



ESTES PARK  
COLORADO

# Estes Valley Accessory Uses and Structures



Revision Date: February 2011

## OVERVIEW

This handout summarizes accessory structure and use requirements from Estes Valley Development Code Section 5.2.

- The Division of Building Safety at 970-577-3726 (inside Town limits).
- Larimer County Building Department at 970-577-2100 (in the unincorporated Estes Valley).

## WHAT IS AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE?

An accessory structure is a structure that is detached from the main building.

Examples include:

- Garages (attached or detached)
- Sheds
- Barns and stables
- Fences and Walls

Accessory structures are clearly incidental to and customarily found in conjunction with the principal structure.

## CAN I BUILD AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE FIRST?

The principal structure must be built at the same time as, or before, the accessory structure.

## CAN I LIVE IN MY RV BEFORE I BUILD MY HOUSE?

No. Recreational vehicles cannot be used for an accessory use. For example, you cannot use an RV for a home occupation or accessory dwelling unit.

## WHAT IS AN ACCESSORY USE?

An accessory use is a use of land or building that is customarily and clearly incidental and subordinate to the principal use of the land or building.

Examples include:

- Home occupations
- Day care homes
- Second kitchens
- Accessory dwelling units

## DO I HAVE TO COMPLY WITH SETBACK REQUIREMENTS?

Yes. Accessory structures are subject to the same height and setback regulations that apply to principal structures.

Minimum setbacks apply whether or not a building permit is required.

## DO I NEED A PERMIT?

Probably. Accessory structures larger than 120 square feet or that have a utility connection require a building permit.

## CAN I PUT AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE IN THE FRONT YARD?

On residential lots smaller than one acre, only detached garages can be located closer to the front property line than the residential dwelling.

## CAN I BUILD IN AN EASEMENT?

No. Accessory structures cannot be located within any easement or over any known utility (fences excepted).

To determine if your structure will require a building permit contact:

TOWN OF ESTES PARK PLANNING DIVISION

170 MACGREGOR AVE. | P.O. BOX 1200 | ESTES PARK, CO 80517 | PH. 970-577-3721 | FAX 970-586-0249 | WWW.ESTES.ORG

## HOW BIG CAN I BUILD?

For residential uses, the maximum cumulative floor area for accessory structures cannot exceed the largest computation of the following:

- a. 1,200 square feet of floor area
- b. 50% of the floor area of the main building, excluding the attached garage floor area
- c. Lots bigger than ½ acre and smaller than 1 acre:  $500+[1,000(a)]^*$ .
- d. Lots bigger than 1 acre:  $1,400+[400(a)]^*$ .

\*a = net land area in acres

This calculation includes all accessory structures, including attached garages.

## HOW MANY ACCESSORY STRUCTURES CAN I HAVE?

On lots of 2 ½ acres or less:

- One accessory structure less than or equal to 120 square feet; and
- Up to two accessory buildings or structures greater than 120 square feet.

## WHAT KIND OF LIGHTING CAN I HAVE?

Accessory structures must comply with the exterior lighting requirements of the Estes Valley Development Code. This means that no unshielded spotlights are allowed.

Please refer to the Estes Valley Exterior Lighting handout if you have questions about this.

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS?

Accessory structures and uses must be constructed, maintained and conducted to avoid production of noise, vibration, concussion, dust, dirt, smoke, odors, noxious gases, fly ash, heat or glare from artificial illumination or from reflection of natural light.

*Garage design.* For garages attached to or detached from a single-family dwelling;

- No more than 32 linear feet of garage door(s) can be oriented toward the street.
- No more than 22 linear feet of garage wall without architectural openings such as a door or window can be oriented toward the street.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Staff recommends you refer to additional handouts for Fencing, Home Occupations, and Vacation Homes.

Also, if you plan on installing a Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems, please contact Staff to discuss the Conditional Use Permit process.

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**Note:** This information was summarized from Estes Valley Development Code Section 5.2 *Accessory Uses and Accessory Structures*. These regulations can be accessed online at [www.estes.org/comdev/devcode/](http://www.estes.org/comdev/devcode/)