ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU) ADOPTION

BULLETIN 2026-03 - REVISION

DATE: 10-27-2026

SUBJECT: Technical Code Bulletin of the Department's policy on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Bulletin is to establish the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE)policies for Accessory Dwelling Units within Prince George's County and clarify applicable building code requirements.

To comply with applicable State and County law, DPIE shall administer and enforce the provisions established by this Bulletin in conjunction with the Land Use Article of the Maryland Code, Prince George's County Zoning Ordinances, Subtitle 4 (Building), Subtitle 11 (Fire Safety), the adopted International Residential Code (IRC), and all other applicable adopted codes, regulations, subtitles, ordinances, standards, and requirements governing the development, construction, alteration, fire and life safety, occupancy, and use of ADUs.

Zoning requirements applicable to ADUs are governed by Prince George's County Zoning Ordinances and the Land Use Article of the Maryland Code; which are outside the scope of DPIE's building-code interpretation.

POLICY: All permit applications proposing the construction, conversion, alteration, addition, or establishment of an Accessory Dwelling Unit shall be reviewed for compliance with the applicable provisions identified in this Bulletin. Compliance with this Bulletin does not exempt an ADU project from compliance with any other applicable codes. In the event of any conflict between this Bulletin and applicable state and county codes, regulations, ordinances, standards, or requirements, the most stringent code, ordinance, or standard shall govern. Nothing in this Bulletin shall be construed to supersede, modify, or establish requirements contrary to applicable law or legally adopted requirements.

DEFINITION: For statutory and regulatory definitions, refer to Prince George's County Council Zoning Bill CB-74-2026, Maryland Senate Bill 891, and Maryland House Bill 1466. With regard to the evaluation of building code compliance, an

Accessory Dwelling Unit shall be a secondary dwelling unit that is on the same lot, parcel, or tract as a principal single-family detached dwelling unit that is constructed in accordance with the IRC and is one of the following:

A. Detached from the principal single-family detached dwelling unit; or

B. Attached as an addition to or,

C. Within the same building as the principal single-family detached dwelling unit.

BC101.1 SCOPE:

ADUs shall comply with the applicable building code requirements and the provisions contained in this Bulletin. This Bulletin is intended to establish and clarify the DPIE permit application requirements and interpretation of applicable building codes pertaining to ADUs. Furthermore, the existing building and the ADU shall not exceed the scoping limitations of Section R101.2 of the IRC. Additional requirements applicable to ADUs can be found in Prince George's County Zoning Ordinances. The building code exempts the following permits from compliance with Universal Design requirements:

A. 4-357(e) "The provisions of this Division shall not apply to a single-family detached dwelling that is built or subcontracted by an individual owner that is used as the owner's personal residence".
B. 4-357(c) "Application of the provisions of this Division shall not require existing dwelling units to be retrofitted".

The building code 4-357(a) states that Universal Design requirements "shall apply to all new single-family attached, single-family detached, two-family, two-over-two's, three-family, and multifamily residential dwelling units constructed in Prince George's County on and after January 1, 2026."

BC101.1.1 ADU LIMITATIONS: An ADU shall not be permitted to be within, in an addition of, or, within any detached structure associated with any use group as defined in International Building Code (IBC), including IRC use groups such as the following:

A. Owner-occupied lodging houses with five or fewer guestrooms.

B. A care facility with five or fewer persons receiving custodial care within a dwelling unit.

C. A care facility with five or fewer persons receiving medical care within a dwelling unit.

D. A day care facility with five or fewer persons of any age receiving care within a dwelling unit.

EXCEPTIONS: The primary single-family detached dwelling is exempt from the above provisions.

BC101.2 ADU CONDITIONS: An ADU may be established when all applicable Subtitle Code requirements are satisfied.

BC101.2.1 ZONING AND OTHER APPLICABLE REQUIREMENTS:

A. **Zoning and Planning Requirements:** ADU eligibility, location, number of ADUs permitted, owner occupancy, gross floor area (GFA), height, and other zoning requirements shall be determined in accordance with the Land Use Article of the Maryland Code, Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance, and other applicable County codes. For applicable statutory and regulatory planning requirements regarding zoning and property information, please contact M-NCPPC Planning and Zoning Information at 240-545-8976 or PPD-InfoCounter@ppd.mncppc.org.

B. **House Number:** An ADU shall require a separate address from the primary dwelling unit. For ADU address inquiries, please contact us at 301-952-3918 or PPD-Address@ppd.mncppc.org.

BC101.2.2 BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS: All ADUs shall comply with the current adopted Building Code and all other applicable life-safety, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, energy, and accessibility requirements in addition to the following conditions, as applicable:

A. **Living Facilities:** All ADUs shall provide, at a minimum, provisions for living, sleeping, sanitation, cooking, and eating.

B. **Sound Transmission Class (STC):** The ratings for walls and floor-ceiling assemblies separating an internal or attached ADU from the primary dwelling unit shall comply with the applicable requirements of Chapter 12 of the International Building Code (IBC).

C. **Entrance:** An ADU shall be provided with a separate entrance that serves only the ADU, either from the exterior of the building or from a common hallway located within the building.

B103 PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESSING:

For questions related to permit application processing, impact fees, surcharges, and other permitting matters, please contact the Permitting and Licensing Division at 301-636-2050 or https://mypgc.us/contactdpie.

BC103.1 REQUIRED: The owner or owner's agent who intends to construct an ADU within an existing or proposed building or structure shall first make an application to DPIE and obtain the required building permit.

BC103.2 FEES: Building Permit fees will be assessed as follows:

A. ADU within a structure – Residential, Alteration/Repair — Interior

B. ADU addition – Residential, Addition

C. ADU detached - Residential, Addition

For additional information, please see the latest DPIE Fee Schedule.

BC104 ADU DESIGN: An ADU shall comply with the applicable provisions of the IRC and all applicable Prince George's County building codes, regulations, and ordinances.

BC104.1 BUILDING: For questions regarding building code, please contact the Building Plan Review Division at 301-636-2070 or dpiebprd@co.pg.md.us.

BC104.2 MEANS OF EGRESS: The path of egress travel from an ADU shall provide a safe and unobstructed route from all occupied areas of the ADU to the public way or to a yard or court that provides access to a public way and shall not pass through the primary dwelling unit. The design of the egress system shall comply with the applicable provisions of the IRC, including requirements for exit access, exit doors, stairways, corridors, and other components necessary to provide safe evacuation for occupants. The means of egress must be designed and maintained to allow occupants to exit the ADU safely during an emergency.

For basements and every sleeping room, there shall be at least one emergency escape and rescue opening which shall fully comply with Section R310 of the IRC. The purpose of the opening is to provide occupants with an emergency means of escape and allow rescue access for emergency responders.

If the backyard is enclosed by a pool barrier, an egress-compliant gate or opening shall be provided through the enclosure to the public way. The gate shall be readily operable from the egress side without requiring a key, special knowledge, or special effort, in accordance with IRC Section R311.2. The pool gate shall be designed, located, and maintained such that it does not obstruct or impede the required means of emergency egress and remains readily accessible to first responders.

BC104.3 FIRE SEPARATION:

ADU ATTACHED TO, OR LOCATED WITHIN THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT:

For an ADU that is attached to or located within the primary dwelling unit, a 1-hour fire-resistance-rated wall and floor assembly is required as prescribed by IRC Section R302.3. However, this requirement shall not be required if all three of the following conditions are met:

A. Condition 1: Interconnected smoke alarms between the ADU and the primary dwelling unit in accordance with IRC Section R314.4, such that activation in one dwelling unit activates the alarms in the other dwelling unit.

B. Condition 2: Interconnected carbon monoxide alarms between the ADU and the primary dwelling unit in accordance with IRC Section R315.5, such that activation in one dwelling unit activates the alarms in the other dwelling unit.

C. Condition 3: Interconnected smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm system shall be provided with approved 24-hour/7-day monitoring by a recognized third-party monitoring service.

DETACHED ADU:

A fully detached ADU shall comply with the fire-resistant construction requirements of IRC Section R302. The exterior walls, projections, openings, and penetrations of the detached ADU shall comply with the applicable fire separation distance requirements based on its location on the property. Where the fire separation distance is reduced, additional protection such as fire-resistance-rated exterior wall assemblies, limitations on openings, protected projections, and protected penetrations may be required. Applicants shall provide sufficient construction documents identifying the location of the detached ADU, applicable fire separation distances, exterior wall construction, openings, projections, and any required fire-resistance-rated assemblies to demonstrate compliance with IRC Section R302.

BC104.4 SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS:

An ADU that is attached to or located within the primary dwelling unit shall have interconnected smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarm systems between the ADU and the primary dwelling unit in accordance with IRC Section R314.4 and Section R315.5, such that activation in one dwelling unit activates the alarms in the other dwelling unit.

Independent smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarm systems can be installed where the following condition is met:

A. 1-hour fire-resistance-rated wall and floor assembly is provided per IRC Section R302.3. For an ADU that is detached from the primary dwelling unit, independent smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarm systems shall be installed throughout the detached ADU building.

BC104.5 FIRE PROTECTION SPRINKLER SYSTEM:

ADU ATTACHED TO, OR LOCATED WITHIN THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT:

A. Primary dwelling provided with an automatic fire sprinkler system: An attached ADU or an ADU located within the primary dwelling unit shall be protected by the automatic fire sprinkler system serving the primary dwelling.
B. Where the primary dwelling is not provided with an automatic fire sprinkler system:

    i. An ADU located within the primary dwelling unit (like a basement) shall not be required to be equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system if any of the following conditions are met:

        1. Condition 1: A 1-hour fire-resistance-rated wall and floor assembly is provided per IRC Section R302.3. Independent smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarm systems shall be installed in accordance with IRC Section R314.4 and Section R315.5.
        2. Condition 2: Interconnected smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarm systems between the ADU and the primary dwelling unit shall be installed in accordance with IRC Section R314.4 and Section R315.5 such that activation in one dwelling unit activates the alarms in the other dwelling unit. Interconnected smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm systems shall be provided with approved 24-hour/7-day monitoring by a listed third-party monitoring service.

    ii. An ADU that is attached to the primary dwelling shall not be required to be equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system if all the following conditions are met:

        1. Condition 1: A 1-hour fire-resistance-rated wall and floor assembly is provided per IRC Section R302.3.
        2. Condition 2: Interconnected smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm systems between the ADU and the

primary dwelling unit shall be installed in accordance with IRC Section R314.4 and Section R315.5, such that activation in one dwelling unit activates the alarms in the other dwelling unit. Interconnected smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm systems shall be provided with approved 24-hour/7-day monitoring by a listed third-party monitoring service.

For any addition or extension to the primary dwelling unit, the applicant shall fully comply with Prince George's County Code, Subtitle 4, Section 4-245 – Building Planning, Sub-section (b) R-313.2 as applicable.

DETACHED ADU:

A detached ADU unit shall be protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system complying with Section R313, IRC. The applicant shall provide a dedicated shutoff valve for the automatic sprinkler system serving the ADU. Although WSSC provides a single domestic water service/main line, a separate sprinkler system shutoff valve shall be installed inside the premise of the detached ADU and be accessible. The sprinkler system serving the ADU shall be independently controlled through this dedicated shutoff valve and shall not be controlled by the water supply or shutoff valve serving the primary dwelling.

BC105 UTILITIES: An ADU must be provided with adequate provisions for electricity, water supply, and sewage disposal.

BC105.1 HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEMS:

A primary dwelling unit and an ADU shall be provided with:

A. Separate heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

B. Separate ducting for heating and cooling systems. Return air openings for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning shall not be taken from another dwelling unit.

C. Separate climate controls.

BC105.2 ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS:

A primary dwelling unit and an ADU shall be provided with:

A. Ready access to the service disconnecting means serving the dwelling unit.

B. Ready access for each occupant to all overcurrent devices protecting the conductors supplying the dwelling unit in which they reside.

For questions about the electrical, such as starting a new service, please contact your service provider.

BC105.3 GAS PIPING:

Gas piping shall be provided with:

A. Ready access for each occupant to shutoff valves serving the dwelling unit in which they reside.

B. Ready access for each occupant to appliance shutoff valves serving appliances in the dwelling unit in which they reside.

For questions, please contact WSSC at 301-206-4001 or customerservice@wsscwater.com.

BC105.4 WATER SERVICE:

A primary dwelling unit and an ADU may share a common potable water system, provided there are separate, accessible main shutoff valves allowing the water to be turned off on one side without affecting the other.

For questions regarding properties served by public water and sewer, please contact WSSC at 301-206-4001 or customerservice@wsscwater.com.

If on well and septic, please contact The Health Department's Environmental Engineering/Policy Program at 301-883-7681 or EnvironEngProgram@co.pg.md.us.

SITE ROAD PERMIT: If the ADU project involves less than or equal to 1,000 square feet of disturbance, the land disturbance shall be approved as part of the building permit. If the ADU project exceeds 1,000 square feet of disturbance, the permit applicant shall apply for and secure an Infill Residential permit (INR) from DPIE. This permit shall be issued prior to the building permit. For more information on this permit process, please review Technogram 008-2018.

Techno-gram 008-2018 Revised Streamlined Processing for Residential Infill Lots.pdf

Construction of an ADU in the 100-year floodplain is prohibited. Contact DPIE Site Road Plan Review for more information pertaining to floodplains. If the ADU requires construction of a driveway or utility connections in the road right-of-way, this work may be included in the INR permit. Please contact the Prince George's County Site/Road Plan Review Division at 301-636-2060 or dpiesiteroadplanreview@co.pg.md.us.

AUTHORITY: Director of the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement.

Notification: Approved and Issued: Effective Immediately

Dawit Abraham (Oct 27, 2026 15:54:29 EDT)

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