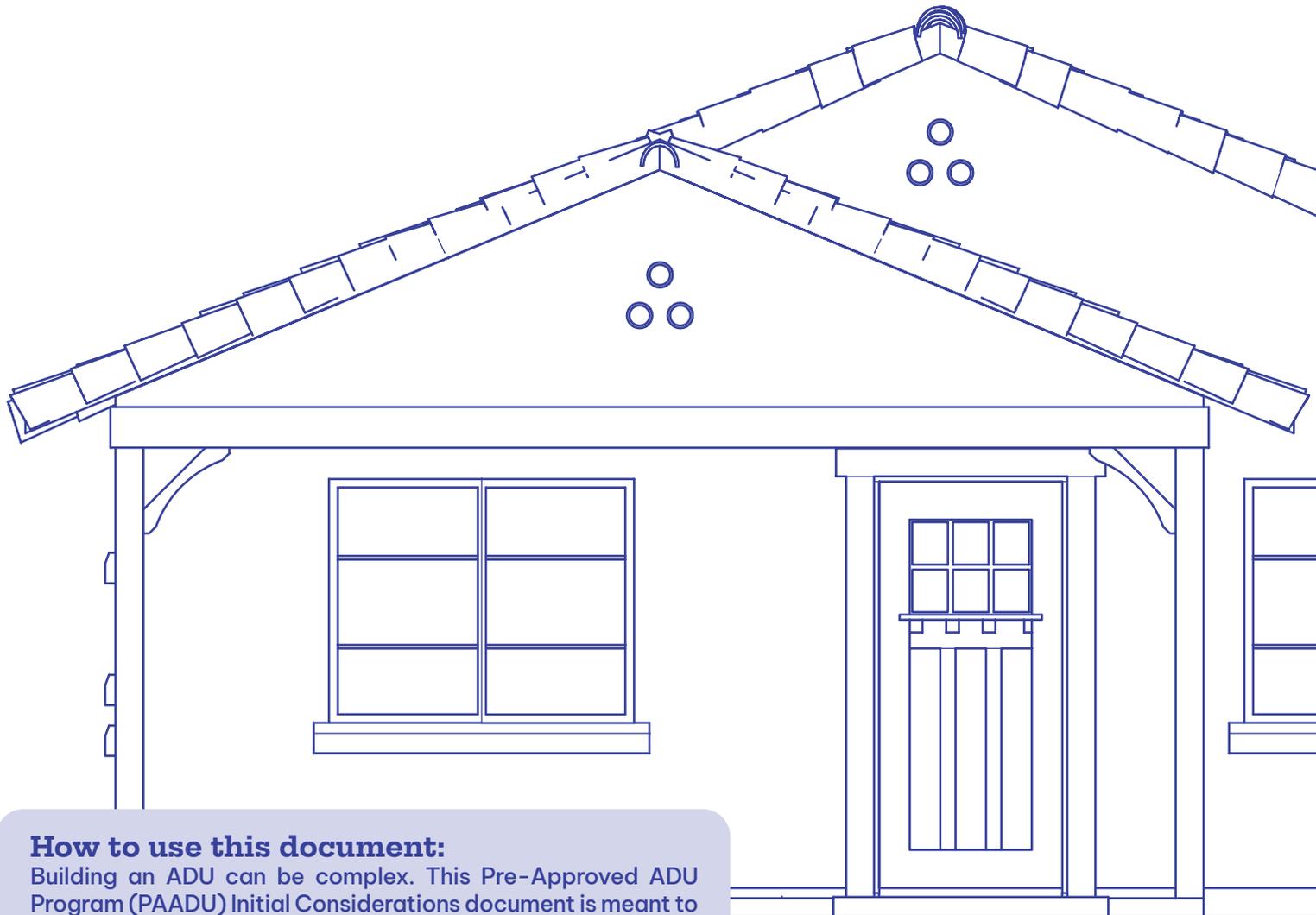




# Pre-Approved ADU Program (*PAADU*) Initial Considerations



**How to use this document:**

Building an ADU can be complex. This Pre-Approved ADU Program (PAADU) Initial Considerations document is meant to help you assess information that may impact your ADU project. Organized by department, this document makes it easy to find the right contact for any assistance that you need.

PAADU questions to consider for the:

# Planning Division



[planning@escondido.gov](mailto:planning@escondido.gov)

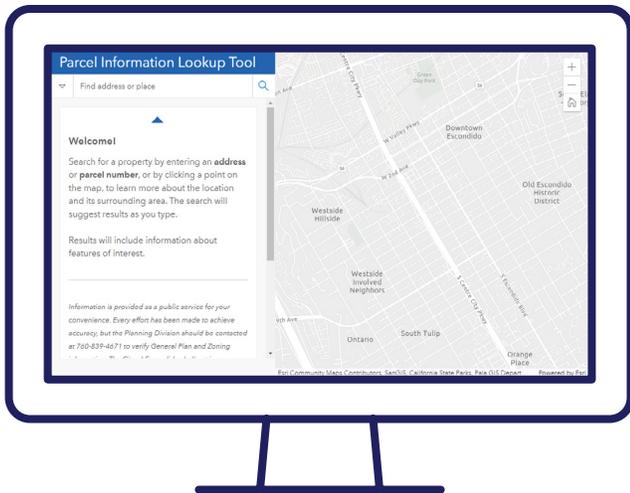


760-839-4671

## What is your property's zoning?

**Zoning** determines the use and regulatory standards that are tied with a piece of land. Cities use zoning to establish patterns for development. For example, a property can be zoned as residential, commercial, industrial. Based on the zoning designation, a city can set regulations associated with uses and development of the land such as building height limits, lot coverage, and more.

In order to use the PAADU program, your property must be zoned as residential. To learn about your property's zoning, we recommend you use the City's Parcel Information Look up tool at: [escondido.gov/209/Parcel-Lookup](https://escondido.gov/209/Parcel-Lookup)



The Parcel Information Lookup Tool provides information about your property and can help you get started.

The Parcel Information Lookup Tool can also help you gather your property's basic information such as the Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) and fire severity zone information.

## What are the characteristics of your property's lot?

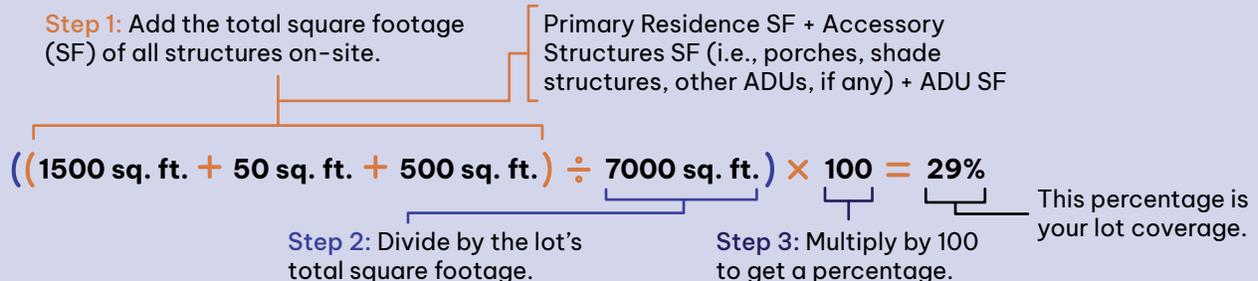
To begin your PAADU journey, you will need to know the physical dimensions of your lot. Information like square footage and property lines can be found on your property's deed. A copy of your property's grant deed is required to submit an ADU permit at the City of Escondido.

Knowing your lot's dimensions will help you determine what size ADU you could build and where you can place it.

## Setbacks

California's Government Code requires ADUs to have at least a four foot side and rear yard setbacks. ADUs may also need to conform to the zoning's front yard setbacks, which can be found by identifying your property's zoning and reviewing Article 6 of the Escondido Zoning Code. Knowing your lot's square footage can help you calculate your property's lot coverage and Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Lot coverage and FAR are both established by your zoning and are required calculations in the PAADU plan sets.

## How do I calculate my lot coverage?



## What is the total square footage of all structures on site?

The square footage of accessory structures (i.e., standalone garages, shade structures) are required to calculate lot coverage and FAR calculations. There are two ways to determine the square footage of your property's accessory structure:

1. You could use blueprints or as-builts of the structures on-site.
2. You could measure the structures by using Google Maps.

## What is the minimum ADU size permitted by law?

California Government Code Section 66323 requires cities to permit at least an 850 square foot ADU to be constructed, regardless of lot coverage or FAR.

The PAADU Program includes two plans that are less than 850 square feet, Plan 1 (484 SF) and Plan 2 (644 SF).

## Where can I build an ADU on my property?

Take note of the location of all of your property's structures, open space, proximity to your neighbors. This information should help you to determine where you could place your ADU.

Keep in mind, there are other considerations that will alter the placement of your ADU. While this worksheet will touch more considerations later, it's important to note that in order to use PAADU plans, there must be a 10-foot distance between a structure and an ADU structure, per Fire Safety Code. If a 10-foot separation distance is not possible, then additional fire safety requirements will be enforced.

## Where are your property lines located?

Use your existing title report or grant deed to understand the basic outline of your property. You can also look at google earth or the City's parcel lookup tool to establish your property lines. Note: the lines shown online are approximate and not official.

The property lines are used when establishing front, side, and rear yard setbacks. It is also important when considering on-site circulation.

## Do you plan on making improvements to your property?

If you plan to make improvements to your property (i.e., fill a pool, demolish an old structure) you may be required to obtain permits for the alterations first. Talk with the planning department or visit city hall before embarking on your PAADU journey.

## What type of properties, buildings, or landscape surround your property?

Is your lot located next to single-family homes, a road, a hill or slope? Look around your property and determine how a new ADU will be compatible with surrounding uses.

If your property is located near a hill it may require additional storm water management for runoff water. Also, additional setbacks are applicable in sloped properties per the development standards. Removal of trees or vegetation may also require a permit.

## What materials and colors should your ADU use?

ADUs should match the materials and colors of your primary structure. The PAADU plans include multiple options for color/finish specifications, such as fiber cement siding, wood siding, board and batten siding, cement plaster stucco siding, shake/shingle siding, as well as masonry stone veneer and adhered masonry brick veneer. In terms of roofing, the PAADU plans include the option of asphalt composite roof shingles or s-tile clay roof.



PAADU questions to consider for the:

# Utilities Department



[utilengineering@escondido.gov](mailto:utilengineering@escondido.gov)



760-839-6290 ext. 7033

## What utility connections does your property have?

ADUs need water, sewer and electricity for the structure to be habitable. Each utility service has to meet certain standards. For example, sewer lines must meet certain percentage of “fall” to make sure waste is disposed of. Water lines must have a certain amount of pressure (psi) for water to flow. Electricity needs an appropriate amperage to power the main home and ADU. All utility details must be shown on PAADU Site Plans. A MEP Engineer or contractor can help you evaluate your property’s utility connections and whether utility upgrades will be needed to accommodate your ADU.

## Is your property connected to sewer or septic?

One of the first steps in planning an ADU is determining whether your property is connected to the City’s municipal sewer system or if it relies on a septic system. Applicable requirements and review process vary depending on which system serves your property.



## Properties with septic systems

If your property is on a septic system you will need to contact the County of San Diego's Department of Environmental Health and Quality to confirm if your septic system has enough capacity for an ADU. You may email at: [LWQDuty.DEH@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:LWQDuty.DEH@sdcountry.ca.gov) or contact them via phone at **858-565-5173**. The County of San Diego's Department of Environmental Health and Quality website ([sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu\\_septic\\_systems.html](http://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_septic_systems.html)) provides helpful information including:

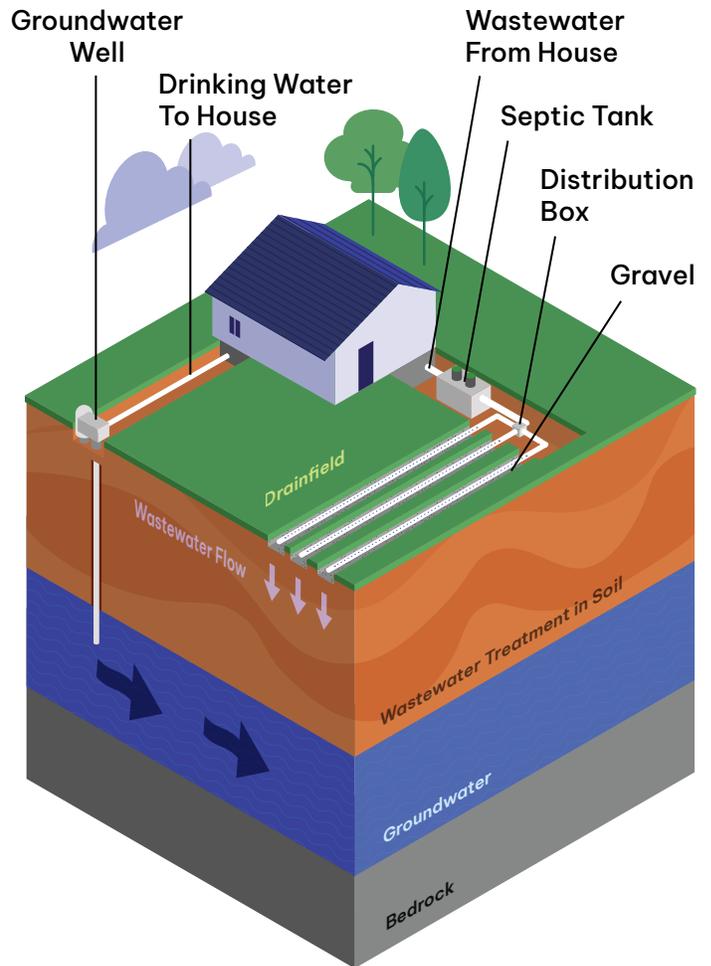
- Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Layout (OWTS) application checklist at: [sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu\\_septic\\_OWTS\\_Layout\\_Application\\_Checklist\\_FINAL\\_1-29-21.pdf](http://sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_septic_OWTS_Layout_Application_Checklist_FINAL_1-29-21.pdf).
- A list of OWTS professionals: [sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/deh/lwqd/OWTS\\_Professional\\_List.pdf](http://sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/deh/lwqd/OWTS_Professional_List.pdf).
- Frequently asked questions about septic systems: [sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu\\_septic\\_systems/lu\\_septic\\_faqs\\_page.html](http://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_septic_systems/lu_septic_faqs_page.html).

Before submitting a PAADU Building Permit Application to City of Escondido, you should wait until you obtain a DEHQ approval of your OWTS Layout Application. It may not be possible to obtain DEHQ approval for your ADU as proposed, and you may need to adjust your ADU size or placement.

The size and capacity of OWTS required by DEHQ may be much more expensive than initially expected, or your site may not have enough space for the leech field required.

If during the process it is determined that your septic system does not have enough capacity, you may consider connecting your property to the City's sewer service, however, this option will result in connection fees and infrastructure needed to connect to the sewer lateral.

## Conventional Septic System



*PLEASE NOTE: Septic systems vary. Diagram is not to scale.*

## Properties with sewer

If your property is connected to sewer, you will be required to indicate the location and elevations of sewer connections and cleanout on the PAADUs site plan.

You should reach out to a mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) professional to support you with the location and placement of your sewer line. A MEP can also support you with the required information as part of the PAADU site plan. Residential properties are only allowed to have one connection to the main sewer and water, therefore an ADU will need to branch off the existing sewer main lines on the property.

MEPs also need to show how the pipe sizes shown on the plans are adequate for the proposed ADU. Calculations will need to justify that existing infrastructure can handle the increased flows of the ADU. The City of Escondido's Engineering Department can help you get started by providing information on public infrastructure leading up to your property. Email [engineering@escondido.gov](mailto:engineering@escondido.gov)

PAADU questions to consider for the:

# Engineering Services



[engineering@escondido.gov](mailto:engineering@escondido.gov)



760-839-4671

## What is your property's topography?

If your property is located on a slope or is adjacent to a slope, grading or additional distance between the ADU structure's footings and the slope may be required. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) provides a free mapping tool where you can learn our property's elevation ([apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer](https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer)).

PAADU Plans are designed to be constructed on relatively flat sites. If your property is not on a flat site, there may be additional prep work required. PAADU plans also require topographic information to be submitted.

*Note: PAADU site plans require one foot topographic contours of the site or drainage arrows with slope percentages.*

## Does your property have any easements?

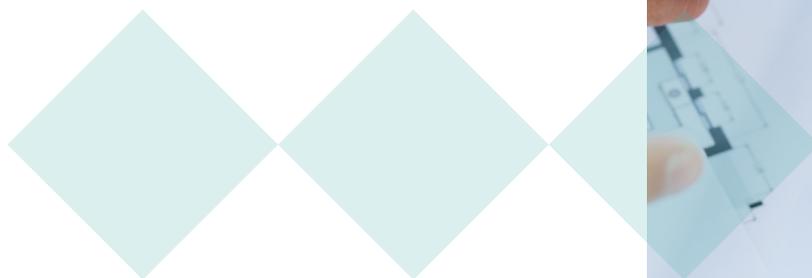
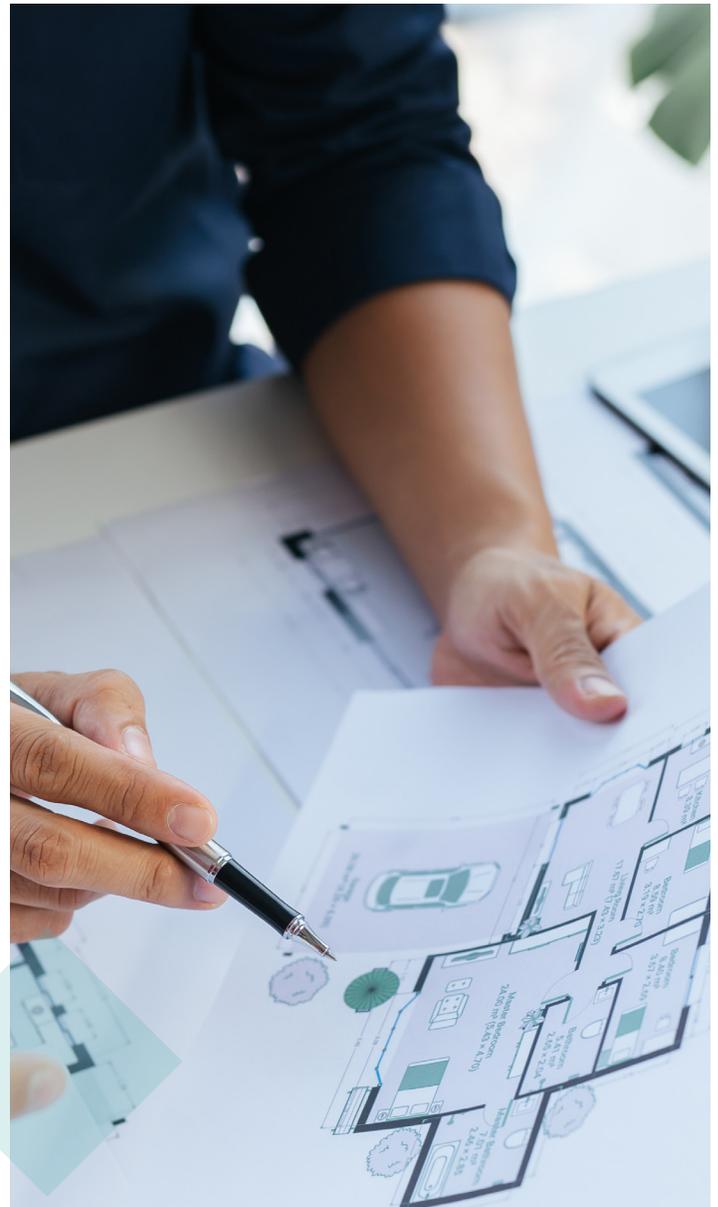
An easement allows another person, entity, or business to access a specific part of your property. For example, the City may have an easement on your property if public water utilities are located within your lot.

Owners are required to provide access to easements for the purpose of cleaning, maintaining, repairing, or replacing infrastructure. The planting of trees, vegetation, placing structures, sheds, playgrounds, gardens, or other landscaping is prohibited over a utility easement. Therefore, it is essential to understand if there are any easements that should be avoided when planning to place an ADU on your property.

You can find your easements in your property's Preliminary Title Report. PAADU Site Plans must include dedication location, width, record date and map reference, and distance from the proposed ADU.

## Is your property in a Flood Zone?

The FEMA Flood Map Service Center (MSC) ([msc.fema.gov/portal/home](https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home)) is the official online location to find all flood hazard mapping created under the National Flood Insurance Program. The map will determine whether your lot is in a high risk zone or not. If your property is on a FEMA flood zone, the finished pad should be elevated by a certain height above the existing adjacent topography elevation. The pad elevation height may vary between 1-3 feet subject to the respective FEMA zone designation.



PAADU questions to consider for the:

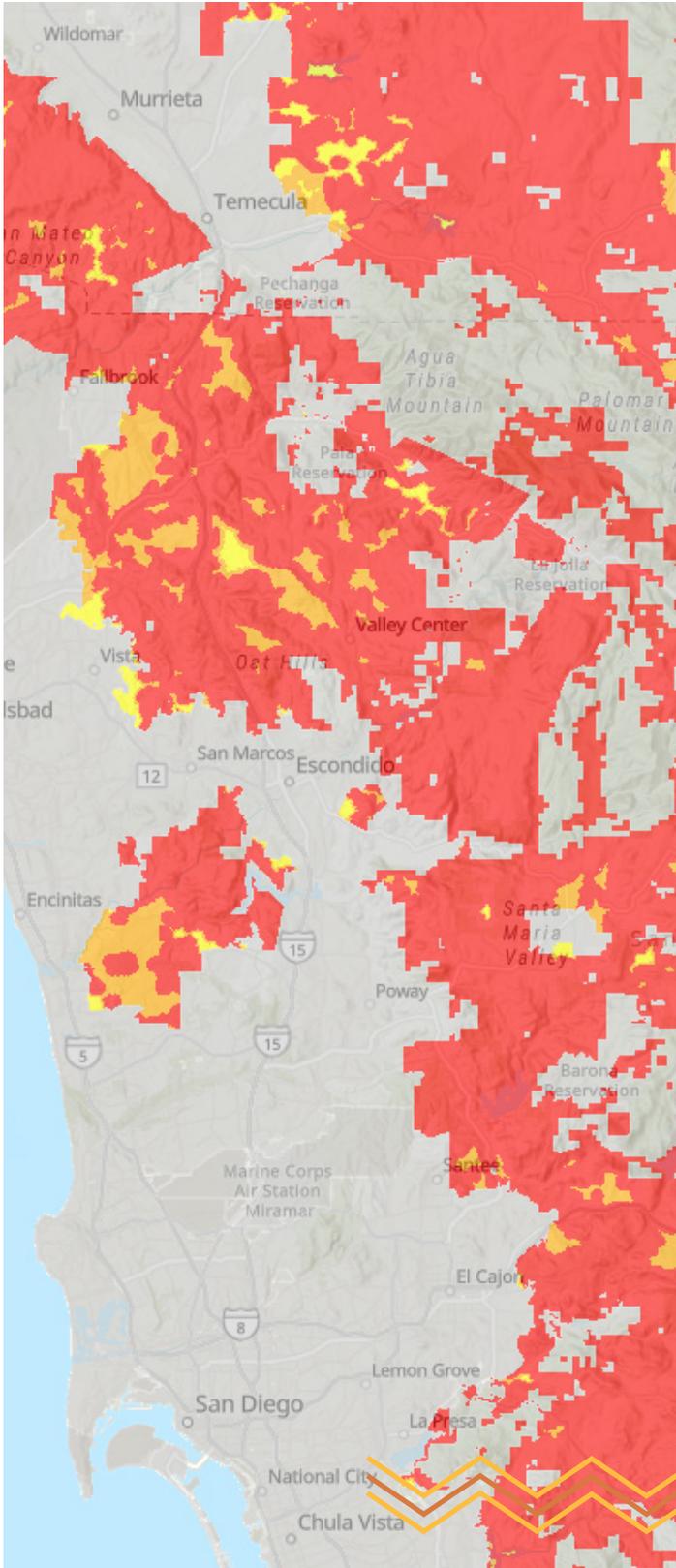
# Fire Department



[fireadmin@escondido.gov](mailto:fireadmin@escondido.gov)



760-839-5400



## Is your property located in a high fire or very high fire severity zone?

Cal Fire uses factors like terrain, winds, potential fuels, and fire history to classify lands within the state. There are three levels Cal Fire may classify fire prone areas: Moderate, High, Very High.

You may use the Cal Fire Fire Hazard Severity Zones interactive map to see the zone your property is located in: [osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones](https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones)

If you are proposing an ADU within high fire or very high fire severity zones, it must comply with the applicable codes and regulations. PAADU plans provide features to comply with regulations. However, applicants must check boxes on provided plans to indicate the features that would be incorporated as part of the project. Structures located in the very high fire hazard severity zones must provide and maintain a fuel modification zone on their property, which is a strip of land where combustible vegetation is modified or removed and replaced with fire-resistant plants to reduce the risk of vegetation fires.

More information about fire hazard severity zones, building materials listings, and requirements can be found on the Office of the State Fire Marshal Website ([osfm.fire.ca.gov](https://osfm.fire.ca.gov)).

## Does your property have sprinklers?

If the primary residence has sprinklers, the ADU is required to be sprinklered. However, if the primary residence does not have sprinklers, the ADU is not required to be sprinklered.

If the ADU is required to be sprinklered, detailed sprinkler plans shall be submitted and approved prior to installation. Plans and installation must be prepared by a C16 licensed sprinkler contractor. If sprinklers are required, a minimum 1" water meter, water service, and back flow preventer may be required as well.

PAADU questions to consider for the:

# Building Department



Form Center • Contact Executive Staff – Building Division



760-839-4647

Although PAADU plans are designed and verified to meet California Residential Code building standards, applicants still have a few important responsibilities:

## Truss Calculation limitations

Trusses are pre-engineered, factory-built frameworks that support an ADU's roof. Escondido's PAADU plans include truss calculations; however, these calculations can only be used *if* a truss manufacturer agrees to build them as specified.

Because not all companies may build the City of Escondido's PAADU truss designs, the City recommends applicants contact multiple truss manufacturers early in the permitting process to confirm whether they are willing to fabricate trusses according to the PAADU plans.



## Register Title 24 Energy Calculations with the California Energy Commission

California Building Code Title 24 sets energy efficiency standards for all homes and buildings. These rules help reduce energy use and protect the environment.

As part of the building permit process, applicants must register their PAADU's Title 24 calculations to the California Energy Code Registry website, CHEERS. The City provides Title 24 calculations based on the PAADU selection. Applicants are then responsible for registering them.

There are two ways to register:

1. **If you have a contractor**, your contractor can register and sign forms for you. Most contractors are familiar with Title 24 process because it's required for all California buildings.
2. **If you do not have a contractor**, you must create a CHEERS account at: [cheers.org/app/login](https://cheers.org/app/login). There are two account types:
  - Homeowner Account – Lets you sign off on design documents (CF1Rs) and is free of charge.
  - Homeowner/Contractor Account – Lets you sign off on both design (CF1R) and installation (CF2R) documents, but requires an \$8 monthly fee plus a \$7 upload fee per plan.

**Note:** Applicants without a contractor must create a homeowner/Contractor account.

A Tutorial for uploading your Title 24 documents can be found at: [youtu.be/wm1hsR-0IYw?si=-2rXXSEI4Wqwn6am](https://youtu.be/wm1hsR-0IYw?si=-2rXXSEI4Wqwn6am)

## Hire an ECC/HERS Rater for the ADUs final inspection

Home Energy Code Compliance (ECC)/Energy Rating System (HERS) raters are third-party professionals trained and certified by the California Energy Commission to verify insulation, ventilation, HVAC performance during or after construction. The PAADU program requires ECC/HERS inspections. Therefore, applicants are responsible to hire an ECC/HERS rater inspector. Inspection results must also be uploaded to CHEERS.

You can learn more at: [What You Need to Know Before Your Final Inspection - CHEERS](#)

## City Inspections

During the construction process, applicants are responsible to contact and coordinate with the City to schedule inspections. Inspections are scheduled via the City's online portal: [cwols.escondido.org/Portal/](http://cwols.escondido.org/Portal/).

Additional information about the scheduling process can be found at [New - Online Building Inspection Requests | Escondido, CA](#).



# City Contacts

## Building Division

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Building staff can answer questions around building codes and safety standards, plan review, inspections and energy requirements.

Message staff at: [escondido.gov/formcenter/Development-Services-12/Contact-Executive-Staff-Building-Divisio-64](https://escondido.gov/formcenter/Development-Services-12/Contact-Executive-Staff-Building-Divisio-64)  
Phone: **760-839-4647**

## Planning Division

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Planning staff can answer questions around local land use and zoning regulations which include setbacks, FAR and lot coverage requirements, historic preservation questions.

Email: [planning@escondido.gov](mailto:planning@escondido.gov)  
Phone: **760-839-4671**

## Engineering Services

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Engineering staff can answer questions around land grading and public utility connection location.

Email: [engineering@escondido.gov](mailto:engineering@escondido.gov)  
Phone: **760-839-4651**

## Fire Department

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Fire staff can answer questions around fire protection standards including sprinkler requirements, ADU hardening, and structure separation.

Email: [fireadmin@escondido.gov](mailto:fireadmin@escondido.gov)  
Phone: **760-839-5400**

## Environmental Programs Division

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Environmental Programs staff can answer questions around storm water compliance and watershed protection.

Email: [water@escondido.gov](mailto:water@escondido.gov)  
Phone: **760-839-4658**

## Utilities Department

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Utilities staff can answer questions around water and sewer connections to the City's sewerage and water system.

Email: [utilengineering@escondido.gov](mailto:utilengineering@escondido.gov)  
Phone: **760-839-6290 ext. 7033**



[escondido.gov/1207/Pre-Approved-ADU-Program-PAADU](https://escondido.gov/1207/Pre-Approved-ADU-Program-PAADU)