



TOWN of PORTOLA VALLEY

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Accessory Dwelling Unit Fire Safety Checklist

Approved by Town Council August 11, 2021

The Town of Portola Valley contains many areas with increased wildland fire risk. To mitigate some of this risk the Town has had historically large building setbacks. Applicants applying for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)s are strongly encouraged to adhere to the local setbacks applicable to the property. This checklist is required for all ADUs that do not comply with the setback of the base zoning district, whether through new construction or conversion of an existing structure. These requirements are imposed to help reduce wildland fire spread in our community. They apply in addition to the requirements of other applicable fire code, building code, zoning code and other safety requirements adopted by the Town. A building permit shall not be issued until the applicant demonstrates compliance with all requirements.

Required Element	Location in Plans (Sheet #)
Site Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Slope Setback - ADU shall be set back 100' from the edge of a slope of 20% or greater. <input type="checkbox"/> Attached Structures – Not allowed (decks, balconies, patio covers, gazebos, trellises, carports, storage buildings, sheds, etc). 	
ADU Construction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems shall be required.* The Fire Marshal may approve an alternative means and methods. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Roof Assembly - Roofline shall be simple in design such as a single ridge or shed design. (No dormers or gullies allowed.) <input type="checkbox"/> Non-combustible roofing materials shall be required, such as tile, clay, slate, metal, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Openings at the roof edge are required to be protected by installing metal angle flashing. <input type="checkbox"/> Gaps between the roof covering and roof deck of metal roofs shall be required to be plugged with “bird stop,” mortar mix, or foam inserts specially designed for metal roofs. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Skylights – Flat, dual pane, tempered-glass skylights shall be required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chimneys – Required spark arrestor with ½” mesh metal screening. 	

<input type="checkbox"/> Gutters – Non-combustible gutters and solid non-combustible gutter covers shall be required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eaves – Enclosed with non-combustible materials. Soffit vents shall be placed near the roof edge, not near the exterior wall.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Walls and siding – Non-combustible exterior walls and siding such as cement board, masonry, or stucco required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Windows – Required to be dual pane tempered glass with trim required to be non-combustible materials. Window screen material required to be metal mesh screening.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vents – Listed ember resistant vents required such as Brandguard or Vulcan vents.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Attached Fences and Gates - Fences and gates within 10 feet of the ADU shall be constructed of non-combustible material.	

Landscaping and Defensible Space

All defensible space measurements are the distance described below, or to the property line, whichever is less.

- Defensible Space Clearance** - Weeds, grass, vines, or other growth that is capable of being ignited and endangering property, shall be cut down and removed by the owner or occupant of the premises. Non-fire-resistive vegetation or growth shall be kept clear 100 feet or to the property line, of buildings and structures in such a manner as to provide a clear area for fire suppression operations. Trees are allowed within the defensible space, provided limbs located less than 6 feet above the ground have been removed and the horizontal distance between crowns of adjacent trees, structures, overhead electrical facilities and unmodified fuel is not less than 10 feet. Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees. Ornamental vegetative fuels are allowed to be within the designated defensible space provided they do not form a means of transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure. (2019 CFC sec. 304.1.2 and 2018 IWUIC sec. 604.)
- Tree Removal** - If there are any Acacia, Juniper, Cypress, Pine, Eucalyptus, Coyote Brush or Broom within 100’ of the proposed ADU, they shall be removed.
- Zone 1: 0-5 feet** – Use non-flammable mulches, rock, and non-combustible hard surfaces. No new landscape cover except for low growing, 18” or less, herbaceous (non-woody) ground cover or succulent plants near the structure.
- Zone 2: 5-30 feet** – Break up continuous vegetation. Use broadleaf or deciduous trees, they are less flammable than conifer trees. Keep 20-30 feet of spacing between treetops and create small groupings of trees and/or shrubs. Lower limbs of trees must be kept pruned to reduce the chance of fire spreading to the canopy. (10-15 feet or 1/3 the height of the tree height, whichever is less). Shrubs and tall grasses adjacent to and under trees need to be removed. Eliminate areas of flammable fuels on the ground.
- Zone 3: 30-100 feet** – Use broadleaf or deciduous trees, they are less flammable than conifer trees. Keep 10-15 feet of spacing between tree canopies and create small groupings of trees and shrubs. Lower limbs of trees must be kept pruned to reduce the chance of fire spreading to the canopy. (10-15 feet or 1/3 the height of the tree height, whichever is less).

- **Submittal Requirements** - Plans shall include a separate sheet with landscaping and defensible space requirements. Zone 1 (circle with five foot radius from new ADU), Zone 2 (circle with 30 feet radius), and Zone 3 (circle with 100 foot radius) shall be shown on the plans with the trees/plants to be removed and planted with the project.

Administration

1. The Planning Commission, acting as the board of adjustment, shall have the authority to hear applications for variances from the strict application of provisions of this checklist through the process outlined in Portola Valley Municipal Code Chapter 18.68 and subject to the fees in the Town Fee Schedule.

2. Definition of Non-Combustible: for the purposes of this checklist, non-combustible building material shall mean materials that comply with any one of the following:
 - a. The building material, in the form in which it is used and under the conditions anticipated, will not ignite, burn, support combustion, or release combustible vapors when subjected to fire or heat; or
 - b. The building material is reported as passing ASTM E136, *Standard Test Method for Assessing Combustibility of Materials Using a Vertical Tube Furnace at 750 Degrees Celsius*; or
 - c. The building material is reported as complying with the pass/fail criteria of ASTM 136 when using the test method and procedure in ASTM E2652, *Standard Test Method for Assessing Combustibility of Materials Using a Tube Furnace with a Cone-shaped Airflow Stabilizer, at 750 Degrees Celsius*. (NFPA 1140 Section 25.2.1 Noncombustible Building Materials)

Ignition-resistant building materials and fire-retardant-treated wood shall not be allowed.