or more vertical and/or horizontal walls in common with or attached to the primary dwelling unit but is separate from the primary dwelling unit either because there is no interior connection between the ADU and primary dwelling unit, or because any interior connection between the ADU and primary dwelling unit is securable by lock from within the ADU.

## ADU Development Regulations and Considerations:

- ❖ ADUs are permitted in both Single-Family Residential (RS) and Suburban Estates (SE) zoning districts.
- ❖ **Size Requirement:** ADUs must not exceed the square footage of the primary dwelling unit and may be up to 1,000 square feet of floor area, have up to two bedrooms, and may be taller than the primary structure up to 30 feet.
  - Detached: Factory-built homes, manufactured homes, outdoor storage containers, and similar structures used or designed to be used as living facilities are permitted.
  - Attached: ADUs may exceed 1,000 sq. ft., up to a maximum of the largest floor area of the primary dwelling unit if the creation of the ADU does not necessitate an exterior alteration of the residence, except for minimal alterations necessary for the ADU to be a functional separate residence. (for example, an attic or basement conversion).
- ❖ **Site Design:** Only one ADU may be created per property. The ADU, accessory structures, driveway and the primary dwelling unit together shall not exceed the maximum lot coverage prescribed in FWRC [19.200.010](#) and [19.190.010](#) RS Zones RS 35.0 and RS 15.0 = 50%, RS 9.6, RS 7.2, RS 5.0 = 60%, SE = 10%. See FWRC [19.110.020\(2\)\(b\)](#) for calculation of lot coverage for flag lots. ADUs are not permitted within the required yard setbacks.
- ❖ **Parking:** Primary dwelling units with an ADU must have a minimum of three off-street parking spaces located a minimum of five feet from the side and rear property lines **\*except when located within ¼ mile of a major transit stop in some circumstances\*** The driveway width in the front yard setback on the property may exceed 20 feet in width for a 3-car garage and to accommodate additional parking for the ADU, but is not allowed in the side yard setback(s) per FWRC 19.130.240(b).

## Additional ADU Requirements for Consideration before Building Permit Submissions:

Disclaimer: The following requirements outlined below may not cover all possible scenarios, and the permitting process is subject to site-specific variables.

- ❖ **Water & Sewer Requirements** – The City does not have its own water and sewer departments. Rather, the City is served by: Lakehaven Water & Sewer District, Tacoma Water, Midway Sewer District, Highline Water District, or King County Public Health Department.
  - ADUs utilizing a septic system are required to secure approval from the King County Public Health Department prior to submitting a Building Permit application.
  - Detached ADU connecting to sewer will be required to have a separate sewer service

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connection permit. If an attached ADU is connecting to sewer, and new sewer service line is outside of the existing residence as required, a separate sewer service connection permit will be needed. If an attached ADU is connecting to sewer by extending internal plumbing, a separate sewer service connection permit is not required.

- The construction of an ADU will increase the number of plumbing fixtures resulting in an increased water supply demand. This increased demand may result in a required upsizing of the existing water service line and meter or the installation of a separate meter and water supply line. These items will add significant cost to the project and should be part of the project budget. It is advisable to conduct an initial fixture count assessment at the earliest stage possible with your respected water and sewer departments.
- Certificates of water and sewer availability are required before the building permit application.

❖ **South King Fire & Rescue Requirements:**

(Access Road/Driveway)

- The site access road or driveway must be at least 20 feet wide.
- The access road or driveway must have a grade of less than 16% and is capable of supporting the weight of fire apparatus.
- If the access road or driveway exceeds 150 feet in length, it must have an approved turnaround.
- All exterior parts of the building must be within 150 feet of a public road or the 20-foot driveway if the driveway is narrower than 20 feet, measured from either the 20-foot width area or the public road.

(Fire Hydrant)

- A fire hydrant must be located within 350 feet of the lot boundaries.

(Fire Flow)

- The available fire flow must be at a rate of 1,750 gallons per minute or more for homes or ADUs exceeding 3,600 square feet.

If any of the conditions listed above are not met, the installation of fire sprinklers will be required.

❖ **Building Department Requirements:**

- A minimum 10-foot separation between the ADU and any other structure is required. If unable to meet separation requirement, fire separation rated construction will be required, per standards. The distance between all detached structures must be identified on plans.

**How to Apply**

Use this informational handout in addition to a building permit checklist to help gather all of the required information in order to submit a complete Building Permit application. All application materials must be submitted electronically. Please visit our website at <https://www.cityoffederalway.com/node/4588> to request a document upload link. **Please note, incomplete applications will not be accepted. FEES:** Contact the Permit Center at 253-835-2607, or [permitcenter@cityoffederalway.com](mailto:permitcenter@cityoffederalway.com).

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