



# Requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) when Public Services are Not Available

If you have a property in an area that does not have access to public services including; municipal water and sewer, then adding an ADU will require additional planning, equipment, specialized services from qualified professional service providers, and written approvals from the Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Division and your local Building and Safety agency before any construction, significant or structural alterations, or additions are started. An ADU is typically a separate building from your home that is constructed to be used as a legal and habitable dwelling but can include a garage or any other detached building that is converted into a legal and habitable dwelling. A room addition connecting to your existing home is not considered an ADU; however, it still requires building permits and an evaluation of your current wastewater disposal system.

All habitable dwellings and buildings not connected to public services must meet specific requirements for a potable water supply and disposal of wastewater through an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS), aka, septic system. Approvals for potable water supply are obtained from the Environmental Health Drinking Water Program. If the property is located within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County or an incorporated city that has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)\* with the Department of Public Health for enforcement of OWTS regulations, these requirements must be approved by the Local Building and Safety and Environmental Health Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program Program.

In cities without an MOU for OWTS, contact your local Building and Safety to determine whether a permit is required by the local water board for your OWTS.

Please see below for additional requirements from the Department of Public Health.

## POTABLE WATER

### **Environmental Health Drinking Water Program – Phone (626) 430-5420**

If you receive potable (drinking) water from an individual private water well located on your property or an approved shared well, your well yield must meet one of the following requirements:

- 3 gallons/minute for each unit on the property
  - For example, if you have a main house and an ADU, you are required to meet a minimum of 6 gallons/minute or a minimum of 9 gallons/minute if the well is shared by two main houses and an ADU.
- 2 gallons/minute for each unit on the property with a 1,500-gallon storage tank for each unit.
  - For example, if you have a main house and an ADU, you are required to meet a minimum of 4 gallons/minute with a minimum of 3,000-gallon storage tank or a minimum of 6 gallons/minute with a minimum of a 1500-gallon storage tank for each 3 units if the well is shared by two main houses and an ADU.

**A water well with the required capacity can be shared by up to two, three or four dwellings. Any well that is shared among five to fourteen dwellings including an ADU, constitutes a State Small Water System which is regulated under the provisions of the California Code of Regulations, Title 22.**

If you require any further information regarding potable water options, please contact the Drinking Water Program at (626) 430-5420 or visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/AreasofInterest/waterwell.htm>



# Requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) when Public Services are Not Available (continued)

## WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

### Environmental Health Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program – Phone (626) 430-5380

If you plan to add an ADU on your property, below are some requirements for proper wastewater disposal:

- If a municipal sewer connection is within 200 feet of the property, any new ADU must be connected directly to the sewer.
- If there is no sewer within 200 feet of the property, then the following options may be considered:
  - Modify the current OWTS to receive wastewater from the ADU.
  - Install a new OWTS to service just the ADU.
  - Install a new Non-Conventional Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (NOWTS) to service both the main house and the ADU.
- Property with an OWTS requires a minimum land size of at least 2.5 acres per dwelling. If your property is not at least 5 acres, the ADU will require a NOWTS.
- OWTS are approved based on the number of units and the number of bedrooms or bedroom equivalents in each building or dwelling on the property. Adding an ADU with two bedrooms may not have the same requirements as adding two bedrooms to an existing home.
- Designation and testing of a future expansion area for the existing OWTS is required, if one was not previously designated.
- If you are required to expand the dispersal area for an existing OWTS or install a dispersal area for a new OWTS and the soil doesn't meet acceptable percolation rates, a NOWTS is required.
- If your property is located within a Flood Zone, then the local Building and Safety would need to approve new or modified wastewater systems in incorporated areas or Public Works in unincorporated areas
- If the addition of the ADU increases the calculated daily wastewater discharge to over 10,000 gallons per day, then your wastewater system will have to be permitted by the State Regional Water Board.
- A permit from your local Building and Safety is required to decommission your current septic system, in accordance with the California Plumbing Code.

Any modification of an existing OWTS or NOWTS or the installation of a new OWTS or NOWTS requires the submission and approval of plans to Environmental Health's Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program and permits from the local Building and Safety.

Information taken from the California State OWTS Policy dated June 19, 2012 and the Los Angeles County Health and Safety Code Titles 11, 22, and 28.

**\*The following cities have an MOU with the Department of Public Health for regulation of septic systems: Agoura Hills, Bradbury, Duarte, Glendora, Hidden Hills, La Canada Flintridge, La Habra Heights, La Verne, Lancaster, Lomita, Palmdale, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Santa Clarita. Please check our website for the most updated list of MOU cities.**

If you require any further information regarding wastewater disposal options, please contact the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program at (626) 430-5380 or visit:

[http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/EP/lu/lu\\_septic.htm](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/EP/lu/lu_septic.htm)