

# How to Apply for a Permit to Build a Detached Accessory Building

## May I build an accessory building on the same lot with my residence?



Yes you may. If your residence is in an "R" district, your accessory building must:

- ✓ Be single story
- ✓ Cover no more than 30% of the rear yard
- ✓ Have an area of 1,000 square feet or less
- ✓ Have a plate height of 10 feet or less and a maximum height of 19 feet. In West Menlo Park the maximum height is 14 feet.
- ✓ Be located at least 3 feet from the rear and side property lines and 5 feet from the residence.
- ✓ On interior lots abutting one street you may not encroach upon the front half of the lot.
- ✓ On interior lots abutting two or more streets you may not encroach upon the fourth of the lot nearest either street.

There may also be other criteria that the DRC (Development Review Center) counter staff can explain to you.

## May I build an accessory building on a separate lot next to the lot on which my residence is located?

Not if they are legally separate parcels. If they look separate (because of fencing, for example) but have been legally merged into one parcel, then you may. The accessory building must serve a use that is accessory to the property's primary use, and it cannot stand alone on a property that has no residence.

## What kinds of permits do I need?



Permit requirements depend on the location and the type of building.

If it is a simple detached building with no wiring or plumbing (e.g., a prefabricated metal shed), you need only a building permit.

If it contains either wiring or plumbing, you may need essentially all of the approvals required for a residence, including the following:

- ✓ A building permit, which includes separate plumbing, mechanical, and electrical permits
- ✓ Approval from your fire department, your sewer and water districts, the County Public Works, Geotechnical, and possibly other County sections
- ✓ Planning approval
- ✓ Depending upon your property's location, you may need additional permits. For example, you may also need a design review and a coastal development permit. Ask the Planning staff for more information about this.

## Do I have to visit all these offices individually?

Building will automatically route your application and plans to most of them. You will be responsible for showing plans to your water and sewer districts if they are not County districts. If you need a planning permit, you should apply for it either before or at the same time as you apply for your building permit.

## How do I apply for a building permit?



Submit an application to Building that identifies the property, describes the project, and lists any permits or approvals that you think you will need in connection with this project.

## What kinds of plans should I submit with my application?

The kinds of plans you are required to have depend upon how extensive your building is, e.g. size, wiring, plumbing, etc. At a minimum, submit three copies of the following:

- ✓ Plot plan
- ✓ Elevations
- ✓ Constructions details

Ask the Building staff for more information before you begin preparing your final plans.

## What fees must I pay?



You must pay building, fire, geotechnical, plumbing, mechanical, application, microfilm, and plan check fees.

## What's the next step in this process?



Read the pamphlet *General Procedures When You Apply for a Planning or Building Permit*. This pamphlet explains the general procedures for applying for a permit, paying fees, calling for inspections, and other related matters. Then you should also review the following documents, which contain other information that you may need:

How to Apply for a Permit to Build a Single-Family Residence

How to Apply for Design Review

How to Apply for a Coastal Development Permit

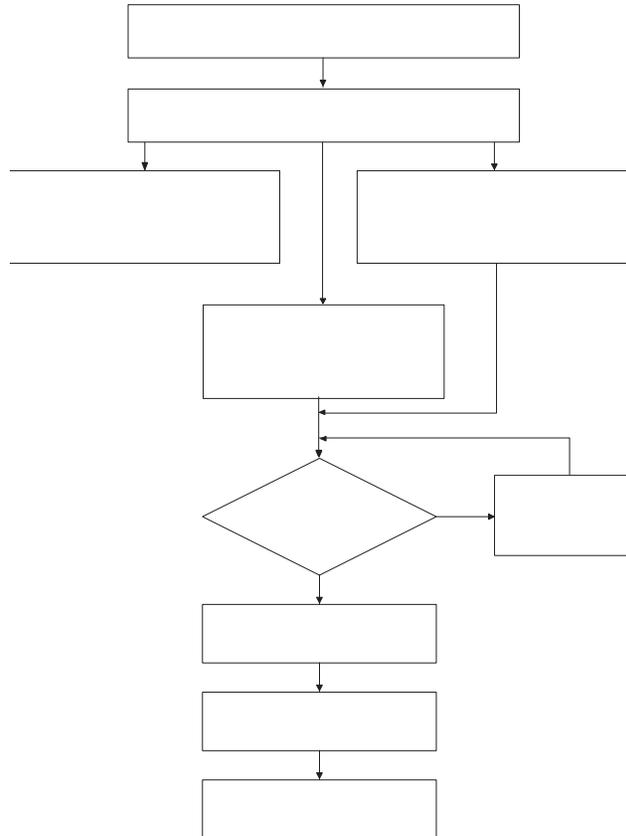
How to Apply for Architectural Review

Section 6410, San Mateo County Zoning Regulations: Detached Accessory Buildings

After you have become familiar with these documents, we recommend that you prepare some very preliminary plans and bring them to the DRC counter so that we can review them. An informal meeting at this stage may save you considerable time and money later on.

If you are new to San Mateo County, you may also wish to make an appointment to meet with staff as part of the County's Early Assistance Meeting Program. Early assistance meetings are designed to acquaint owner/builders, contractors, architects, and other professionals who are new to the area or are unfamiliar with our permit system with the different agencies involved and the various costs and requirements. There is no charge for the meeting, which you can schedule by calling (650) 363-1825.

# Permit Process to Build a Detached Accessory Building



San Mateo County  
Planning and Building Division

# How to Apply for a Permit to Build a Detached Accessory Building

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