

Zoning Administrator Development Permits Level 5

The Board of Supervisors, through adoption of County Code Section 18.10.410, has established the Office of Zoning Administrator (ZA) and has designated the Planning Director as the ZA. The Planning Director may appoint one or more Deputy Zoning Administrators to carry out the functions of the Office of Zoning Administration.

Development Permits: Level 5

In Santa Cruz County, many kinds of construction projects and land uses require development permits in addition to building permits. Planning Department staff must visit the site and review the plans to see if the project meets all Zoning and General Plan requirements and will not damage the environment.

What Level of Development Permit is Required?

Applications for Development Permits are handled in the Project Review section of the Planning Department at various decision-making levels, depending on size and neighborhood impact. Common Level 5 Projects include, but are not limited to:

- Coastal Zone projects (See the [Coastal Zone Permit](#) brochure).
- Single family dwellings and appurtenant structures exceeding 7,000 feet of gross floor area.
- Second units with the Urban Services Line exceeding 17 feet in height
- Habitable accessory structures over 640 sq ft.
- Variances for setbacks, height, lot coverage and floor area ratio (See the [Variances](#) brochure).
- Commercial development of 2,000 to 20,000 sq. ft.
- Agricultural caretakers' mobile homes.
- Multiple residential projects of 2 to 4 units on one parcel.
- Fences over 6 feet high, within any required setback
- Greenhouses of more than 20,000 sq. ft.
- Some home occupations (See the [Home Occupations](#) brochure).

Filing an Application

The first step is to contact the Zoning Information line at 831-454-2130 or visit the Zoning Counter during [walk-in hours](#) for information.

Prior to submitting a Level 5 application, come to the Zoning Counter (no appointment - walk in only) to obtain a List Of Required Information (LORI packet). In addition to the required submittal materials, the LORI will include an application, the number of plans required, the estimated fees, and an application flowchart. An appointment will be required to submit the application. An owner agent form signed by the property owner must be submitted if the property owner is not present.

You will be asked to fill out an application form and submit a description of the project with whatever plans are listed on the "List of Required Information", which the counter planner will give you. The property owner must sign either the application form or a separate owner/agent approval form.

The Permit Process

The planner assigned to your project will visit the site, review your plans, receive comments from other reviewing agencies, and write a staff report. This report will contain a description of the project, its location, and a recommendation either for approval (usually with certain conditions), or for denial if the affirmative findings cannot be made.

Findings

Required findings for development permits appear in Section 18.10.230(a) of the Santa Cruz County Code. Briefly, these require that the project:

1. Will be consistent with the Zoning Plan, General Plan, and all County ordinances.
2. Will not be detrimental to the public or to property in the neighborhood.
3. Will not generate too much traffic, overload utilities, or waste energy.
4. Will harmonize with existing land uses and densities in the neighborhood.

For Coastal Zone permit findings, see the [Coastal Zone Permits](#) brochure and Section 13.20.110 of the County Code.

Environmental Review

Some development permit applications are subject to environmental review per the California Environmental Quality Act.

Public Notices

You must place a project description sign or signs on the project site before your application will be deemed complete for processing. Your project planner will contact you with details (see the [Guidelines For Neighborhood Notification of Proposed Development](#) brochure for additional information). A copy of the staff report, findings, and recommendation for either approval or denial will be sent to the applicant and to surrounding property owners. An announcement of the proposed hearing will be published in a newspaper, posted on the site, and if the site is within the Coastal Zone, to all legal occupants of properties within 100 feet of the site ten days before the hearing.

The Hearing

The Zoning Administrator will conduct a public hearing which anyone may attend. A decision based on the planner's findings and statements made by the applicant and the public will be made. The permit, if approved, becomes effective (subject to any conditions of approval) ten business days after the Zoning Administrator's decision, if not appealed (See the [Planning Appeals](#) brochure).

Appeals

All actions of the Zoning Administrator are appealable to the Planning Commission as described in Chapter 18.10 of the County Code.

For More Information

This brochure describes the general information for obtaining Level 5 development permits. For complete regulations, see the Santa Cruz County Code, Chapter 18.10.

If you have questions about Development Permits, please call the Zoning Information phone line at 831-

454-2130 or visit the Zoning Counter during [walk-in hours](#).