



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

What are the fees to build an ADU?

Building Permit fees for ADUs vary from one project to the next based on the type of construction (remodel vs. new structure, remodel of habitable space vs. remodel of non-habitable space), the size of the ADU, and the full project scope (adding new sidewalks, need to open street to install new water or sewer connections, adding parking or paved areas, etc.)

Below are estimated Building Permit fees for three sample projects: New Construction ADU, 400 sf in size; New Construction ADU, 750 sf in size; and a Conversion ADU of 400 sf in size (based on conversion of a two-car garage). These estimates are samples only.

New Construction ADU Building Permit Estimate – 400 sf

\$6,130.42 + Fire and water fees

<u>Payment Information</u>	<u>Fee Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Due at Application Submittal	Building & Safety Plan Check Fee	\$ 721.34
	Planning Plan Check Fee	\$ 894.00
	Public Works Plan Check Fee	\$ 496.00
Due at Permit Issuance	Fire Plan Check Fee*	-
	Building, Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing Permit Inspection Fees	\$ 1,305.75
	State Required Fees	\$ 15.88
	Technology Fees	\$ 163.85
	Document Handling Fees	\$ 40.00
	Green Building Education Fund Fees	\$ 220.00
	General Plan Maintenance	\$ 1,073.60
	Parks & Recreation Fees	\$ 1,200.00
Fees Paid Directly to Water Department (Due Prior to Permit Final)	Water Fees*	-
Fees Paid Directly to School District Office (Pay Prior to Permit Issuance)	Santa Cruz County Office of Education Developer Fees	N/A

* Check in with the following Departments regarding their specific fees and for any other permits/fees that an ADU may incur for your disclaimers section (i.e. water meter upsizing, fire service, fire sprinkler permit, encroachment permits, etc.):

Fire - Kelly Kumec (831) 420-5284

Water - BJ Dericco (831) 420-5318

Public Works - Curtis Busenhart (831) 420-5175



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

New Construction ADU Building Permit Estimate – 750 sf

\$12,117.48 + Fire and Water Fees

<u>Payment Information</u>	<u>Fee Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Due at Application Submittal	Building & Safety Plan Check Fee	\$ 1,012.54
	Planning Plan Check Fee	\$ 1,279.00
	Public Works Plan Check Fee	\$ 496.00
Due at Permit Issuance	Fire Plan Check Fee*	-
	Building, Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing Permit Inspection Fees	\$ 1,840.75
	State Required Fees	\$ 29.28
	Technology Fees	\$ 224.41
	Document Handling Fees	\$ 40.00
	Green Building Education Fund Fees	\$ 412.50
	General Plan Maintenance	\$ 2,013.00
	Parks & Recreation Fees	\$ 2,250.00
Fees Paid Directly to Water Department (Due Prior to Permit Final)	Water Fees*	-
Fees Paid Directly to School District Office (Pay Prior to Permit Issuance)	Santa Cruz County Office of Education Developer Fees	\$ 2,520.00

* Check in with the following Departments regarding their specific fees and for any other permits/fees that an ADU may incur for your disclaimers section (i.e. water meter upsizing, fire service, fire sprinkler permit, encroachment permits, etc.):

Fire - Kelly Kumec (831) 420-5284

Water - BJ Dericco (831) 420-5318

Public Works - Curtis Busenhart (831) 420-5175



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Conversion ADU Building Permit Estimate – 400 sf

\$5,392.13 + Fire and Water Fees

<u>Payment Information</u>	<u>Fee Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Due at Application Submittal	Building & Safety Plan Check Fee	\$ 598.49
	Planning Plan Check Fee	\$ 759.00
	Public Works Plan Check Fee	\$ 496.00
Due at Permit Issuance	Fire Plan Check Fee*	-
	Building, Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing Permit Inspection Fees	\$ 1,247.75
	State Required Fees	\$ 11.19
	Technology Fees	\$ 148.06
	Document Handling Fees	\$ 40.00
	Green Building Education Fund Fees	\$ 151.64
	General Plan Maintenance	\$ 740.00
	Parks & Recreation Fees	\$ 1,200.00
Fees Paid Directly to Water Department (Due Prior to Permit Final)	Water Fees*	-
Fees Paid Directly to School District Office (Pay Prior to Permit Issuance)	Santa Cruz County Office of Education Developer Fees	N/A

* Check in with the following Departments regarding their specific fees and for any other permits/fees that an ADU may incur for your disclaimers section (i.e. water meter upsizing, fire service, fire sprinkler permit, encroachment permits, etc.):

Fire - Kelly Kumec (831) 420-5284

Water - BJ Dericco 4(831) 20-5318

Public Works - Curtis Busenhart (831) 420-5175

Do I need a permit to build an ADU?

Yes. All ADUs require only a building permit – no public hearing or planning permit is required, and these permits cannot be challenged or appealed by neighbors. If an ADUs is part of a larger project that involves building or extensively renovating the primary home on the parcel, additional permits may be required.

What features does an ADU need to have?

An ADU is a fully independent living unit with full facilities for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. They can be small or large, but must have a full kitchen (minimum of countertop, cooking appliance, space for refrigeration, and sink with 2" drainline) and full bath (minimum toilet, sink, shower). An ADU must have exterior access independent from the primary dwelling.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Can I use a manufactured home as an ADU?

Yes. As long as the home can comply with state and local building code requirements, including local green building standards for ADUs, and can be sited on the property in compliance with the zoning code.

There is an existing unit on my property that was built without permits. Can it be legalized?

Yes, nearly all existing unpermitted units are eligible for legalization through the City's ADU legalization program. These units will need to be brought into compliance with current building, health and safety codes, and the City is working to facilitate this process for property owners in order to keep rental housing on the market. Information about the [Legalization Program is available on our website](#).

What can I do to reduce the cost of my project?

There are many factors that can influence the cost of ADU construction, some will be unavoidable and others can be greatly influenced by considering several factors at the beginning of your planning process. Below are several factors that can influence the cost of a project both in hard and soft construction costs as well as fees.

- Type of Project
 - Conversion ADUs are the least expensive option both in terms of permit fees and in terms of actual construction costs. Conversion of existing habitable space will be less expensive than the conversion of existing non-habitable space (such as a storage area or garage).
 - Building your ADU as an addition to your existing home may be more cost effective than building a new stand-alone structure, but this will depend on the age and construction of your existing home.
 - The size of your attached ADU can trigger the requirement for fire sprinklers – if the ADU exceeds 50% of the size of the habitable area of your existing home, your project may require the installation of fire sprinklers throughout the entire structure. If you are close to this threshold, consult with City Fire while you are designing your project.
 - Building a new, free-standing ADU is the most expensive type of ADU, both in terms of construction and in the permitting fees that will apply, but it may be the only or best option for your project depending on your site and your goals.
 - Utilizing a manufactured home or prefab construction may be more cost effective, but make sure the product and its placement on your site can comply with local zoning and building codes, including green building standards.
 - ADUs that are smaller than 500 square feet fall below the threshold for paying school fees (around \$3.50/square foot).
- Site planning



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

- Are you locating your ADU adjacent to an alley? Is the alley paved and in good condition? If not, you could be responsible for paving the portion of the alley abutting your property.
- Are you locating the ADU on a slope? The structure will need to be engineered more carefully and the project may trigger the requirement for a Slope Alteration Permit.
- Do you plan to provide driving access for the occupant of the ADU (not required)? Adding additional paved area to your project (for a longer driveway) adds costs for materials as well as drainage considerations.
- Project Phasing
 - Does your property have sidewalks? Are they in good condition? If not, consider installing these features *before* applying to build your ADU. If you voluntarily install or repair sidewalks, the fees charged by the Public Works Department are significantly reduced.

[Do I need to notify my neighbors or have my ADU reviewed at a public hearing?](#)

No. ADUs require only a building permit. Building permits do not require public notice and cannot be appealed. That said, providing courtesy notice to the residents of adjacent lots prior to the start of construction is neighborly.

[Does my ADU need a separate water meter/sewer connection?](#)

ADUs created as Conversion ADUs are not required to install separate connections for water and sewer service, but could in some cases exceed the capacity of the existing connection and trigger the need to up-size the existing meter. This circumstance could result in the need to open the street to upsize the water main, which would also trigger additional permits and fees. We recommend consulting with the Water Department early in your planning process to try to identify any issues that are likely to affect your project.

ADUs created as New Construction will almost always trigger the requirement for new water and sewer connections and the associated connection fees.

[Will fire sprinklers be required in the ADU? Will adding an ADU trigger the requirement to add sprinklers to my existing home?](#)

The state law currently prohibits the City from requiring fire sprinklers in an ADU when sprinklers are not present or required in the primary home. If you are building an attached ADU that is larger than 50% of the existing habitable space of your primary home (excluding any attached garage), the size of the addition could require that fire sprinklers be added to the entire structure – both the existing home and the new attached ADU. If you are close to the threshold, we recommend consulting with the City Fire Department about your project before submitting your building permit application.

[Can I build more than one ADU?](#)

No. The municipal code currently allows only one ADU per parcel, in conjunction with a proposed or existing single-family home.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

I live in a duplex. Can I build an ADU?

No, ADUs can only be built on a property with an existing or proposed single-family home.

Will adding an ADU raise my property taxes?

Yes, a bit. Building an ADU will not cause the basis of your property taxes to be reassessed, but an increment representing the added value of the new structure, will be added. Further information is available by contacting the County Tax Assessor.

Where can I find more information about financing an ADU?

The County of Santa Cruz created an ADU Financing Guide in 2017 that covers the basics of planning a project and acquiring financing for construction. With the obvious exception of local fees, the information in that guide is relevant to City residents as well. The ADU Financing Guide is available through the County's ADU website at www.sccoplanning.com/ADU (Select 'ADU Guides' from the menu bar and then 'Financing Guide').