



Catawba County Planning and Parks
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RESIDENTIAL ACCESSORY STRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

The Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) allows accessory structures, such as garages and outbuildings, in all residential areas. An accessory structure is a structure detached from, but located on the same lot as a house. An accessory structure cannot be permitted unless a house exists on the same zoning lot or a building permit for a house has been issued at the same time the accessory structure permit is issued. Please see [UDO Sec. 44-607](#) for complete regulations pertaining to accessory structures.

Steps to follow when constructing a residential accessory structure:

1. Check with the Catawba County Planning Department to see if an accessory structure is permitted on the property. You may either call the Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov.
2. Submit an [application for a zoning permit](#). Every application for a zoning permit needs to include an 8½ x 11 inch or 8½ x 14 inch drawing, prepared to scale, showing the footprints of proposed and existing buildings or structures on the property. You may obtain a copy of a map of your property from Catawba County's Geographic Information System at: www.gis.catawbacountync.gov/parcel/.
3. Obtain a zoning permit from the Permit Center. You may reach the Permit Center by phone at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at permit_center@catawbacountync.gov.
4. Submit an [application for a septic tank permit and well permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center, if needed. If you have questions you may call the Permit Center at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at permit_center@catawbacountync.gov.
5. Submit an [application for a building permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center. If you have questions you may call the Permit Center at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at permit_center@catawbacountync.gov.

Residential single-use accessory structure standards are as follows:

- (1) An accessory structure must not exceed the maximum permitted height for the zoning district in which the property is located.
- (2) An accessory structure cannot be erected in any required front setbacks.
- (3) Accessory structures must be separated from the house by at least 5 feet of open space.
- (4) Accessory structures must be at least 10 feet from any side lot line and 5 feet from any rear lot line unless the lot is on the lakes or Catawba River where 30 feet is required from the waterfront.
- (5) Swimming pools (in ground or above ground) need to be located at least 10 feet from any side lot line and 10 feet from any rear lot line, unless the lot is on the lakes or Catawba River where 30 feet is required from the waterfront.
- (5) Manufactured homes or truck trailers cannot be used for storage.
- (6) Fences and walls cannot exceed 6 feet in height when located in a front yard. A zoning permit is not required for fences and walls.

Residential multi-use, multi-story, or livable space accessory structure standards:

- (1) Accessory structures need to follow the guidelines of # (1), (2) and (3) above.
- (2) Accessory structures must meet the required setbacks for a house based on the zoning of the property.

If you have questions concerning residential accessory structures, where they may be located or obtaining a permit for your property, please call the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov. Please know that we are here to assist you throughout the process.

The purpose of this information sheet is to assist you with the process of obtaining permits and approvals associated with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Before proceeding with any project or spending any funds, you are strongly encouraged to contact staff of the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov to insure awareness of all options that may exist as well as the most effective way of accomplishing a particular project.

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