



City of Urbandale  
3600 86<sup>th</sup> Street  
Urbandale, IA 50322-4057

Building Department (515) 278-3930  
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## Accessory Structure Requirements

- **A building permit is required** for structures that include a concrete slab, post supports or other means of permanent affixation regardless of floor area.
- **A building permit is not required** for accessory structures provided that the structure is portable and no larger than 120 square feet in floor area. Although these portable structures are not subject to permitting requirements, they must comply with other accessory structure requirements such as setbacks, easements and structure height.
- **Fees:** Based upon floor areas/valuation. Contact Building Department for Fee Calculation
- **Location:** Permitted in the rear yard only.
- **Setbacks:** (measured to the wall of the structure)
  - Rear setback: 3'-0" minimum (see Easements)
  - Sideyard setbacks: 3'-0" minimum (see Easements)
  - Separation: 10'-0" minimum to any dwelling or 6'-0" minimum with Type "X" gypsum board (drywall) in the accessory structure.
- **Easements:** Typically, easements may not be encroached by an accessory structure and therefore setback distances may be increased according to easements of record. Easements will be reviewed by the City staff at the time of the building permit application and easement information will be noted on the permit.
- **Height:** Maximum height is 12'-0", measured at the mid-point of the gable end of the structure.
- **Maximum area:** The floor area of the accessory structure(s) may not exceed 30 percent of the rear yard area. The rear yard is defined as the full width of the lot extending from the rear lot line to the nearest part of the dwelling, including decks.
- **Restrictive Covenants:** The owner should check the restrictive covenants for their neighborhood to assure compliance with covenant regulations regarding accessory structures. In most cases, restrictive covenant information may also be obtained at the Community Development Office.
- **Before you dig:** Call "One Call" for utility locations before you begin digging, at 1-800-292-8989. Utility locations are typically completed within 48 hours of your request. Underground utility location prior to digging is required by state law. This service is free of charge.

## Required Inspections

1. **Footings/Setback** inspection must be made after form work is completed and prior to pouring concrete. The property corner pins should be exposed to view for verification of setbacks dimensions. If the property corner pins cannot be found by the owner or contractor, it is the owner's responsibility to have a registered land surveyor establish these points.
2. **Framing**
3. **Electrical Rough-In** (if any), may be combined with Framing Inspection
4. **Final Inspection** (Framing and Electrical Rough-In may be combined with the Final Inspection provided the framing or electrical work has not been covered with drywall).

## SECTION 4: GENERAL PROVISIONS (Amended Ord. 2000-22, October 3, 2000)

### 4.1 General Regulations for Land and Structures.

#### B. Accessory Buildings. (Amended Ord. 2009-02, June 2, 2009)

- (1) Detached buildings. No detached accessory building shall be erected within the minimum setback required along any street, or within the minimum side yard setback required for a principal structure. Accessory buildings shall be located a minimum of ten feet from any other building or structure other than a fence on the same property unless fire protection is installed within the accessory building in accordance with the provisions of the Urbandale Building Code for an attached garage, in which case such minimum separation may be reduced to six feet. An accessory building shall not exceed twelve feet in height except as provided herein.

Detached accessory buildings for a single family residence shall not occupy more than thirty percent of the dwelling's rear yard; shall have minimum setbacks of three feet from all property lines if the building's main floor is 720 square feet or less in area; minimum setback of ten feet from the rear property line and comply with the minimum side yard setbacks for the principal structure if the building's main floor area is more than 720 square feet but less than 1,000 square feet, or if a detached accessory building exceeds 12 feet but is not more than 14 feet in height; and shall comply with all setback requirements for a principal structure if the building's main floor area exceeds 1,000 square feet of floor area or if a detached accessory building has a height of more than fourteen feet.

Detached accessory buildings for multi-family or nonresidential uses shall have minimum setbacks of ten feet from all property lines if the building's main floor has less than 1,000 square feet of area; and shall have minimum setbacks of 25 feet from all property lines if the building's main floor area exceeds 1,000 square feet or if the building has a height of more than twelve feet.

No detached accessory building shall exceed a height of 25 feet in any case.

- (2) Attached and breezeways. Accessory buildings except stables may be erected as part of the principal building, or if separated from the principal building the distance required in paragraph 1 above may be connected to the principal building by a breezeway or similar structure, provided the accessory building complies with all yard requirements for a principal building.
- (3) Principal Use Required. No accessory building shall be constructed upon a lot until the construction of the principal building has been actually commenced, and no accessory building shall be used unless the principal building is also being used.
- (4) Additions creating nonconformity. In the event that a legally existing detached accessory building will be made nonconforming by reason of being placed in a side yard by an addition to a principal building, such existing accessory building may be retained as a legal nonconforming structure provided the following conditions have been met:
  - a) that the existing accessory building and the addition to the principal building comply with all other zoning regulations and the Urbandale Building and Fire Codes including but not limited to separation between principal and accessory structures and other regulations specified by paragraphs 1 and 2 of this subsection.
  - b) the location and design of the addition to the principal building is determined by the Zoning Administrator to be the only reasonable and practical location for the addition.
  - c) the accessory building has been in existence for a minimum of three (3) years as determined by the date of the certificate of occupancy or other verifiable means.
  - d) the Zoning Administrator determines that the nonconformity created does not alter the character of the neighborhood nor impair health, safety, or general welfare.

Such nonconforming accessory building shall not be constructed as part of the principal building nor attached thereto by a breezeway or similar structure.

Such nonconforming accessory building shall be subject to the provisions of Section 7 and shall not be extended, enlarged, reconstructed, moved, or structurally altered except when required to do so by law or order or so as to be in full compliance with paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection and other applicable regulations and requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable Codes, and if damaged to the extent of more than fifty (50) percent of its assessed value, or is abandoned or becomes obsolete, it shall not be restored except as to comply with the provisions of paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection and all other applicable regulations and requirements.