



Permits & Inspections  
Division  
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www.cosatx.us/permits

**PERMITS & INSPECTIONS**  
Permits & Inspections is a Division of the Department of Planning & Development Services

# ACCESSORY APARTMENTS/GUEST HOUSES

## ACCESSORY APARTMENTS

### *Can I build an accessory apartment on my property?*

It depends. By definition, an *accessory apartment* is an apartment containing full facilities (sleeping quarters, kitchen and bathroom), on the same lot as an existing single-family residential dwelling unit that shares utilities, and is clearly subordinate to the primary dwelling unit. *Depending* on where your residence is zoned, an accessory apartment may not be allowed. We encourage you to talk to our *Planning Division* at 325-657-4210, option #2.

There are specific regulations, codes, and requirements that address *residential accessory apartments* in the Code of Ordinances, Zoning Ordinance, and the International Residential Code and these need to be met before approval can be granted. For an accessory apartment they include, but are not limited to:

- Must have a full bathroom, (lavatory, commode, tub or shower), *and* have mechanical ventilation or a window to allow adequate air flow.
- Must meet all setback requirements as stated in the Zoning Ordinance covering accessory apartments.
- Each bedroom must have at least 1 window that meets emergency egress requirements.
- A smoke detector must be located in each bedroom and in all corridors giving access to the bedrooms.
- A carbon monoxide detector must be centrally located in all corridors giving access to bedrooms *if* the unit is serviced with a gas-fired line (liquid propane).
- All habitable rooms shall have one or more windows or provide mechanical ventilation.
- Travel distance to any exit shall be no more than 75'.
- Interior hallway minimum width is 36".
- It may be used for income but must you must be properly zoned; please contact our Planning Division for more information.

## GUEST HOUSES

### *Can I build a guest house on my property?*

Yes. A *guest house* is defined as guest quarters designed for *temporary* use and excludes one of the following: sleeping, cooking, or sanitation facilities. If all three are present then the structure can be considered an accessory apartment or a dwelling unit; and, depending on where your residence is zoned, may not be allowed.

Hours of Operation: 8 AM - 12 PM & 1 PM - 5 PM  
No payments or permit issuance can be made after 4 PM due to accounting constraints.

Again, as with accessory apartments, there are specific regulations, codes, and requirements that address guest houses in the Code of Ordinances, Zoning Ordinance, and the International Residential Code and these need to be met before approval can be granted.

*Note: Due to the variable nature of these projects you are highly encouraged to talk to our Planning Division as all possibilities cannot be summarized here.*

***What is the process to obtain a permit?***

Since an accessory apartment/guest house is considered new construction you will need to:

1. Complete a Building Application found on our website under *Departments and Services – Building Permits and Inspections – Information, Handouts and Forms* and,
2. At a minimum, submit a site plan, building plan, electrical plan, foundation plan, elevation plan, and a construction detail.

*Note: The site plan needs to be to scale (i.e. 1" = 10') and referenced on the drawing. The building and elevation plans need to be dimensioned and referenced on the drawings.*

***What other permits will I need and how much do they cost?***

After your building application is approved an accessory apartment will typically need electrical, mechanical, & plumbing permits and these will be issued separately to licensed contractors or to homeowners who meet the requirements for obtaining a homeowners permit (see "Homeowner Permit Information" handout for information on a homeowner's permit). These permit applications can be found online or filled out at our office and the permit fees will vary depending on the scope-of-work to be done.