FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about:

Accessory Buildings and Structures

In RR, CR, SR, and the RS Zones

Q: What is an accessory building or structure?

A: They are buildings or structures, the use of which is accessory to a principal use or building on the same lot. For example, accessory buildings located on a residential lot may include: garden sheds, workshops, and detached garages.

Note: A Coach House is technically considered a stand alone Accessory Use in the Zoning Bylaw but is also listed as an accessory building. Coach Houses are only permitted in zones where they are specifically listed as a permitted Accessory Use.

Q: Do I need a building permit to build or place an accessory building or structure?

A: A building permit is required to build or place an accessory building or structure if it is larger than 10 m^2 (107.6 ft^2). For more information, please contact the Building Permits & Licences Division at City Hall.

Q: Am I allowed to build an accessory building on my lot?

A: In most situations, yes. However, you need to know that there may be existing regulations that restrict the ability to construct an accessory building on your property. It is your responsibility to ensure full compliance with all applicable regulations, including:

- Certificate of Title (title) of your property and any applicable restrictions registered against it. You can retrieve your title from the Land Title Office (88 6th Street, New Westminster, 1-877-577-5872 or www.ltsa.ca). Your Solicitor and/or Real Estate Agent can also assist you with the document retrieval. *Note: if there is a Land Use Contract registered on your title, you will need to comply with the provisions set out by your specific Land Use Contract.*
- The *Zoning Bylaw*, which is primarily summarized on this handout, and is available on the City of Abbotsford website;
- The *Streamside Protection Bylaw* and the *Tree Protection Bylaw*. Both of these bylaws are available on the City of Abbotsford website; and
- BC Building Code.

Q: Can I use an accessory building or structure as a dwelling unit?

A: No, unless it is a Coach House within a zone that allows such a use, as per the Zoning Bylaw.

Q: How big can an accessory building or structure be?

A: The size of an accessory building or structure is determined by the Floor Space Ratio (FSR) and Lot Coverage permitted in a respective zone.

- For a Single Detached Dwelling or Duplex, the **Floor Space Ratio (FSR)** is obtained by dividing the gross floor area by the total area of the lot.
- **Gross Floor Area** means the total area of all storeys in all buildings on a lot measured to the outside of the exterior walls of the building**.** For Single Detached Dwellings and Duplexes, this shall exclude an accessory building with a maximum size of 10 m^2.
- **Lot Coverage** means the horizontal area of all buildings and outdoor covered areas on a lot, expressed as a percentage of the lot area.

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Maximum Lot Coverage and Floor Space Ratio for all buildings and structures:

Zone:	RR	CR	SR	RS4	RS3/RS3A	RS4	RS5/RS5A	RS6/RS6-C
Maximum Lot Coverage:	10%	15%	15%	33%	40%	40%	45%	45%
Maximum FSR	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.65	0.65**

***For lots greater than 420 m² the Gross Floor Area is capped at 273 m² as per the Zoning Bylaw. For RS6-C the floor area of a Coach House and associated accessory building shall be excluded from the FSR calculation.*

Your Zone: _____

(Your Lot Size _____m²) x (Percentage Permitted 0._____) = **Allowable Lot Coverage _____m²**

(Your Lot Size _____m²) x (FSR Permitted _____) = **Allowable Gross Floor Area _____m²**

Q: Where can I build/place my accessory building or structure?

A: In addition to setbacks imposed by either restrictions registered on the title or by the Streamside Protection Bylaw, the following setbacks shall apply for an accessory building:

	Front Lot Line	Rear Lot Line	Interior Side Lot Line	Exterior Side Lot Line
RR, CR - Accessory Building	7.5 m	1 m	1 m	4.5 m
RR, CR - Coach House	7.5 m	7.5 m	7.5 m	7.5 m
SR Accessory Building	6 m	1 m	1 m	4.5 m*
SR Coah House	6 m	7.5 m	1.8 m	4.5 m*
RS1, RS3, RS3A, RS5, RS5A	6 m	1 m	1 m	4.5 m
RS4	6 m	1 m	1 m	3 m
RS6	3 m	1 m	1 m	3 m
RS6-C Accessory Building	6 m	1 m	0.6 m	3 m
RS6-C Coach House	6 m	2.5 m	0.6 m	3 m

**For an Exterior Side Lot Line with driveway access, the setback is 6.0 m.*

***Setbacks** are the horizontal distance separating a building, structure or use from a specified lot line, building or other feature.*

The minimum setback between a Principal Building and an accessory building, is 1.5 m, except for Coach Houses, which have a minimum setback of 6 m.

If an accessory building or structure is attached to the principal building, it is considered part of the Principal Building and must comply with all of the setback requirements for the Principal Building.

Note: The BC Building Code and Fire Codes also regulate the minimum separation distance between your accessory building/structure and the Principal Building. For more information, please contact the Building Permits & Licences Division.

Q: What is the maximum height for an accessory building or structure?

A: The maximum height permitted for an accessory building or structure is 4.5 m (14.76 ft). For a Coach House, the maximum height is 7.5 m (24.6 ft).

***Height** is the vertical distance measured from the average existing grade level at the extreme corners of the building faces surrounding the perimeter of the building to the highest point on a flat roof, or the midpoint between the uppermost eave and the uppermost ridge of a gable, hip or gambrel roof.*

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