



ACCESSORY STRUCTURE FAQs

■ **What is this handout?** This handout provides an overview to common questions related to accessory buildings.

■ **What is an accessory building?**

Accessory buildings are usually small buildings that are subordinate to and serve a main building on the same lot. Examples include detached garages, carports, garden sheds, and greenhouses.

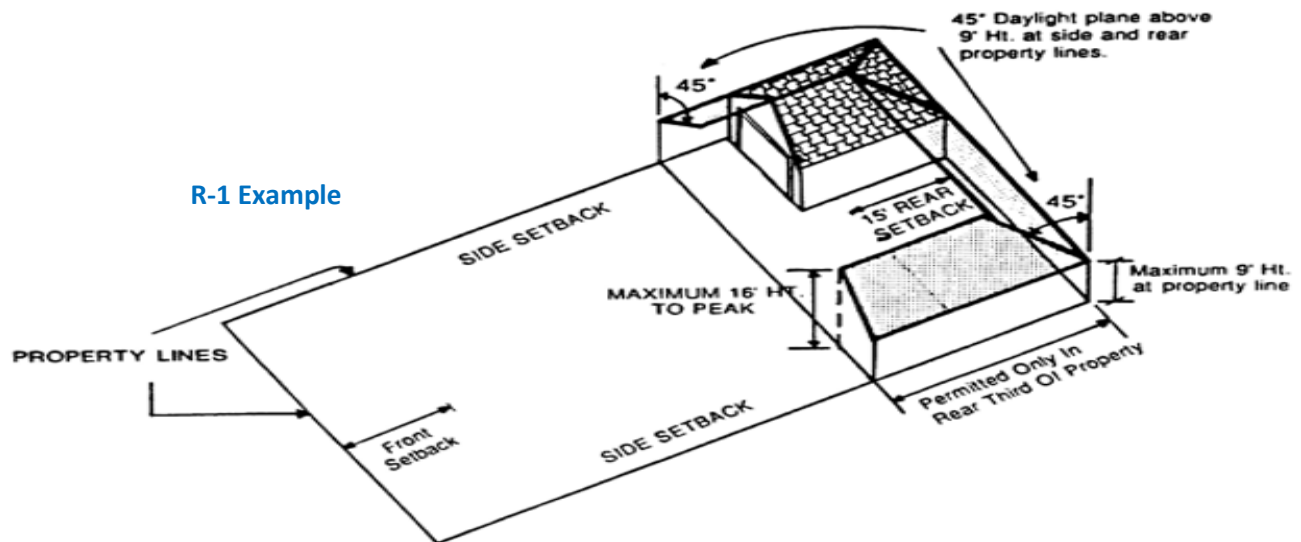


■ **How big can my accessory building be? Is there a maximum coverage?**

Accessory buildings must not cover more than 50% of the required rear yard. The square footage of accessory buildings also count towards the property's maximum allowable floor area ratio.

■ **What is the height limit for accessory buildings located in the setback areas?**

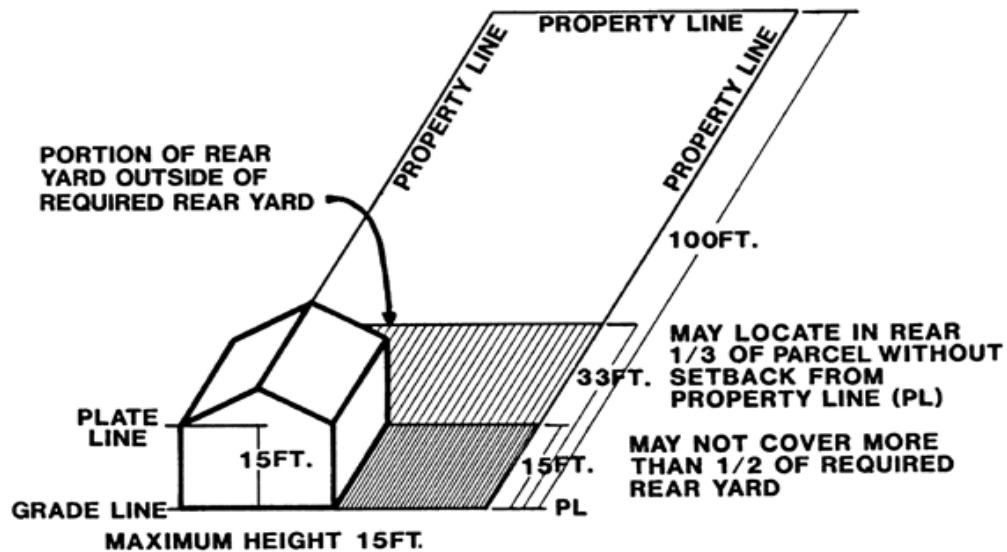
Zoning District	Building Height in Setback Areas
R-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 feet max. to the plate line, 16 feet max. to the roof peak. Shall not extend into the daylight plane: 9 feet at each side <i>and</i> rear property line, extending into the parcel at an angle of 45°. See image below.)



1. **Visibility triangle**

- At street intersections, the visibility triangle is formed by lines measuring 45 feet from the intersection of curb lines, or pavement edge where no curb exists.
- At driveways, the visibility triangle is formed by lines measuring 10 feet from the intersection of the edge of driveways and the edge of the sidewalk closest to the private property.

Zoning District	Building Height in Setback Areas
All Other Zoning Districts	<p>15 feet max. to the plate line, if the following requirements are met per SMMC 27.70.010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> located within the rear one-third of the parcel located within the interior side or rear yard separated from principal building by at least 4 feet



■ Where can my accessory building be located?

Outside of setback areas and anywhere in the property's Buildable Area. If an accessory building is located within the setback areas, additional height limits and restrictions would apply, as described above.

■ How many floors can my accessory building be?

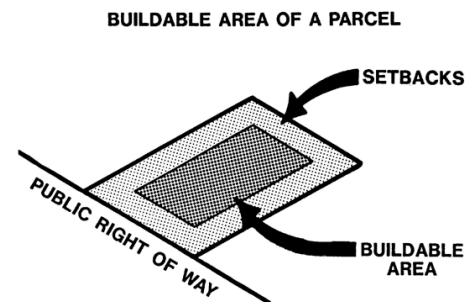
In R-1 districts, accessory buildings located in required setback areas are limited to one habitable floor located on the ground level.

■ How far does my accessory building need to be located away from my main house?

At least 4 feet and that area must be open to the sky.

■ Do I need a building permit for my accessory building?

Yes, if the accessory building is larger than 120 square feet. [California Building Code, Title 24, Section 105.2, and California Residential Code, Title 24, Section R105.2] You can find more information at the Online Permit Center through this link: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/4294/Online-Permit-Center>.



For more information, please see San Mateo Municipal Code [27.18.100](#) – Structures and Building Projection in Required Yards and [27.70](#) – Accessory Buildings and Structures in Required Yards.