

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT POLICY/ORDINANCE  
INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation No.: AS-AMPS (Accessory Structures: Amperage limits)  
Effective Date: 6/25/09  
Revised: N/A

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**Question:**

*What is the maximum amperage allowed for accessory structures without discretionary permit approval?*

**Applicable Ordinance Section  
13.10.611(c)2**

**INTERPRETATION:**

**Power for agricultural accessory structures zoned A, CA, AP, TP, or SU (with an Agriculture General Plan designation) does not have an amperage limit if there is an existing legitimate agricultural use on the property that requires the requested amperage.**

**Power for residential accessory structures in any zone district is limited to a 125-amp/220V/single phase maximum subpanel. Requests for greater amperage or a separate electric meter may be considered with a Level IV Development Permit Application outside the Coastal Zone or a Level V Development Permit inside the Coastal Zone.**

**This amperage and subpanel restriction does not apply to Second Units.**

**Reason:**

The A, CA, AP, TP, and SU (with Agricultural General Plan designation) zone districts allow and encourage agriculture as primary uses. Accessory structures are commonly required to facilitate these agricultural uses; therefore, it is appropriate that power be allowed to these structures to further utilization of the agricultural resources on the property.

Residential accessory structures are, by definition, ancillary to permitted uses (such as single-family and multi-family dwellings) in various zone districts. Accordingly, Section 13.10.611(c)2 prohibits electrical service to residential accessory structures in the absence of a main dwelling (without Level IV approval outside the Coastal Zone or a Level V approval inside the Coastal Zone.) Section 13.10.611(c)2 also limits the amperage to 100 amps for residential accessory structures ancillary to a permitted use. 100 amp services are becoming less readily available in the market and, therefore, the allowable maximum amperage allowed without discretionary permit approval is increased to a 125 amps/220V/single phase subpanel.

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Tom Burns, Planning Director

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Date