

CITY OF PROVIDENCE, DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTION + STANDARDS
ADU TYPES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Definitions:

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

- Zoning Definition – A residential living unit on the same lot where the principal use is a legally established single-, two-, three-, or multi-family dwelling. An accessory dwelling unit provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons.
- RI State Building Code Definition – An accessory dwelling unit shall include separate cooking & sanitary facilities, with its own legal means of egress, and is a complete, separate dwelling unit. The accessory dwelling unit shall be within, or attached to, the principal dwelling unit structure or within an existing structure, such as a garage or barn, and designed so that the appearance of the principal structure remains that of a one (1) family residence.

Zoning regulations:

- One ADU is permitted per residentially zoned lot.
- An ADU may be a maximum of 900 square feet of gross floor area for a one-bedroom or studio unit, and 1200 square feet of gross floor area for a 2-bedroom unit. An ADU is limited to a maximum of 2 bedrooms.
- An ADU is subject to all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance base zone, and those that relate to principal and accessory structures – this includes building and impervious lot coverages, setbacks, height, and site elements.
- Tenants of an ADU are not restricted based on familial relationships or age.
- An ADU is **NOT** permitted to be offered as a Short-Term Rental (AirBnB, for example).

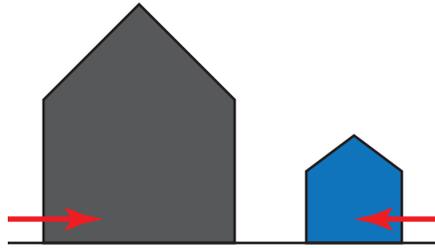
Types:

- Separate ADU. A *separate* ADU is one in which the unit is **NOT** connected via an internal communicating stair/door/passage to another principal dwelling unit. A separate ADU may take the form of a dwelling unit added in an existing principal structure, in an addition to an existing principal structure, or in a separate existing or new accessory structure.
- Internal ADU. An *internal* ADU is one that is internally connected to/within a principal dwelling unit via an internal communicating stair/door/passage. An internal ADU may also have an external means of egress, that does not pass through the principal dwelling.

Establishing an ADU:

- A Certificate of Occupancy is required when establishing an ADU, regardless of type.
- A Certificate of Occupancy may be applied for as part of a Building Permit application related to a renovation/construction scope of work.
- **Separate ADUs** are considered separate dwelling units pursuant to the State Building Code and any scope of work to establish a separate ADU will be pursuant to applicable State Building Code regulations for a separate dwelling unit.
 - For Example: See Diagrams A. – E. on page 2 of this document
- **Internal ADUs** are considered an integral part of an existing principal dwelling unit and will **not** be reviewed as a separate dwelling unit pursuant to the State Building Code, but as an interior renovation to an existing unit. They will still be considered as an ADU for the purposes of zoning regulations.
 - For Example: See Diagrams F. – I. on page 2 of this document

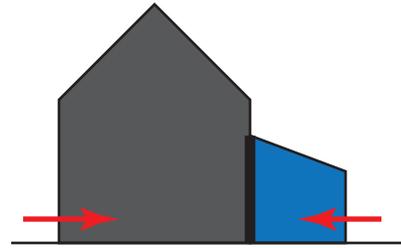
SEPARATE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) CONFIGURATIONS



SF + SEPARATE ADU
(SF) (IRC)

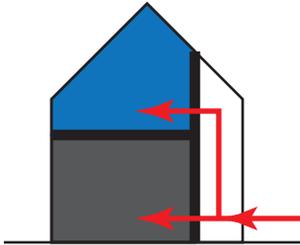
A.

(SF) (IRC)
(NOTE - THE IRC IS APPLICABLE TO DETACHED ADUs REGARDLESS OF THE # OF UNITS IN THE PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE)



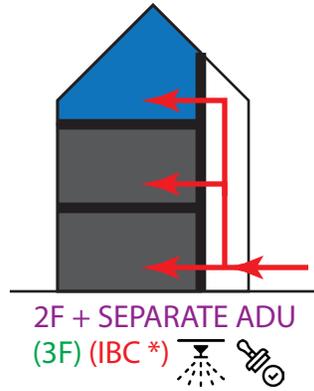
SF + SEPARATE ADU
(2F) (IRC *)

B.



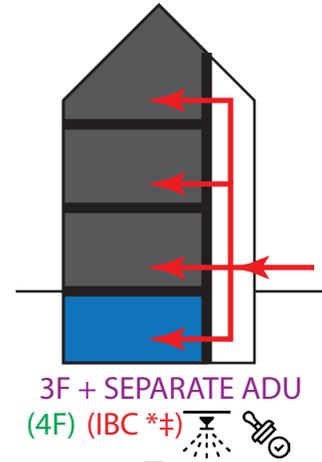
SF + SEPARATE ADU
(2F) (IRC *)

C.



2F + SEPARATE ADU
(3F) (IBC *)

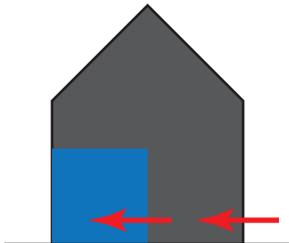
D.



3F + SEPARATE ADU
(4F) (IBC *‡)

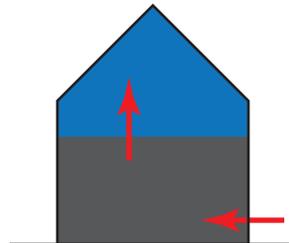
E.

INTERNAL ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) CONFIGURATIONS



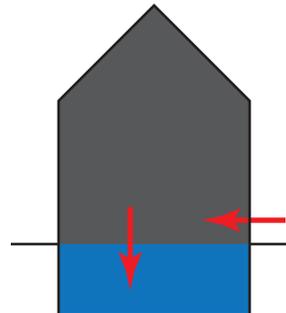
SF + INTERNAL ADU
(SF) (IRC)

F.



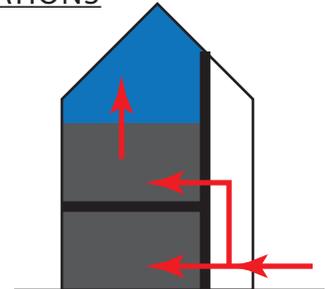
SF + INTERNAL ADU
(SF) (IRC)

G.



SF + INTERNAL ADU
(SF) (IRC)

H.



2F + INTERNAL ADU
(2F) (IRC)

I.

NOTATION KEY

PURPLE TEXT: ZONING USE LANGUAGE

GREEN TEXT: (BUILDING CODE OCCUPANCY DESIGNATION)

RED TEXT: INDICATES THE APPLICABLE STATE BUILDING CODE (RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL)

* INDICATES FIRE SEPARATION AND/OR FIRE DOORS IS REQUIRED B/W UNITS

‡ INDICATES FIRE DEPARTMENT REVIEW REQUIRED



INDICATES SPRINKLERS ARE REQUIRED



INDICATES ENGINEER/ARCHITECT STAMPED PLANS + 128 FORM ARE REQUIRED

Building code ADU guidelines

Means of egress

- **IRC**, one means of egress
- **IBC**, two means of egress

Stairways

- **IRC**, riser height of 8-1/4" or less. Tread a min of 9"
- **IBC**, riser height of 7" max and 4" min. Tread a min of 11"
- Head room **IBC & IRC** 6'8"
- Width a minimum of 36", Landings minimum 36"

Doors

- **IRC & IBC** a min of 36" for each dwelling
- **IRC** min height 6'-6". **IBC** min height of 6'8"
- Fire-rated doors for 60 min unless the ADU is detached.
- Doors to be self-closing, self-latching.

Ceiling heights and areas

- **IRC** habitable space of not less than 7'. Bathroom, toilet rooms and laundry rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than 6'8". Beams, girders, ducts or other obstructions shall be permitted to be 6'4".
- **IBC** habitable space of not less than 7'6". Bathroom, toilet rooms and laundry rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7'
- Rooms with sloped ceilings, at least 50% of the area shall meet the required ceiling height
- Hallway width shall be a minimum of 36"
- All measurements are to finished materials.
- Minimum room areas shall be 70sq ft and not less than 7ft in any direction.
- Bathrooms shall meet the minimum clearance requirements
- Natural light of 8% of the floor area is required for each room.

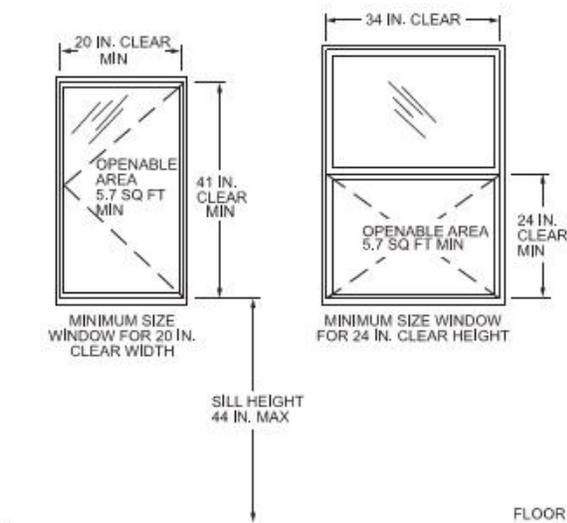
Fire ratings and Sprinkler requirements

- Three or more dwelling units in one structure = **IBC** sprinklers are required
- Between separate dwelling units (attached ADU to main unit):
 - Wall and floor-ceiling assemblies = 1-hour listed fire-resistance rating
 - Door in the separation wall = 1 hour rated

Emergency escape and rescue openings

- Each sleeping room in the ADU has at least one emergency escape and rescue opening
- Minimum net clear opening area = 5.7 sq. ft. (5.0 sq. ft. at grade floor)
- Minimum net clear opening height = 24 inches or Minimum net clear opening width = 20 inches
- Maximum sill height = 44 inches above finished floor
- Opening directly to a public way, yard, or court with access to street level
- Window well (if below grade): Horizontal area ≥ 9 sq. ft. with minimum 36" projection. Ladder or steps provided if window well depth > 44 "
- Window operational without tools, keys, or special knowledge

Emergency escape and rescue openings



Window wells

