



City of Cedar Falls
Department of Community Development
Inspection Services Division
268-5161

Residential Accessory Structures

2015 International Residential Code

This information has been compiled for the benefit of any person wanting to construct an attached or detached residential accessory structure. Its intent is to provide a general guideline to familiarize a person with procedures and minimum building standards to be a complete list of code requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building permits are required for any accessory building (storage sheds, detached or attached garage). This is to include additions to existing structures or garages. Building permits are not required for detached sheds under 120 square feet in area. Land use permits issued by the Zoning Administrator are required for any shed or structure regardless of size.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Accessory structures shall be permitted in all zoning districts subject to the floodplain regulations contained in this ordinance where applicable, in accordance with the following criteria:

Accessory structures shall be permitted in all zoning districts, subject to the floodplain regulations contained in this chapter, where applicable, in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Such detached accessory structures shall not be closer to a side lot line than ten percent of the width of the lot, unless the front line of such accessory structure is situated at least 18 feet behind the front line of the principal structure, in which case the accessory structure may be two feet from the side lot line, except on corner lots, and two feet from the rear lot line. In any case, when the rear lot line abuts an alley, the structure may be built within one foot of the rear property line. However, no portion of the accessory structure, including roof eaves, shall extend across the private property line. On corner lots, accessory structures shall be no closer to the side property line abutting the longer street side of the property than the rear of the required side yard setback in that district, or no closer to the longer street side than the building line of the principal structure, whichever setback is greater. No detached accessory structure shall be allowed in the required front yard of any district.

Each detached accessory structure measuring 600 sq. ft. or larger in base floor area must provide minimum building setbacks of 10 ft. as measured from the rear yard property boundaries to the base of the detached accessory structure and a side yard setback of 10% of the lot width as measured from the side property line to the base of the detached structure.

All detached accessory structures measuring at least 600 square feet in base floor area but no larger than 1200 sq. ft. in base floor area, shall be consistent with the architectural style of the principal residential structure located on the property at the time such detached accessory structure is established, and shall be required to adhere to the following design guidelines:

- a. The detached accessory structure must utilize similar exterior wall siding materials as then exist on the principal residential structure on the property. Siding panels must approximate the size and dimensions of those siding materials on the principal residential structure. No corrugated metal coverings or siding materials shall be established on the detached accessory structure. No vertical siding materials shall be established unless similar vertical siding materials are then established on the principal residential structure. No steel siding materials shall be permitted unless the principal residential structure then utilizes steel siding materials. In the case of residential structures utilizing brick siding materials, similar brick or masonry materials must be used on the front portion of the exterior walls of the detached accessory structure. Masonry or brick "accents" or trim elements matching similar components on the principal residence are acceptable to complement a residence constructed with brick siding materials. For the remainder of the accessory structure located on a lot with a brick residence, siding materials must resemble siding materials utilized on at least one other non-brick residential structure found on an adjacent property or on the same block in the residential neighborhood if any.
- b. The color and texture of exterior wall materials used on the detached accessory structure must be similar to the color and texture of exterior wall materials on the principal residential structure.
- c. Roof lines and angles on the detached accessory structure must resemble or be similar to the roof lines and angles of the principal residential structure on the property. No flat roofs shall be permitted on the detached structure unless the main residential structure then has a flat roof covering more than half of the residence, excluding a garage or carport flat roof feature attached to the principal residential structure.

- d. Other architectural features of the detached accessory structure must resemble or be similar to features found on the principal residential structure including the size and dimensions of windows. Windows shall be established on at least two walls of detached accessory structures.
 - e. Roofing materials utilized on the detached accessory structure must be similar to roofing materials used on the principal residential structure. Metal roofing materials may be utilized only if the principal residential structure on the property then utilizes metal roofing materials.
 - f. For preexisting structures that are enlarged or improved resulting in a structure size 600 sq. ft. in base floor area or larger, the entire enlarged or improved structure shall comply with the design and architectural requirements stated herein.
 - g. Every property owner applying for a detached accessory structure in a residential zoning district measuring at least 600 square feet in base floor area but no larger than 1200 sq. ft. in base floor area shall submit to the city planning division office renderings illustrating materials and design characteristics on all four sides of the proposed detached accessory structure, along with then-current photographs of all four sides of the principal residential structure on the property, and a description of the siding and roofing materials and colors of those materials along with a description of the roof pitch on the principal residential structure and how those features compare with the proposed detached accessory structure. City planning division staff shall evaluate the architectural consistency between the proposed detached accessory structure and the principal residential structure based upon the guidelines set forth in this subsection, before issuing a land use permit. In the case of a dispute or uncertainty between city planning division staff and the property owner relating to architectural details or features, or in the event the Planning Division staff does not approve the architectural/design plans submitted by the property owner, the application for the proposed detached accessory structure shall be submitted to the City Planning and Zoning Commission followed by referral to the City Council for architectural/design review purposes.
2. Regardless of its location, an unattached accessory structure shall maintain a clearance of eight feet, wall-to-wall, between structures on a single lot.
 3. An accessory structure serving principal single-family or two-family residences shall not exceed 1,024 square feet in area, nor 45 percent of the required rear yard, whichever is less. An accessory structure serving a

commercial, professional office, industrial or institutional use, including religious, educational, government, hospital, or nursing homes or convalescent centers shall not exceed 1,200 square feet in area. The maximum allowable square footage of the floor area of accessory structures serving residential uses shall be calculated in the following manner: lot width times required rear yard times 45 percent ($LW \times RY \times .45 =$ maximum allowable square footage). The total allowable square footage calculation shall be based upon the area of the base or "footprint" of the structure.

4. In agricultural zoning districts, accessory structures serving principal agricultural uses on properties larger than 20 acres in area shall not be subject to the size or height limitations specified herein. However, on those properties in agricultural districts which contain less than 20 acres in area and where the principal use is residential, the regulations specified herein for residential uses shall apply.
5. An accessory building serving a commercial, professional office, industrial or institutional use including religious, educational, government, hospital, nursing homes, or convalescent centers shall not exceed 20 feet in height as measured from the slab floor of the structure to the top of the roof ridge. For all residential uses, including single-family, duplex, and multi-family residences, the maximum height of detached accessory structures shall be 18 feet as measured from the slab floor to the top of the roof ridge.

However, on properties containing principal residential structures exceeding one story in height, the residential accessory structure may exceed the 18 foot overall height limitation provided that the structure does not exceed the following components:

- a. Maximum allowable wall height for two opposite walls as measured from the slab floor to the top of the wall is 18 feet.
- b. The maximum overall height of the detached structure, as measured from the slab floor to the roof ridge, shall not exceed 30 feet.
- c. The overall height of the detached structure shall not exceed the height of the principal residence on the property. The height of the principal residential structure shall be determined from the natural grade immediately adjacent to the residential structure to the highest point of the roof ridge of the structure. The natural grade adjacent to the principal residential structure shall be considered to be at a point that represents the prevailing or average grade surrounding the structure excluding the at-grade elevation of an exterior basement entryway.
- d. There shall be no more than two floors, including the base or main

floor of the structure, within any detached accessory structure.

6. When more than one accessory structure is constructed on a lot, the total floor area of all accessory structures on the lot shall not exceed the area requirements specified in this section.
7. In all districts, when additions are made to accessory structures, the entire structure shall thereafter meet all the requirements specified in this section.
8. No accessory structure is permitted on any lot unless such lot has a principal permitted use located thereon.
9. No portion of an accessory structure shall be allowed to encroach into a public utility easement.
10. An accessory structure used in conjunction with a multifamily residence (3 or more dwelling units) shall not exceed a total size of more than 576 square feet in area per dwelling unit, or 45 percent of the total required rear yard, whichever is less.
11. The exception to size limitations for detached accessory structures set out in this section shall apply to any lot which measures at least one acre in area, but not more than 20 acres in area, and which contains a principal permitted use located thereon. All detached accessory structures must be located on the same lot where the principal permitted use is located. For any lot which measures one acre or more in area, but not more than 20 acres in area, the maximum allowable sizes of detached accessory structures, as measured by the combined base floor area of all detached accessory structures which are located on the property, shall be limited as follows:

TABLE INSET:

Lot area	Maximum size of all detached accessory structures on lot
At least 1 acre but not more than 2 acres	1,200 sq. ft.
More than 2 acres but not more than 3 acres	1,400 sq. ft.
More than 3 acres but not more than 5 acres	1,600 sq. ft.
More than 5 acres but not more than 8 acres	3,000 sq. ft.
More than 8 acres but not more than 11 acres	4,000 sq. ft.
More than 11 acres but not more than 20 acres	5,000 sq. ft.

Each detached accessory structure which measures 1,200 sq. ft. or more in base floor area on any property containing a residential or commercial principal permitted use shall be located on the property at least 18 feet

behind the front line of the structure which comprises the principal permitted use on the property. Furthermore, there shall be established a minimum separation of eight feet, as measured wall-to-wall, between each detached accessory structure of any size and each principal structure, and between each such detached accessory structure and any other detached accessory structure of any size located on the property. In addition, each detached accessory structure measuring more than 1,200 sq. ft. in base floor area must satisfy minimum required side yard and minimum required rear yard setback requirements as specified for the zoning district within which the principal permitted use on the property is located. No detached accessory structure of any size shall be allowed within the required front yard area of any property in any district.

Building height limitations as specified in this section shall apply to each detached accessory structure, regardless of base floor area dimension.

12. A detached accessory structure can be attached and become a part of the principal structure only under the following conditions:
 - a. All minimum building setbacks pertaining to principal structures in the zoning district must be satisfied.
 - b. Both structures must be constructed on a permanent foundation and connected together by foundation footings or walls.
 - c. An above ground structural connection must be established between the two structures consisting of a roofed enclosure that is placed on a permanent foundation.

NOTE:

- Accessory structures are prohibited from being constructed on or infringing upon any easements.
- Placement of structures on corner lots can vary; contact the Zoning Administrator.
- Driveways are required to be setback at least three (3) feet from property lines.
- Any variations to the established Zoning Regulations will have to be appealed and decided by the Board of Adjustment. Contact the Zoning Administrator for procedures.
- Accessory structures located within the floodway or floodplain are subject to different requirements and approvals. Check with the Zoning Administrator for regulations and procedures.

PROCEDURES:

- Check with the Zoning Administrator regarding any questions on the preceding Zoning Regulations.
- Obtain a site plan form from either the Planning and Zoning Division or Inspection Services Division.
- Complete the supplied site plan form provided with all the information requested as per instructions.
- Obtain and complete a building permit application form providing all applicable information.
- When applications and site plan forms are completed, submit both forms along with a cross sectional elevation of the proposed building to either the Planning and Zoning Division or Inspection Services Division.
- After the forms have been approved, a building permit will be issued.
- Any changes to the original information (zoning or building) supplied with the original application need to be resubmitted for further review. This is to assure that the changes are still in compliance with the minimum standards set forth by the City Code.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

The permit fee is based on the calculated value (a fee schedule may be obtained upon request).

The electrical and/or plumbing inspectors need to be contacted prior to the installation of a separate service, lights, outlets, drains, etc. Additional permits are required for such work.

After the building permit has been issued, there will be a minimum of three (3) inspections:

1. Before any concrete is placed in the forms for a floating slab spread footing or trench type foundation (when a masonry or concrete foundation is used in conjunction with a spread footing, an additional inspection is needed prior to any backfill material being placed).
2. When framing has been erected roof and wall sheathing can be in place.
3. A final inspection.

DETACHED STRUCTURES

Foundations for one story unattached buildings, supporting roof loads only, can be:

1. A one-story wood-or metal-framed building (unattached from other principal structures) not used for human occupancy nor exceeding 850 square feet in floor area, supporting roof loads only, may be supported by a slab-on-grade with turned-down footing which provided a minimum perimeter bearing edge of eight inches in width and twelve inches in depth. The slab shall be reinforced with 6x610-gauge weld wire remesh or No. 4 reinforcement bar spaced 2'-0" o.c. each way and one No. 4 bar placed within the perimeter of the slab at the top and bottom.
2. Fill under slab areas shall be fully compacted.

Other requirements for unattached structures are:

1. When the area exceeds 850 square feet or any detached building is constructed with a floored space above the first story, a continuous frost foundation under such structure is required. The foundation can be a spread footing with masonry, concrete, approved treated wood walls or trench type footing 7½" wide flared to 12" at the bottom and 42" deep reinforced horizontally with a minimum of two reinforcing rods, ½" in diameter.
2. An addition to an existing detached building which would increase the overall area to more than 850 square feet warrants both the new addition and existing building to have a frost foundation installed underneath.

General construction requirements are as follows:

1. Wall framing is to be fastened to the foundation with ½" diameter anchor bolts spaced 6'-0" o.c. They shall be located 12" each way from all corners. Other methods need to be approved.
2. Sill plates are to be approved treated lumber or of a species naturally resistance to decay or rot.
3. Studs shall be a minimum of 2" x 4" spaced 16" or 24" o.c.
4. Walls shall be capped with double top plates each having a nominal thickness of 2". Corners shall be overlapped and fastened with two 16d nails. End joints of double plates shall be offset by 48" minimum.
5. Wall bracing may be 1 x 4 diagonal let in bracing, approved metal type, 3/8" CDX plywood.
6. In bearing walls where studs are spaced 24" o.c. rafters, joist or trusses need to bear within 3 inches of the studs beneath.

7. Rafters need to be sized according to the spans and roof pitch. This information needs to be indicated on the application for proper sizing. Ridge boards of 1" or 2" nominal thickness shall be one size larger than the rafters.
8. Roof trusses will be designed members. Specification sheets are supplied by the manufacturer. It is important to review this material, as some designs need permanent bracing placed as indicated on the spec sheets.
9. Roof sheathing shall be of an approved type.
10. If a building has received a variance by the Board of Adjustment allowing a setback of less than 6'-0" between the detached garage and house, the garage wall shall have 5/8" type "X" sheetrock installed continuing up from the foundation to the underside of the roof sheathing. There shall be no openings in the garage wall except for service doors. These doors need to be a minimum of 1-3/8" thick solid wood core or approved 20 minute insulated metal without glass panels.
11. Headers over openings in nonbearing walls can be two 2" x 10" for spans up to 16'-0". On openings in bearing walls for roof/ceiling loads only, headers spanning 12'-0" shall be two 2" x 10" with 1/2" solid plywood between; for 12'-0" to 14'-0" spans, two 2" x 12" with solid plywood between; and in spans more than 14'-0" three 2" x 12" need to be used. Certain conditions can exist which will change the actual size of a header needed. Check with the inspectors for additional information. Sizing will be reviewed at the time a building permit is issued.

ATTACHED STRUCTURES

Foundations for attached garages or storage areas are:

1. A trench 12" wide and 42" deep continuously around the entire perimeter reinforced with two reinforcing rods, 1/2" in diameter placed horizontally can be used if supporting wall and roof loads only.
2. Masonry, poured concrete or approved treated wood walls on concrete spread footings will be sized according to loading of structure.

General construction requirements are as follows:

1. Anchoring, treated sill plates, double plates, wall bracing, rafters, roof trusses, roof sheathing and headers are as indicated for detached structures.
2. Floor surfaces for garages or carports shall be placed concrete with a minimum thickness of 4" reinforced with 6x6 10-gauge welded wire mesh. A slab 6" thick does not have to be reinforced.
3. Studs shall be a minimum of 2" x 4".

4. The common wall separating a garage and dwelling shall have ½" sheetrock installed on the garage side extending up from the top of the foundation to the bottom of the roof sheathing. In lieu of extending to the underside of the roof sheathing; the sheetrock can be stopped at the ceiling line provided the entire ceiling is covered with minimum ½" sheetrock. Existing openings in the common wall (basement windows, windows, vents, etc.) need to be closed or covered over. Service doors shall be 1-3/8" thick of solid wood core or approved metal type without glass panels and equipped with self-closing hinges.

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