



CUSTOMER GUIDE: ADU PERMIT APPLICATIONS

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ATTACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)

An Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) can be constructed/established when the main dwelling is a Detached Single-Family Dwelling.

The USE of the Main Dwelling will change to a Detached Two-Family Dwelling.

Application Details

Description

Include the follow items in the description of work.

- Begin with: “Construction/establishment of Attached ADU”
- Describe the location of the ADU within the main dwelling.
- Include the area, square feet, of the main dwelling and ADU.
- If the permit includes construction, that work should be clearly described.
- If there is no construction, the description needs to include “NO CONSTRUCTION.”

Examples of ADU location descriptions:

- In the basement of the main dwelling unit
- In an addition to the main dwelling unit
- On the 2nd floor of attached garage

Owner Statement

If there is “No Construction” or a Contractor is not assigned on a Plan with Construction, **an Owner Statement is required, completed by the Owner of the main dwelling.**

The Owner statement is not required if a Contractor is assigned to the Permit.

Plans

If the permit includes construction, that work should be clearly described. A construction plan set is required and Contractor requirements apply.

If there is no construction, the description needs to include “NO CONSTRUCTION.”

A floor plan of the Main Dwelling and ADU is required.

The floor plan must include:

- Measurements
- Labeled rooms, doors, windows, means of egress
- Indication of spaces shared with both units
- Square footage of the primary dwelling and the proposed ADU
- In the ADU show:
 - Permanent fixtures including the food preparation area with sink, permanently mounted cooking device and/or stove, refrigerator, and sanitation fixtures with clearances.

Other plan requirements:

- If fire separation is not provided, a Fire Alarm system complying with Chapter 29 of NFPA 72 and interconnected CO alarms must be installed throughout.
- Show locations for full access to utility controls, disconnecting means, and all overcurrent devices for the ADU.
- ADUs are required to comply with the applicable design criteria in the Virginia Residential code. This includes lighting, ventilation, heating, room areas, ceiling heights, sanitation, toilet, bath, and shower spaces, EERO's, etc.
- Exception: Historic Buildings and approved by the Commissioner of Buildings.

All ADUs must include a site plan

- Indicate the property lines with measurements
- Include all structures on the property
- Show distances from structures to property lines and other structures

Trade Work and Utilities

- All utilities all utility connections shall be provided by the primary dwelling only. Exception: When approved by the Commissioner of Buildings.
- Trade permits and inspections are required for ALL trade work associated with the ADU project.

Zoning Requirements

Please review the Zoning requirements. Among these requirements:

- The ADU cannot exceed one-third of the-floor area of the main single-family dwelling or 500 square feet, whichever is greater.
- The proposed ADU must meet the underlying zoning district regulations (height, setbacks, lot coverage, etc.)

If you have questions, consult Zoning: PDRZoningAdministration@rva.gov or 804-646-6340.

Certificate of Occupancy

A final Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is required. It will be issued as a Detached Two-Family Dwelling. This will replace the existing use of the main dwelling.

DETACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)

The Building Code recognizes this structure as a separate Dwelling Unit from the main dwelling. The term “Detached ADU” will be used in this document as defined in the Zoning Ordinance.

A Detached ADU can be constructed/established when the main dwelling unit is an Attached or Detached Single-Family Dwelling.

Fire Department access is required from the main street or rear alley.

A new address will be required. The Permit Technician will assist in establishing the new address.

Application Details

Description

Include the follow items in the description of work.

- Begin with: “Construction/establishment of an additional Single-Family Dwelling Unit on this parcel, permitted by Zoning's ADU ordinance. Main dwelling is on <address>.”
- Describe the location of the ADU on the property.
 - Indicate if it is part of another accessory structure, such as a garage.
- Include the area, square feet, of the main dwelling and the ADU.
 - If the ADU is part of another structure, include the area of that structure that is not part of the ADU.
- If the permit includes construction, that work should be clearly described.
- If there is no construction, the description needs to include “NO CONSTRUCTION.”

Examples of ADU location descriptions:

- Separate structure on rear of property
- In the detached garage, converted

Owner Statement

If there is “No Construction” or a Contractor is not assigned on a Plan with Construction, **an Owner Statement is required, completed by the Owner of the main dwelling.**

The Owner statement is not required if a Contractor is assigned to the Permit.

Plans

If the permit includes construction, that work should be clearly described. A construction plan set is required and Contractor requirements apply.

If there is no construction, the description needs to include “NO CONSTRUCTION.”

A floor plan of the ADU is required.

- If the dwelling unit occupies part of an accessory structure, like a garage, include a floor plan for the entire structure.

The floor plan must include:

- Measurements
- Labeled rooms, doors, windows, means of egress
- Indication of spaces shared with both units
- Permanent fixtures including the food preparation area with sink, permanently mounted cooking device and/or stove, refrigerator, and sanitation fixtures with clearances.

Other Plan requirements:

- If fire separation is not provided, a Fire Alarm system complying with Chapter 29 of NFPA 72 and interconnected CO alarms must be installed throughout.
- Show locations for full access to utility controls, disconnecting means, and all overcurrent devices for the ADU.
- ADUs are required to comply with the applicable design criteria in the Virginia Residential code. This includes lighting, ventilation, heating, room areas, ceiling heights, sanitation, toilet, bath, and shower spaces, EERO's, etc.
- Exception: Historic Buildings and approved by the Commissioner of Buildings.

All ADU/Dwelling Unit Applications must include a site plan

- Indicate the property lines with measurements
- Include all structures on the property
- Show distances from structures to property lines and other structures

Trade Work and Utilities

- Utility connections can be provided by the main dwelling or separately for Detached ADU.
- Trade permits and inspections are required for ALL trade work associated with the ADU project.

Zoning Requirements

Please review the Zoning requirements. Among these requirements:

- The ADU cannot exceed one-third of the-floor area of the main single-family dwelling or 500 square feet, whichever is greater.
- The proposed ADU must meet the underlying zoning district regulations (height, setbacks, lot coverage, etc.)

If you have questions, consult Zoning: PDRZoningAdministration@rva.gov or 804-646-6340.

Certificate of Occupancy

A final Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is required. A final CO will be issued for the new dwelling unit. It will not affect the existing CO of the main dwelling.

APPENDIX 1 – HOW TO APPLY FOR A PERMIT IN THE ONLINE PERMIT PORTAL

The User Guide for the Online Permit Portal can be found [HERE \(click\)](#).

You will need to apply for a permit in the [Online Permit Portal \(click here\)](#).

- Once in the portal, click “Apply”
- Select “All” on the tabs above the categories
- Select “Show Categories”
- Select “Plans”
- Select the type of permit you need. For example: “Residential Building”
- To the right, select the Work Class – for example: “New” or “Light Alteration”

Help Desk: PDRPermitsAndInspections@rva.gov or 804-646-4169

If you come to our front desk, please note it is open from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on days that City Hall is open to the public. Our desk is located in Rooms 108/110.