



ADU Memo

A number of State bills revising requirements and processes regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) went into effect on January 1, 2020. The Department is currently working to determine what impact these revisions will have. Generally, we believe they may offer additional opportunities and/or further relief from Planning Code requirements.

Until a determination is made, this Memo provides a summary of our current interpretation of State Law and Planning Code options for creating Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) utilizing the current Local or State ADU Programs. Please note there may be other Code requirements that apply, and further legislative amendments will provide additional details in the future. Please visit sfplanning.org/adu or contact CPC.ADU@sfgov.org for additional information.

Local ADU Program (also known as Waiver ADUs)

The Local ADU Program allows adding ADUs to existing or proposed single- and multi-family buildings (subject to relevant requirements and Codes). The number of ADUs allowed varies; please refer to the [ADU Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

State ADU Program (also known as No-Waiver ADUs)

The State ADU Program allows the addition of ADUs, detached ADUs, or Junior ADUs to existing or proposed single-family buildings; and the addition of ADUs or detached ADUs to existing multi-family buildings. State law does not allow the addition of ADUs to new construction of multi-family properties. Please refer to Local ADU Program for this option.

For existing or new single-family properties:

- One (1) converted ADU is allowed per property. This would convert part of the single-family home or garage into an ADU and/or expand within the buildable area of the lot.
- One (1) new detached ADU is allowed per property. This is a:
 - new, freestanding structure,
 - no larger than 800 square feet,
 - setback at least 4 feet from the side and rear lot lines, and
 - no taller than 16 feet.
 - An existing legal structure may be converted into an ADU and would not require 4 foot setbacks.
 - Other City Codes may require separation between buildings. Please contact the [Department of Building Inspection](#) (DBI) for further details.

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- One (1) Junior ADU (JADU) is allowed per property. This would convert no more than 500 square feet of the existing or proposed single-family home or garage into a Junior ADU. This requires owner-occupancy in either the remaining portion of the single-family home or the newly created JADU.

For existing multi-family properties:

- One (1) converted ADU is allowed per property. In some cases, more than one is allowed, totaling up to 25 percent of the existing number of units, whichever number is greater. For example: An existing building with 16 units can add up to four (4) ADUs, and an existing building with 100 units can add up to 25 ADUs.
 - These ADUs must otherwise be Planning-Code compliant, which means they cannot require a waiver, or administrative exception, from Planning Code requirements. These would convert an existing part of the multi-family building that is not currently used as livable space, such as a storage room, garage, or basement, into an ADU and/or an expansion within the buildable area of the lot.
- Two (2) detached ADUs are allowed per property. These are:
 - new, freestanding structures,
 - setback at least four 4 feet from the side and rear lot lines, and
 - no taller than 16 feet.
 - Other City Codes may require separation between buildings. Please contact the [Department of Building Inspection](#) (DBI) for further details.

Please note that by filing your ADU application now, you acknowledge that there may be minor revisions requested to align with State and local laws. Please contact CPC.ADU@sfgov.org for additional details.