

ADU Frequently Asked Questions

(March 27, 2023)

What is an ADU?

An ADU is accessory to a primary residence and has complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and has a few variations:

- Detached: The unit is separated from the primary structure.
- Attached: The unit is attached to the primary structure.
- Converted Existing Space: Space (e.g., master bedroom, attached garage, storage area, or similar use, or an accessory structure) on the lot of the primary residence that is converted into an independent living unit.
- JADU: A specific type of conversion of existing space that is contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family residence.

Regardless of type of Accessory Dwelling Unit (Attached, Detached, etc.) an ADU is “accessory” to the primary unit of the home. Meaning that it does not require separate features such as utilities which includes sewers.

Current City policy states that one sewer lateral is allocated to each parcel, regardless of if the parcel has an ADU. For billing purposes, a parcel that has an ADU will typically have a larger bill due to the increase in sewer flow and volumetric charges (the more each parcel uses the sewer the greater the monthly bill will be).

Additional information regarding Accessory Dwelling Units can be found here:

<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/ADUHandbookUpdate.pdf>

What are the ADU size limits?

Accessory Dwelling Units can be constructed with a maximum square footage of 1200 sq.ft. However, California state law requires local jurisdictions to allow at least an 850 sq.ft. accessory dwelling unit regardless of any local development standards. As defined by State law and local ordinance an ADU or JADU is accessory to the primary unit.

Do I have to pay impact fees on an ADU?

Impact fees are often charged by local jurisdictions to account for increased density and strain on infrastructure. An ADU of 750 sq. ft. or less is exempt from impact fees, which can present a substantial cost savings. Square footage over that amount may be subject to local impact fees.

Does an ADU require separate utilities?

No, but you will need to size your utilities to meet the additional demand or load of the new ADU. Many older properties may need to upgrade utilities for more capacity/usage (i.e., volume).

It may also be preferable to install separate meters for ADUs that will serve primarily as rental units. Separate meters do not constitute a new connection as the connection to sewer infrastructure has already been obtained for the parcel, the separate meter allows for calculation of sewer capacity/usage (i.e., volume).

Calculation of Connection Fees or Capacity Charges for Utilities.

A local agency, special district, or water corporation shall not consider ADUs as a new residential use for the purposes of calculating connection fees or capacity charges for utilities, including water and sewer services. However, these provisions do not apply to ADUs that are constructed concurrently with a new single-family home. (Gov. Code, §§ 65852.2, subd. (f), and 66000.)

Can I still be charged water and sewer connection fees?

ADUs converted from existing space and JADUs shall not be considered by a local agency, special district, or water corporation to be a new residential use for purposes of calculating connection fees or capacity charges for utilities, unless constructed with a new single-family dwelling. The connection fee or capacity charge shall be proportionate to the burden of the proposed ADU, based on its square footage or plumbing fixtures as compared to the primary dwelling. ADU Law does not cover monthly charge fees. (Gov. Code, § 65852.2, subd. (f)(2).)