COUNTY of VENTURA
Resource Management Agency • Environmental Health Division • 800 S. Victoria Ave, Ventura, CA 93009
Phone 805-654-2813 • Fax 805-654-2480 • rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/environmental-health

Frequently Asked Questions: Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems and Accessory Dwelling Units/Junior Accessory Dwelling Units

What is an ADU?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is an attached or a detached residential dwelling unit (see Government Code Section 66310), or a unit within the existing space of a primary dwelling unit, which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary dwelling. It shall include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same lot as the proposed or existing single-family or multifamily dwelling. An accessory dwelling unit also includes the following:

(a) An efficiency unit, as defined in section 17958.1 of the Health and Safety Code; and
(b) A manufactured home, as defined in section 18007 of the Health and Safety Code.

What is a JADU?

A Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) is a dwelling unit that is no more than 500 square feet in size and contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family dwelling. These are typically bedroom conversions into separate accessory dwelling units. A JADU must have cooking facilities (including a sink). However, a JADU is not required to have a private bathroom and may share common bathroom facilities with the primary dwelling. JADUs are further described and defined in Government Code Section 66333.

How do know I know what type of ADU/JADU, if any, is allowed on my property?

County Planning has information on local zoning and lot coverage requirements related to building an ADU. Please contact County Planning staff and review online information regarding ADU permits:

- Planning general phone: (805) 654-2488 or (805) 654-2451
- ADU Permits - https://rma.venturacounty.gov/accessory-dwelling-unit-permits
- Senate Bill 9 - https://rma.venturacounty.gov/senate-bill-9

Do I need a separate Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) for my Attached or Detached ADU?

The Ventura County Building Code (VCBC), Section H201.1 requires a minimum septic tank capacity of 1000-gallon for each dwelling unit. This may be accomplished with two separate tanks or one larger tank with additional volume capacity of at least 1,000 gallons for the ADU. Moreover, the dispersal field may be shared with the main dwelling unit provided your leach field or seepage pit (s) are adequately sized.

A Full Certification is required if you want to connect your ADU to the existing OWTS. Consult an OWTS staff specialist for more details.

Can I use my existing OWTS for my JADU?

Possibly, if the existing OWTS is adequately sized for your specific project. A Full Certification will be required to ensure the added wastewater demand on the existing OWTS is adequate in size and functionality. Consult an OWTS staff specialist for more details.

Do I need a geological/soil suitability report and design for my ADU OWTS?

Yes, a geological/soil suitability report is required to evaluate the adequacy of any new or existing OWTS. If there is an existing report for the property which contains percolation data in the existing or proposed dispersal area, then a new geological/soil suitability report may not be necessary. The OWTS shall be designed by a licensed professional engineer or equivalent. In addition, all OWTS shall be designed with a 100% expansion area. Consult an OWTS staff specialist for more details.

What if my existing OWTS is undersized or failing, or if sewer is available?

A Permit to Construct will be required when "upgrading" or replacing your existing OWTS due to failure or to accommodate your proposed ADU. If public sewer is available in your area, your ADU will most likely need to connect. Consult an OWTS staff specialist for more details.

Does an Accessory Structure have the same OWTS requirements as an ADU/JADU?

No, an accessory structure is not an ADU/JADU and may share the principal dwelling unit's OWTS if it is sized appropriately. Consult an OWTS staff specialist for more details.

Where can I find more information on OWTS and ADU/JADU requirements?

- Visit our website for general information: **https://rma.venturacounty.gov/septic-systems-wastewater-disposal**
- Contact the OWTS staff specialist in your project area:

OWTS Staff	Contact Information	Inspection Area
Paulina Vargas	Ph: (805) 662-6520 Paulina.Vargas @venturacounty.gov	Casitas Springs, El Rio, Fillmore, Frazier Park, La Conchita, Lockwood Valley, Malibu, Ojai, Oxnard, Piru, Saticoy, Santa Paula, Ventura
Lou Maya	Ph: (805) 654-2802 Lou.Maya@venturacounty.gov	Bell Canyon, Camarillo, Chatsworth, Hidden Valley, Moorpark, Newbury Park, Santa Rosa Valley, Santa Susana, Simi Valley, Somis, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village