

HOW-TO GUIDE: Converting Accessory Buildings to Residential Use

This guide is applicable for conversion of accessory detached buildings (ie. garages or workshops) to residential use. Within Ucluelet's zoning bylaw, residential use of accessory detached buildings is referred to as *Accessory Residential Dwelling Unit (ADU)*.

Can I convert my detached garage or workshop into an ADU?

The zoning bylaw outlines which uses are allowed in which areas. ADUs are allowed within all zones where *Accessory Residential Dwelling Unit* is listed as a 'secondary use', and where a 'primary use' is established on the property. To find your zone, use our interactive zoning map online at www.ucluelet.ca/community/ukeemap.

Depending on the specifics of your project, development applications may be required. This means that planning staff will review how your project aligns with guidelines in our [Official Community Plan](#), or to the [Zoning Bylaw](#). For example, if the existing accessory building no longer conforms to the zoning bylaw, variances (ie. approval to relax certain regulations such as setbacks) may be required to bring the siting into compliance.

Can I operate a short-term rental business within a building converted to ADU?

Within the District of Ucluelet, ADUs are exclusively for **residential use** and cannot be used for commercial tourist accommodation.

Zoning or land use questions?

Reach out to Planning Staff at planning@ucluelet.ca or find more information about land use regulations within the [ADU Guide](#) summary.

BUILDING CODE IMPLICATIONS

A **building code assessment** must be completed when converting an existing accessory building to a residential dwelling. Where existing construction assemblies are covered and cannot be confirmed visually, you must complete sufficient investigation to confirm that the Building Code requirements have been met. This may require involvement from registered professionals, such as a structural engineer to confirm or design the building to resist lateral loads (seismic event) or an architect or engineer to review the building assemblies.

The extent of the building code assessment would be based on confirmation of the accessory building constructed with a building permit and inspections. If previously unauthorized, there would be additional requirements.

See the [ADU Conversion Building Code Assessment](#) form for more details.

BUILDING CODE OVERVIEW

Some key building code aspects are listed here, but please note there may be additional items required that are not listed and applicable to your specific situation.

Seismic Design (Subsection 9.23.13)

Sealed approval from structural engineer will be required confirming existing construction acceptable or provide design details (and related documents) for required improvements.

Construction Assemblies* To meet BC Building Code:

- **Foundation/footing design** to comply with BC Building Code or sign off by structural engineer. Dampproofing (9.13.), Footing depth (9.12.2.), Drainage (9.14.)
- **Exterior Wall Assembly:** cladding type, flashing, moisture barrier (9.27.3.), insulation, air barrier (9.25.3.), vapour barrier (9.25.4.) and GWB. (45 minute FRR if within 1.2 m of property line or imaginary line used for spatial separation)
- **Roof / Ceiling Assembly:** roofing type, insulation, air Barrier (9.25.3.), vapour barrier (9.25.4.), ventilation (9.19.1.) and GWB. (no soffit projections within 0.45 m of property line or imaginary line used for spatial separation)
- **Slab Assembly:** thickness of slab, insulation, air barrier and vapour barrier.

**Energy Advisory could provide As-Built Compliance Report indication building meets a minimum of current BC Energy Step Code, in lieu of meeting BCBC minimum insulation values and air barrier installation in exterior assemblies.*

Egress Requirements (Subsection 9.9.10)

Confirm that the egress requirements of 9.9.10.1. will be met in each room that is intended to be a bedroom/sleeping area. Additionally, all exit doors, stairs, landing, guard and handrails to be code compliant.

Spatial Separation (Subsection 9.10.15)

Spatial separation requirements must be met between the Detached Accessory Dwelling and that adjacent property, as well as any other buildings on the same property. The limiting distance is measured to an imaginary line between the two buildings and/or to property lines and affects wall and soffit construction and amount of glazing (windows/doors).

For up-to-date information on building permits, application forms and general requirements, refer to the District [website](#) or contact building@ucluelet.ca

Fire and Sound Separation if multiple uses

(Sections 9.10 and 9.11)

If dwelling is located in an accessory building with other uses, like garage or workshop, the construction between the uses will need to meet a minimum rating for fire and sound.

Smoke Alarms (Subsection 9.10.19)

Hardwired and interconnected smoke alarms are required at least one on each storey, one in each sleeping room and one in the hallway serving the sleeping rooms.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms (Article 9.32.4.2)

If the Accessory Dwelling with an attached garage or a fuelburning appliance, require carbon monoxide alarms in either one of the following locations inside each bedroom, or outside each bedroom within 5 m of each bedroom.

Ventilation (Section 9.32.)

system complies with BCBC requirements for a small dwelling; if prescriptive insulation, air barrier, ventilation could be passive, however, if meeting current Step Code, would require a mechanical ventilation system (forced air furnace, HRV or CRV).

Plumbing Facilities (Section 9.31.)

Confirm that the required fixtures are compliant with and installed to the relevant CSA standards as well as the BC Plumbing Code. (Note: Camera inspection may be required if

SERVICING

- **Water supply** may require upgrades to existing water supply on property to accommodate new fixtures and off-property to accommodate additional loading. Appropriately sized water meter will be required.
- **Storm** (perimeter drain and roof water) to comply with District bylaws, building and plumbing codes.
- **Sewer** connect to existing lateral for property.
- **Electrical** permit through Technical Safety BC for existing electrical or to authorize new.