



Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

Frequently Asked Questions and Tips

The City of Algona has created customer tip sheets to inform the general public about the City's land use processes, effect of codes and regulations, and commonly asked questions relating to land development and construction projects. These sheets are not intended to be complete statements or advise customers of all applicable codes and regulations.

The codes and regulations may be revised or amended, please consult City staff to confirm your understanding of requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to understand all requirements and ensure the project meets the City's applicable codes and regulations.

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a small self contained residential unit built on the same lot as an existing single-family home. ADUs may be permitted within a primary residence (garage, basement) or detached from the main unit. ADUs are commonly referred to as Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADU) or Granny/in-law units.

Why an ADU?

ADUs provide property owners with increased flexibility for developing their lots while also increasing the diversity of housing options in a neighborhood. ADUs can generate rental income for the property owner or be used to address family needs such as aging in place.

How long does it take to approve an ADU?

Building an ADU requires a building permit. Building permit application typically takes three (3) to four (4) months to process and approve. The length of time may vary depending on proximity and impact to critical areas and the responsiveness of the applicant.

What is the application process for an ADU?

1. Submit the building permit application and required materials by email to: juliek@algonawa.gov.
2. The City will review the application for completeness within 28 days.
3. When the application is deemed complete, the submittal materials will be circulated for administrative review.
4. After being reviewed by the separate departments, the city planner will issue their decision of approval, approval with conditions, or require revisions.

How much does a building permit cost?

The city's fee schedule for permits is updated on an annual basis. The fee schedule is located in [Chapter 2.50](#) in the Algona Municipal Code (AMC).

How long will a building permit be valid for?

A building permit can remain valid as long as work authorized by the permit is commenced within six months of permit approval. As long as inspections are recorded in intervals of six months, the permit will remain valid.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not include all codes and regulations that may be applicable to your project. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating compliance with adopted codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

For more information: City of Algona | www.algonwawa.gov | (253) 833-2897

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call (253) 833-2897. TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Service.



What do I need to submit to get a building permit ?

Please refer to the building permit Tip Sheet (Tip Sheet #111) for all applicable submittal requirements. All required application materials are to be submitted electronically in PDF format. Additional materials may be required depending on the specific nature of the application. Please contact the City of Algona to confirm if additional materials will be required.

Calculating max allowed ADU square footage

The allowable square footages of an ADU is determined by the specific lot being developed. ADUs can cover up to 10% of a lot in both R-L Low Density and R-M Medium Density zones. The minimum ADU size is 300 ft². The maximum size is the lesser of 1,000 ft² or 40% of the combined floor area of both the ADU and the main residential structure.

ADU setback requirements

There are setback requirements specific to ADU development such as:

- Cannot be less than 5 ft. from any lot line
- Cannot be built in front or side yard
- Cannot be constructed in area of rear yard adjacent or within 10 ft. of any adjoining front yard, adjacent or within 5 ft. of an adjoining yard, or within 15ft. of any public street

Is a pre-application meeting required?

Any person considering developing an ADU is encouraged to participate in a pre-application meeting with city staff. pre-application meetings are an informal review of the proposed ADU where recommendations can be offered by planning, engineering, building, public works, police, and fire reviewers.

What are the approval criteria?

The applicant is responsible for demonstrating how the project meets the following approval criteria, listed in [Chapter 22.48.010 AMC](#).

An ADU may only be granted by the city upon the following findings:

1. Compliance with Applicable Codes including but not limited to the building and zoning codes
2. Certification from City of Algona Public Works Department confirming adequate water and waste disposal facilities
3. ADU must be fully within, part of, or an accessory unit
4. Only one ADU unit per single-family lot
5. The property owner of record must occupy either the single-family dwelling or the accessory dwelling unit as a legal residence
6. ADU minimum size is 300 ft² and the maximum size being the lesser of 1,000 ft² or 40% of the combined floor area of both units
7. ADU development requires one additional off-street parking space
8. Garages can be converted to an ADU only if the parking space lost is replaced elsewhere on the lot
9. All structures on the property shall have the appearance of a single-family unit
10. Occupants of ADU are limited to a single family
11. Minimum Requirements:
 - Bathroom including sink, toilet, shower
 - Kitchen
 - Light and ventilation
 - Separate Closet



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