

# CUSTOMER INFORMATION BULLETIN

## CAN I BUILD A SHED OR GARAGE IN MY BACKYARD?

(Single Family Residential Zones)

### Planning Division

1055 South Grady Way-Renton, WA 98057  
Phone: 425-430-7200 | [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov)

**Do I Need a Permit to Build My Shed or Garage?** Yes, you likely need a building permit for detached accessory structures such as garages, carports, playhouses, or sheds, even if the structure is prefabricated. There are exceptions for detached garden sheds or similar storage structures having a floor area<sup>i</sup> of 200 square feet or less, in which case a building permit is not required. These accessory structures must comply with other locational limitations (see below) and cannot be used for other residential purposes such as living or sleeping, or located within critical areas (wetlands, steep slopes, etc.) or their buffers.

**How Large Can My Shed or Garage Be?** Accessory structures are only permitted if there is currently a house located on the lot. The floor area of the accessory structure (or combined floor area if there are two structures) must be less than the floor area of the house. In addition, the lot coverage (total footprint of the house plus the accessory buildings) and maximum amount of impervious surfacing (total footprint of all buildings plus all on-site paving, etc.) are also limited by the zoning district<sup>ii</sup>. Please also consult your plat map to ensure there are no additional footprint restrictions<sup>ii</sup>.

**How Many Can I Have?** The maximum size for a *single* accessory structure is 1,000 square feet. Up to two garages/sheds are permitted, provided that neither is over 720 square feet in size.

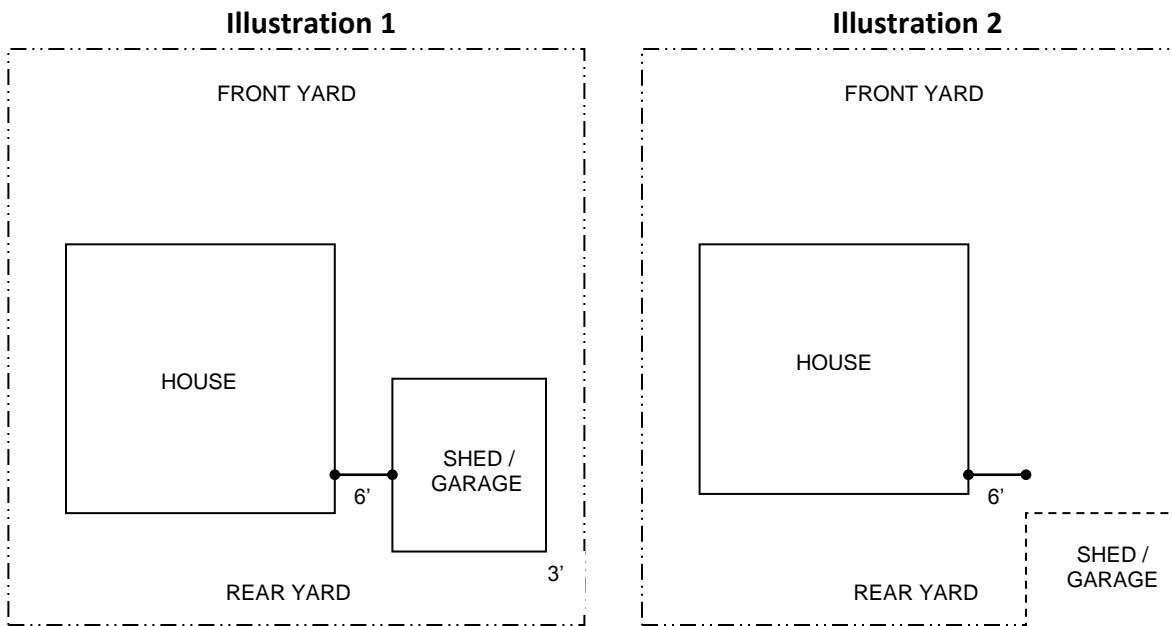
**How Tall Can My Shed or Garage Be?** Non-Agricultural accessory structures may be no taller than 12' in height to the wall plate. The peak of a hipped or gable roof can extend an additional 6' above the wall plate provided the pitch of the roof is at least 4:12. Wall plates supporting a primary roof surface having only one sloping plane (e.g. "shed roofs") may exceed 12', provided the average of the wall plates is equal to or less than 12' feet.

Agricultural structures (such as a barn or greenhouse) are limited to a maximum of 32 feet in height. Agricultural structures are only allowed in the RC and R-1 Zones where agricultural uses are permitted.

**Where on My Property Can I Put My Shed or Garage?** To be considered a detached structure, your accessory structure must be located at least 6 feet away from your house or any other structure in the RC, R-1, R-4, R-6 and R-8 zones. If the accessory structure is closer than 6 feet

to the house or other structure, it will be considered an “attached structure” and will have to comply with the regulations<sup>ii</sup> for attached structures. Your shed or garage may not be built within a front yard setback area, or side yard setback adjacent to a side street, or within critical areas (wetlands, steep slopes, etc.) or their buffers. For R-10, R-14 and RM Zone standards see RMC 4-2-110B.

If you want to build your structure on the side of your house, it must be at least 6 feet away from your house and at least 3 feet away from your side yard property line. (See Illustration 1) If the location of your shed is between the back of your house and the rear property line, the shed or garage may be built right up to the property line, although the eaves of the structure may not extend over the property line. (See Illustration 2)



Garages, carports and parking areas must be set back from the rear property line a sufficient distance to provide a minimum of 24 feet of back-out room, either on-site or on improved rights-of-way, where parking is accessed from the rear of the lot.

Locations of property lines are important; if you are uncertain about their locations, it is recommended that you have a survey done by a licensed land surveyor.

**What if I Want to Build a Structure for an Animal?** Detached barns, stables, or other animal or agricultural related structures must be built at least 50 feet away from any side or rear property lines. Hobby kennels must follow requirements set by Renton Municipal Code 4-4-010 and 4-9-100.

**What Are the Building Code Requirements?** Structures less than 5' to the property line require one-hour exterior wall construction. At distances of less than 3 feet, no openings

(windows or doors) are allowed. Exterior wall roof eaves require one-hour protection when projecting into the 3-foot side yard setback.

**How Do I Apply For a Building Permit?** A building permit application may be obtained at Renton City Hall, 1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, on the 6th floor in the Customer Service Center. For an **accessory structure**, you will need the handout titled "*Residential Building Requirements*". The submittal requirements for this type of Building Permit include a site plan and a construction plan (these are described on the building permit requirements handout). Applicants are required to bring in a CD or USB portable (flash/hard) drive with one PDF file of the application package. Fees will be based according to the value of the accessory structure. Staff can assist you in calculating the fee amount for the building permit. Please contact Development Services at (425) 430-7200 or visit the Customer Service Center on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall. The building permit will take approximately 2-3 weeks to be processed.

**Is the Permit Application Available on the City's Website?** Yes, Building Permit requirements and applications are also available online at:

<https://www.rentonwa.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=7922741&pageId=9669537>

**Are There Any Other Permits That May be Required?** If plumbing, mechanical, electrical or other utilities will be added to the accessory structure, additional permits will be required. Applications for these permits may be obtained on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Renton City Hall in the Customer Service Center or online at:

<https://www.rentonwa.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=7922741&pageId=9669435>.

**Who Do I Contact if I Have Additional Questions?** If you have further questions regarding zoning, setbacks or other land use related questions, please visit the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall, or call **(425) 430-7294** to be directed to a planner.

If you have any structural, electrical, plumbing or utility questions, please visit City Hall or call **(425) 430-7200**.

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<sup>i</sup> Floor area is measured by the area included within the exterior walls of the structure unless there is a larger than typical eave.

<sup>ii</sup> See additional restrictions for individual zoning districts and your specific plat map for any additional drainage restrictions on impervious surfacing limits due to flow control best management practices.