

FAQ:

What is an accessory use?

Do I need a permit for an accessory use?

Background:

Per [A-301](#), 1.5 a use registration permit is required for every new use commenced on any land or in any structure except for use as a single-family dwelling.

Certain types of uses are considered accessory and are permitted in conjunction with the principle use without obtaining a separate permit.

Per [14-604\(1\)\(a\)](#), unless otherwise expressly stated in this Zoning Code, accessory uses and structures are permitted in conjunction with allowed principal uses and structures.

Answer:

Per [14-203\(2\)](#), an Accessory Use is defined as:

A use, including all necessary public utility facilities, that is subordinate to and on the same lot as the principal use on a lot and customarily incidental to the principal use.

In *most* cases, a use permit is not required to document an accessory use; the exception would be cases where the code only permits accessory uses in certain scenarios (e.g. specific zoning districts or overlays) or where there are additional code requirements associated with the accessory use.

The following are examples of accessory uses that do require a use registration permit and, in some cases, plan review:

- Accessory Parking
- Accessory Signs (see [14-903](#) for permit exceptions)
- Accessory Dwelling Units ([14-604\(11\)](#) for more information)
- Accessory Limited Lodging (see [14-604\(13\)](#) and [FAQ](#) for more information)
- Accessory Home Occupations (see [14-604\(10\)](#) for more information)

The following are examples of accessory uses that do not require a use registration permit:

- An office or storage area accessory to a retail store, restaurant, or similar use
- A spa or fitness center accessory to a hotel or apartment building
 - For these types of uses to be accessory, they should be for use of the occupants of the building, not the general public.
 - In most cases, sit-down restaurants and bars located within hotels are not accessory as they are patronized by both hotel guests and the general public.
- Take-out service accessory to a sit-down restaurant
- Retail sale of clothing, food or beverages accessory to a fitness center
- Holding cells accessory to a police station
- Clinical and biological manufacturing accessory to research and development including post-trial production
- A food pantry or Sunday school accessory to a religious facility

Questions?

Call 311 or (215) 686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit an online form via <http://www.phila.gov/li/get-help>.

Disclaimer:

This interpretation, policy or code application is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code application to specific projects may vary. There may be other ways to comply with the Code. If so, you are not required to use this method. You may want to investigate other options or consult with a professional identifying an equally code compliant solution.