



Exempt Residential Accessory Buildings

I want to build an exempt accessory building. What are the requirements?

Exempt accessory structures do not require a building permit if the following standards are met:

1. Accessory to a single-family dwelling unit;
2. Detached and set back a minimum of three feet from any other structure;
3. Not used for human habitation;
4. Not used for commercial uses;
5. Eaves may extend 24 inches beyond the exterior wall;
6. May contain a mezzanine/loft space that does not exceed 1/3 the building area will not count toward the square footage;
7. Used only as tool shed, storage shed for small maintenance or agricultural equipment or vehicle storage, and playhouse;
8. When located *outside* the Urban Growth Area:
 - Shall not exceed 400 square feet in floor area.
 - Side walls no greater than 12 feet measured from finished grade to bottom of the eave.
9. When located *inside* the Urban Growth Area:
 - Shall not exceed 200 square feet in floor area.
 - Side walls no greater than 9 feet measured from finished grade to bottom of the eave.
10. Comply with other applicable County, State and Federal regulations (zoning, stormwater, public health codes, critical area ordinance, wildland urban interface, etc.)

Can the Structure be heated?

Yes. A permit is required to add heat. Thurston County is required to check for energy code compliance for structures that are heated. The Master Application and Residential Permit application will need to be submitted along with a site plan. Any structure that is not a residence is considered “commercial” and reviewed under the requirements of the commercial energy code. For more information on the energy code requirements visit www.waenergycodes.com. A basic section through the structure indicating the insulation values, equipment sizing calculations and efficiency must be provided.

Can the structure contain plumbing fixtures?

Yes. A permit is required to add plumbing fixtures. A site plan will need to be submitted with the Master Application and Minor Permit application. Plumbing fixtures require protection from the cold and heated areas must meet the energy code. The site plan shall meet site plan submittal standards and depict the sewage and water line connection to ensure compliance with the Public Health Department requirements. A review fee is associated with this review. Separate tank placement permits or revision to the existing septic system may be required.

Questions before you build?

- **Talk with Building Development Center (BDC) Staff** - Each project and property is different. Please talk with a BDC professional to determine if a permit is required.
- **Contact Information and Office Hours** - Call the BDC at (360)786-5490 or visit us Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If submitting an application, please arrive by 3:30 p.m.

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Thurston County Building Development Center

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