



## ALLOWED USES AND ACTIVITIES ON VACANT, RESIDENTIALLY ZONED PARCELS

See Sections 13.10.322, 13.10.683, 13.10.556, 16.20.080, 13.10.611 and 16.22.080 of the Santa Cruz County Code

### The following uses and activities are allowed on vacant residential\* parcels:

- ✓ Family gardening.
- ✓ Family animal raising (as defined) in the RA\*, RR and R-1 zone districts.
- ✓ Noncommercial animal keeping.
- ✓ Fences and gates in conformance with Section 13.10.525.
- ✓ Signs allowed in the residential zone district in conformance with Section 13.10.580.
- ✓ Land disturbance limited to the extent necessary to allow for a determination of adequate water source, sewage disposal, or other required site investigation to determine buildability or provide appropriately-sized access to a permitted structure or use, in conformance with Section 16.20.040.
- ✓ Minimal land clearing in conformance with Section 16.22.080(a).
- ✓ Shoreline protection structures in conformance with Section 16.10.070(h)3(i).
- ✓ Electric services as allowed in Policy Interpretation ES-01 revised 6/25/09.
- ✓ Overnight parking of vehicles, not including RVs, owned by the property owner and intended for private use only if ancillary and necessary to a permitted use on site. Vehicles must be operable and registered.

### The following uses and activities are NOT allowed on vacant residential\* parcels:

- ✓ Those uses listed in the County Code that require a residence on site. Accessory structures are only permitted when incidental to a dwelling.
- ✓ Camping, living in vehicles, tents, yurts, tiny homes or any other structure not constructed in conformance with the California Building Code for use as a primary residence.

**The following uses and activities are NOT allowed on vacant residential\* parcels (continued):**

- ✓ Outdoor storage of personal property and materials except for those materials, bins, dumpsters, etc. as required for work under construction on the site pursuant to a building permit.
- ✓ Large or small scale commercial agriculture.
- ✓ Storage or use of any RV, travel trailer, camper, mobile home or tiny home except as allowed by Section 13.10.683.
- ✓ Land disturbance for the creation of, or access to, a building site without permits.
- ✓ Shoreline protection structures not meeting the restrictions in Section 13.10.070(h)3(i)
- ✓ Any use not indicated in the Residential Use Chart Section 13.10.322.

\* Including parcels in the SU (Special Use) zone district if the General Plan allows primary residential use.

The main use of land in residential zone districts is single-family and/or multi-family dwellings. The objectives of these districts are to protect residential properties from various disturbances, hazards and nuisances. Also, to allow development that does not impair the natural environment, and protect light, air, and privacy.

The uses not allowed on vacant residential land do not meet the purposes of the Residential Zone District or are prohibited in other County Code Sections.

In particular, camping and overnight or longer stays can be detrimental to the health and safety of the campers and neighboring properties due to possible inadequacy of water and sanitation facilities and due to potential fire dangers. Also, certain areas of the County are designated as “No Camping” areas in Section 10.16.040.

Section 13.10.556 states that “No portion of any undeveloped or vacant site...” shall be used for the outdoor storage of personal property and materials. With the exception of building or construction materials reasonably required for work under construction pursuant to a valid and effective building permit, outdoor storage is prohibited even if the items are located in the rear yard and screened from public view (such as behind a fence).

The specific purposes of the RA zone district (Section 13.10.321(b) state “...and where small-scale commercial agriculture, such as animal keeping, trucking farming and specialty crops, can take place in conjunction with the primary use of the property as residential.” The phrase “in conjunction” implies that use of a parcel totally for these uses is prohibited.

For more information, please email Zoning staff at:  
[Planning.zoningInfo@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:Planning.zoningInfo@santacruzcounty.us)  
Or leave a message at 831-454-2130

You can find additional land use information at the  
Santa Cruz County GIS:  
<http://gis.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/PublicGISWeb/>