

ACCESSORY APARTMENTS

The following information should answer many of the questions you may have about establishing an accessory apartment in Iowa City. If, after reading through the following information, you still have questions or need help, please contact the Housing and Inspection Services Department at 356-5120.

WHERE CAN AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT BE ESTABLISHED?

Accessory apartments are permitted in the RS-5, RS-8, RS-12, RM-12, RM-20 and RNS-20 zones in owner occupied detached single family dwellings and detached zero lot line dwellings and in buildings accessory to these same dwelling types.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT?

The owner of the property in which an accessory apartment is located must occupy at least one of the dwelling units on the premises as the permanent legal resident.

In addition to the parking required for the principal dwelling unit, one off-street parking space must be provided for the accessory apartment.

The accessory apartment must be a complete separate dwelling unit that functions independently from the principal dwelling unit. It must contain its own bathroom and kitchen facilities.

Any addition for an accessory apartment may not increase the floor area of the original dwelling by more than 10% and any new entrances should face the side or rear of the dwelling.

If the accessory apartment is located within the principal dwelling, the apartment floor area may not exceed 30% of the total area of the principal dwelling or 650 square feet, whichever is less. If it is located in an accessory building, the apartment floor area may not exceed 50% of the total floor area of the accessory building or 650 square feet, whichever is less.

The accessory apartment may not contain more than one bedroom.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN LIVE IN AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT?

The total number of individuals that reside on a property, including both principal and accessory units, may not exceed the number allowed for one household in that particular zone.

IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?

Yes, prior to the establishment of any accessory apartment, a rental permit must be obtained from the Department of Housing and Inspection Services. This will require an inspection and the payment of a rental permit fee. The permit is valid for two years and must be renewed every two years for as long as the accessory apartment exists. The owner must submit a notarized affidavit to the City verifying owner occupancy and shall also file in the Office of County Recorder, a declaration of covenants stating that right to the accessory apartment ceases upon transfer of title and the right to maintain an accessory apartment in no way constitutes approval of the dwelling as a duplex. Forms for these documents can be supplied by the City.