

Guest Quarters / Granny Flats

The terms Granny Flat, Mother-in-Law Unit, Guest House and Second Residential Unit are often used interchangeably. However, the El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance provides distinctions and design criteria.

Second Residential Units – often called Granny Flats or Mother-in-Law Units – are defined and regulated by [Chapter 130.15](#) of the Zoning Ordinance. Second Residential Units are permitted on all lots zoned for single-family residential uses, unless the parcel is encumbered by a [Williamson Act Contract](#).

A freestanding Second Residential Unit cannot exceed 1,200 square feet, as measured by its exterior dimensions. Building setback requirements apply. A Second Residential Unit may also be constructed as an attached unit to the main house. In this design, the attached Second Residential Unit cannot exceed 30 percent of the square footage of the primary dwelling, excluding garages, patios and decks.

Second Residential Units cannot be added onto or otherwise increased in size beyond 1,200 square feet. Either the primary residence or the Second Residential Unit must be occupied by the property owner. Only one of the two residences may be rented.

For information regarding building permits or permit fees for Second Residential Units, please contact the [Building Safety Services Unit](#). [Click here](#) for Transportation Impact Mitigation (TIM) Fee offset information.

Please Note: A Guest House is NOT a second residential unit and is limited to 400 square feet in size. It is structure accessory to the residence that provided temporary sleeping quarters for guests. As it is not intended as a residence, it may not include kitchen/cooking facilities. Building permit fees for guest houses can be found on the Building Safety Services web page, Building Permits, [Residential Accessory Structures](#).