

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

UPDATED 4/20/2023

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADU) are regulated by Costa Mesa Municipal Code 13-35. Please consult with a planner prior to submitting an ADU or JADU project.

submitting an ADU or Ja	JADU	ADU WITH SINGLE- OR MULTI-UNIT¹ DEVELOPMENT			ADU WITH MULTI-UNIT DEVELOPMENT	
ADU TYPE	JADU Conversion of an interior portion of an existing single-family dwelling unit; or new construction within a proposed single-family dwelling unit or addition	INTERNAL Conversion of an interior portion of an existing single-family dwelling unit, or an existing detached accessory building; or new construction within a proposed single-family dwelling unit	ATTACHED Construction of a new ADU attached to an existing or proposed single-family dwelling unit or multi-family dwelling unit	DETACHED Construction of a new ADU as a detached accessory building	CONVERSION Conversion of an existing non-habitable (e.g., storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, or garages) portion of a multi-family dwelling unit	DETACHED Construction of a new ADU(s) as detached accessory building(s)
Zoning	Allowed on all residential and mixed zoned properties that are improved with one single-family dwelling unit	Allowed on all residential and mixed-use zoned properties improved with single-family dwelling units or multiple family dwelling unit structures			Allowed on all residential and mixed zoned properties that are improved with existing multifamily dwelling unit structures	
Number of Units	One	One. Common interest developments may have one ADU per unit.	velopments may have One		At least one and no more than 25% of the existing unit count in the multi-unit development	Two
Allowed with other ADU	May also provide a single-family dwelling ADU	May also provide JADU as part of a single-family dwelling unit			May also provide up to two detached ADUs	May also provide conversion ADU(s)
Minimum Size	Must meet minimum efficiency unit requirements of 220 square feet. ADUs may also be less than 220 square feet, provided that they are no smaller than 150 square feet, and comply with all other legal requirements.					
Maximum Size	500 SF	No Maximum ²	No more than the greater of 50% of the square footage of the dwelling ³ or 1,000 square feet	1,200 SF ⁴	No Limit	800 SF
Maximum Height	Per underlying zone	Per underlying zone	18 FT. Two Story heights per underlying zone ⁵	18 FT. Two Story heights per underlying zone ⁵	NA	18 FT. Two Story heights per underlying zone ⁵



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	JADU	ADU WITH SINGLE- OR MULTI-UNIT¹ DEVELOPMENT		ADU WITH MULTI-UNIT DEVELOPMENT			
	JADU	INTERNAL	ATTACHED	DETACHED	CONVERSION	DETACHED	
Front Setback	Per underlying zone and 25 feet for second story portions of ADU						
Side Setback ⁶	Per underlying zone	Per underlying zone	4 FT	4 FT	NA	4 FT	
Rear Setback ⁶	Per underlying zone	Per underlying zone	4 FT	4 FT	NA	4 FT	
Second Story Setbacks	Front setback is 25 feet. All other setbacks are per the underlying zone and design guidelines for second story setbacks.						
Separation Requirements	NA	NA	NA	6 FT	NA	6 FT	
Exterior Stairs	New exterior stairways to a second-floor ADU shall not be visible from the public right of way at the front of the property. Stairways and landings shall incorporate screening materials designed to eliminate views into abutting properties. Stairways and landings, which exceed building code minimum sizes, are prohibited.						
Balconies	New balconies that face the street and are located at the front of the main residential structure are permitted provided that the balcony be set back a minimum 20 feet from the front property line. On corner properties, balconies may face the side street provided that they maintain the setback for the underlying zone. Balconies within 25 feet of a neighboring residence shall incorporate screening to ensure there are no direct views into the abutting property. New construction balconies that are not facing the front of the property or a side street, are prohibited.						
Roof Decks	No new roof decks are allowed for ADUs.						
Open Space/Landscaping	NA	NA	ADUs greater than 80 provide open space, re landscape requiremen zon	ar yard coverage, and ts per the underlying	NA	NA	
Access	Exterior entrance required in all cases. JADUs must provide internal connection if sharing bathroom facilities.						
Entry Design	ADU or JADU entrance shall match the materials and color of the primary residence(s), not be located on the same building elevation as the main entrance of the primary residence(s) and shall be located along the building side, rear, or within the interior of the property, unless the Economic and Development Services Director approves an alternative configuration due to unique development circumstances.						
Bathroom	May share with primary dwelling unit	Full bathroom (toilet, sink, bath/shower) required					
Kitchen	Efficiency Kitchen ⁷	Full kitchen, including fixed cooking appliance, storage, and counter space.					
Parking			N	Vone			
Attached/Detached Garage Conversion	Allowed within attached garages only	Allowed	N/	A	Allowed		
Garage door infill	If garage door façade is visible from the public right of way, the façade shall be covered with landscaping that covers at least fifty (50) percent of the wall, and/or include openings of at least 10% of the façade with at least one door or one window which matches the material and design of the existing windows on the residence.						
Deed Restriction	Prior to issuance of building permit, owner must record deed restriction (prepared by the City) noting the size of the unit, description of unit, prohibition on short term rentals, prohibiting the sale of the ADU/JADU, and specifying owner-occupancy requirement.						
Owner-Occupancy	Owner shall live in either unit	Owner-o	Owner-occupancy is not required for units built between January 1, 2020 and January 1, 2025				
Short-Term (<31 days) Rentals	Short-term lodging is prohibited.						



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	JADU	INTERNAL	ATTACHED	DETACHED	CONVERSION	DETACHED	
Utility Connection	Separate connection is not required The City may require the installation of a new or separate utility connection between the ADU and the utility						
Mailing Address	Each ADU and Junior ADU shall have a separate mailing address as assigned by the City and shall be visible on the exterior of the unit. The construction of an ADU will result in the property having to meet the City's addressing policy, which may require re-addressing of all existing units.						
Fire Sprinklers	Only required if fire sprinklers required and provided on primary unit. (See State Fire Marshall Informational Bulletin 21-005 for exceptions)						
Separate Conveyance	ADUs and JADUs may not be sold separately						
Design	M	latch exterior of primary u	ınit	Compatible in exterior appearance with the primary unit in compliance with code and design guidelines	Match exterior of primary unit	Compatible in exterior appearance with the primary unit in compliance with code and design guidelines	
Impact Fee	Each individual ADU of 750 SF or greater is subject to impact fee's as a proportion to the primary unit. In no cases will the Impact Fee's exceed the fee to the main residence. Single-Family ADU Impact Fee = (Proposed ADU SF/Existing Unit SF) x \$13,572 Multifamily ADU Impact Fee = (Proposed ADU SF/Average Existing Unit SF) x \$13,829 JADU Impact Fee = \$5,000						

¹ Single-family dwelling development consists of a property with one or more detached single-family dwelling units. Multi-family dwelling development consists of a property with two or more attached dwellings.

²Accessory structure conversions may construct up to 150 new SF for purposes of ingress/egress.

³ADU can be no more than 50% of the floor area of a single-family dwelling or average unit floor area of a multi-family dwelling.

⁴Please see the multi-family dwelling development column if proposing two ADUs.

⁵ Second story ADUs must comply with all of the following: All portions of the ADU structure on a second floor are at least twenty-five (25) feet from the front property line; and each stairwell for the ADU is interior or is not visible from the front property line and incorporates screening to eliminate views into neighboring properties and are the minimum size allowed by building code; and the second floor of any portion of the ADU, if built above a detached garage, does not exceed the footprint of the garage; and no windows are installed on the second floor on side elevations if such windows are within twenty-five (25) feet of a neighboring dwelling and face the neighboring property unless such windows have a minimum sill height of at least five (5) feet; and the second floor (or the entire two (2) story ADU as applicable) meets the setbacks applicable to additions for the underlying zone.

⁶ Mechanical equipment associated with the ADU and/or JADU shall meet the minimum 4 foot side and rear setbacks.

⁷ Efficiency kitchens must include a cooking facility with appliances, outlet for a small refrigerator, food preparation counter, and storage cabinets.