



RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ENVELOPE STANDARDS

Santa Cruz County Zoning Ordinance (SCCC Chapter 13.10)

This table presents basic building envelope standards for dwelling units and accessory structures on *existing* parcels in zone districts that allow residential uses. Setback standards differ slightly for the creation of new parcels (see 13.10.323[B]). The table does not replace the Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC); please consult the Code for specific ordinance language or additional rules applicable to your project. Separate brochures provide detailed information about ADUs, garages and other accessory structures. Parcels with environmental resources or constraints are subject to SCCC Title 16.

Discretionary applications to exceed building envelope standards may include residential development permits, design review, minor exceptions or variances (see also, brochure: “Exceptions to Standards”). See SCCC 13.10.262 for modification of existing structures that do not conform to building envelope standards. On parcels with existing nonconforming structures, setbacks shall be configured to create the least area of nonconformance.

Zone Districts and Special Uses	Setbacks				Max Lot Coverage	Max FAR	Max Ht. (Stories)	Additional Building Envelope Considerations	SCCC Section
	Front	Street Side	Int. Side	Rear					
Zone Districts [to find a parcel's zoning, please visit the Planning Department website: https://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/ZoningDevelopment/What'sMyZoning.aspx]									
AP: Agricultural Preserve	20'	20'	20'	20'	N/A	N/A	28' (Farm buildings 40')	On lots <2.5 acres, apply standards from residential zone district most closely matching lot size (see residential below & SCCC 13.10.323[B]).	13.10.313, 13.10.631
CA: Commercial Agriculture								Homes >5000 sq.ft require Level 5 review.	
A: Agriculture								10' between structures (50' to livestock structure). Provide buffers between residential uses and CA and Ag Resource land per SCCC 16.50.095. Farmworker / agricultural employee housing: see 13.10.631 for special stds.	
RA: Residential Agriculture	40'	20'	20'	20'	10%	N/A	28' (2)	Lots < 60' wide: 5-foot side setbacks. Lots < 80% of the zone district min lot size: apply standards of zone district that matches lot area. Corner lots in R-1-9 or lower: interior side setback is 5'.	13.10.323, 13.10.325, 13.10.510
RR: Rural Residential, R-1-≥1 ac									
R-1-16 to R-1-< 1 ac	30'	15'	15'	15'	20%	N/A	28' (2)	Homes >5000 sq.ft require Level 5 review.	
R-1-10 to R-1-15.9	20'	10'	10'	15'	40%	0.5	28' (2)	Double frontage lots: apply front yard setbacks to front and rear.	
R-1-6 to R-1-9.9	20'	10'	5' & 8'	15'	40%	0.5	28' (2)	Front yard averaging can be used as provided in 13.10.323(E)(7).	
R-1-5 to R-1-5.9	20'	10'	5' & 8'	15'	40%	0.5	28' (2)	Min 10' between structures.	
R-1-3.5 to R-1-4.9	15'	10'	5' & 5'	15'	40%	0.5	28' (2)	Structural encroachments & exceptions: See 13.10.323 and 13.10.510.	
RB: Ocean Beach Residential	10'	10'	0' & 5'	10'	40%	0.5	25' (2)	In RB district, beach-adjacent lots have no rear setback and max height 17' (1 story). No min. front yard on sloped parcels abutting roadways.	
RM-5 to RM-9.9	20'	10'	5' & 8'	15'	40%	0.5	28' (2)	In RM-1.5- RM-5 districts, buildings with 6+ units can be up to 35' high where placed above parking, with extra setbacks.	
RM-1.5 to RM-4.9	15'	10'	5' & 5'	15'	40%	0.5	28' (2)		

Zone Districts and Special Uses	Setbacks				Max Lot Coverage	Max FAR	Max Ht. (Stories)	Additional Building Envelope Considerations	SCCC Section
	Front	Street Side	Int. Side	Rear					
C-1: Neighborhood Commercial.	10'	0'	0'	0'	N/A	N/A	35' (3)	Residential square footage can be max 50% of building square footage (67% for 100% affordable projects). Commercial properties abutting residential or agricultural districts have 30' side and rear setbacks.	13.10.333
C-2: Community Commercial									
PA: Professional-Admin. Office									
PF: Public Facilities	10'	10'	10'	10'	N/A	N/A	35' (3)	PF properties abutting residential or agricultural districts have 20' setbacks. Single family dwellings can be ancillary only, per Master Permit. Special allowances for multifamily workforce or affordable housing on PF parcels.	13.10.363
TP: Timber Production	40'	20'	20'	20'	10%	N/A	28'	Single family dwellings only. Exceptions to standards allowed per 13.10.323.	13.10.373
PR: Parks/Rec/Open Space	Apply development standards for single family dwellings and accessory structures per 13.10.323 & 13.10.325, based on lot size.								13.10.353
SU: Special Use	For single family dwellings, apply R-1 standards based on the parcel size. For multifamily dwellings (where allowed), apply RM-9 standards.								13.10.383
Combining Zone Districts¹									
-GH: Geologic Hazards	Parcels are subject to provisions of geologic hazards ordinance, including development buffers and restrictions.								13.10.423, 16.10
-L: Historic Landmark	Parcels are subject to regulations in SCCC 16.42. Max lot coverage is 1.25 times that of the base zone district., Where the max floor area ratio of the base zone district is 0.5., the FAR provided by the -L combining district is 0.6.								13.10.453, 16.42
-MH: Mobile Home Park	Parcels are subject to the regulations governing mobile home park development as provided by 13.10.684 and California Code of Regulations, Title 25, Chapter 5. All structures shall have a 20' setback from any right of way.								13,10,458, 13.10.684
-O: Open Space Easement	Development must not violate open space easement.								13.10.463
-PP: Pleasure Point	Apply special rules for second floor step-backs, roof angles, exterior side wall height, front porches, and garage placement. Also, max lot coverage of 45% is allowed on small lots (< 5000 sq.ft).								13.10.446
-R: Regional Housing Needs	Apply RM-2 site standards except that height may be 35' (3 stories), and site-specific standards are established using a PUD.								13.10.477
-SBE: Seascape Beach Estates	Setbacks: 20' (front), 8' (street side), 5'-8' interior side (10% lot width), rear setbacks are parcel specific (see SCCC). Height is parcel-specific (16' for some lots, 28' for other lots, see SCCC) and is measured from the street level (different from usual measurement from ground level). FAR is 0.6. Lot coverage is 45% for lots with 28' height, 60% for lots with 16' height.								13.10.436
-SP: Salamander Protection	Development standards are set forth in the sensitive habitat protection ordinance (SCCC 16.32.090[C][2][a]) and SP brochure. Maximum allowable impermeable surface area, including roofs, driveways and walkways, is 10% of gross parcel area.								13.10.483
Special Residential Uses and Structures									
Garages	Minimum 20' setback to garage/carport opening. Detached garages inside the USL have max height 24' (20' at exterior wall). Garages can encroach into side and rear setbacks under certain conditions (13.10.323[E][6][f]). Carport can have a front setback of 5' on steep slopes.								13.10.323
Accessory Dwelling Units	Meet base zone district standards for front and street side setbacks. Interior and rear setbacks are 4'. Max height is 16-28' dependent on location and ADU type (see SCCC and ADU brochures). ADU up to 800 sq.ft may exceed max lot coverage and FAR for base zone district. On land designated as AG in General Plan or zoned as agricultural, ADU must be located within 100' of primary dwelling.								13.10.681
Habitable Accessory Structure	One story, 17' height, 640 sq.ft. max size. Maximum 100 feet from primary dwelling, with access and slope restrictions. Discretionary permit required to exceed these rules.								13.10.611
Nonhabitable Accessory Structure	Inside USL: 28' (2 stories), 640 sq.ft max. Outside USL: 28' (3 stories), 1,000 sq.ft max. Discretionary permit to exceed. See Garages above.								13.10.611

¹ Combining districts D (Park Dedication), H (Assisted Housing), I (Statement of Intention), PRH (Permanent Room Housing) and W (Watsonville Utility Prohibition) have no special building envelope standards.