

Click the **plus (+)** or **minus (-)** symbols to expand or collapse the entries. Click the **checkboxes** to select sections for saving or printing.

Revised marks sections affected by recently codified ordinances.

Amended marks sections affected by uncodified ordinances.

Print/Save Selections Clear all

- + PIERCE COUNTY CHARTER
- + Title 1 General Provisions **Revised 12/19**
- + Title 2 Administration **Revised 10/19 Amended**
- + Title 3 Personnel **Revised 12/19 Amended**
- + Title 4 Revenue and Finance **Revised 9/19 Amended**
- + Title 4A Impact Fees **Revised 2/19 Amended**
- + Title 5 Business Licenses and Regulations
- + Title 6 Animals
- + Title 7 Water Supply
- + Title 8 Health and Welfare **Revised 9/19**
- + Title 9 Criminal Code **Revised 4/19 Amended**
- + Title 10 Vehicles, Ferries and Traffic **Revised 8/19**
- + Title 11 Storm Drainage and Surface Water Management **Amended**
- + Title 12 Roads and Rights-of-Way **Revised 10/19**
- + Title 13 Sewer Code **Revised 6/19 Amended**

Current Version

Title 18A Development Regulations – Zoning
Chapter 18A.37 ACCESSORY DEVELOPMENT – RESIDENTIAL

Home



Chapter 18A.37 ACCESSORY DEVELOPMENT – RESIDENTIAL

Sections:

- 18A.37.010 Purpose.**
- 18A.37.020 General Provisions for Residential Accessory Uses and Structures.**
- 18A.37.030 Accessory Use List.**
- 18A.37.040 Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and Short-Term Vacation Rentals (VR).**
- 18A.37.050 Cargo Container Storage.**
- 18A.37.060 Animals.**
- 18A.37.070 Motor Tracks.**
- 18A.37.080 Vehicle Parking.**
- 18A.37.090 Wind Power.**
- 18A.37.100 Day Care.**
- 18A.37.110 Home Occupation.**
- 18A.37.120 Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).**

18A.37.010 Purpose.

SHARE

The purpose of this Chapter is to identify certain uses and structures that may be established accessory to a residence and to establish standards and conditions for regulating such uses and structures. (Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.020 General Provisions for Residential Accessory Uses and Structures.

A. In all zones, there shall be no limit as to the number of accessory uses allowed on a lot provided:

SHARE

1. The use meets all applicable development regulations; and
2. The use is accessory to a lawfully established residence.

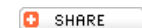
B. Structures typically accessory to a residence, such as garages, greenhouses and storage buildings, may be permitted without a principal use up to a maximum of 576 total square feet. Fences and retaining walls shall not be considered a principal use and shall not be limited to the 576 square feet maximum when no principal use is located on site.

C. In residential zones, on lots of less than 1 acre in size, detached accessory structures shall not exceed 2,000 total square feet, except that the area of a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) shall not apply.

- D. All accessory uses must be customarily incidental and subordinate to the principal building or use of the lot upon which it is located.
- E. At such time as the principal use or structure is discontinued, all accessory uses and structures to the principal use or structure shall also be discontinued or removed.
- F. Where there is a question regarding the inclusion or exclusion of a particular accessory use within any zone classification, the Director shall have the authority to make the final determination. The determination shall be based upon the general standards of this Section and an analysis of the compatibility of the use or structural size and placement with consideration of the predominant surrounding land use pattern and with the permitted principal uses of the zone classification.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.030 Accessory Use List.



The following uses may be allowed accessory to a residence:

- A. Decks and patios.
- B. Greenhouse and landscape structures.
- C. Carports or garages for the sole use of occupants of premises and their guests, attached or detached (without fee to guests), for storage of motor vehicles, boats, recreational vehicles, and/or planes.
- D. Antennae and satellite dishes.
- E. Recreational facilities and areas (indoor or outdoor), including swimming pools.
- F. Docks and mooring facilities (see Title 20 PCC, Shoreline Management).
- G. Retaining walls, free-standing walls, and fences.
- H. Small-scale composting facility which meets State and local solid waste regulations.
- I. Personal hobby activities, limited to uses and activities permitted to take place within a residence or residential accessory structure per appropriate building and fire codes.
 - 1. Personal hobby activities shall be undertaken for personal use only and shall not be used to generate income of any sort.
 - 2. Personal hobby activities may not include uses that together would constitute a dwelling unit.
- J. Storage buildings for yard maintenance equipment and household goods.
- K. Agricultural activities, such as gardens and orchards.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.040 Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and Short-Term Vacation Rentals (VR).



- A. A Bed and Breakfast shall be allowed, on a parcel upon which the bed and breakfast proprietor resides, within a legally established single-family dwelling or accessory structure when the following criteria are met:
 - 1. Not more than five guest rooms are provided;
 - 2. Not more than ten travelers are lodged at any time;
 - 3. Lodging for each guest does not exceed two weeks;
 - 4. Compensation of any kind is paid for the lodging; and
 - 5. The B&B owner files an affidavit with Pierce County Planning and Public Works which indicates the location of the property and that the property will be used as a bed and breakfast.
- B. A Vacation Rental (VR) is a short-term rental accommodation within a legally established single-family or accessory dwelling. Longer term rentals exceeding 30 days are not regulated under this Chapter. Vacation rentals shall be allowed when the following criteria are met:
 - 1. A total of five guest rooms may be provided.

2. Two guests per bedroom, not to exceed a total of ten guests may be lodged at any time.
 3. Compensation of any kind is paid for the lodging.
 4. The VR owner or representative shall provide guests with information indicating the location of guest parking spaces.
 5. The VR owner or representative shall provide notification of the presence of the vacation rental business to all neighboring property owners directly adjacent to the vacation rental property.
 6. The property owner shall file a Vacation Rental Affidavit with the Pierce County Planning and Public Works Department which indicates the following:
 - a. The property owner's intent to use their residence as a Vacation Rental.
 - b. Contact information for either the owner, representative, or property management company including phone number and e-mail.
 - c. Listing of the internet site(s) where the Vacation Rental property is advertised.
 - d. The required neighborhood notification has been provided.
 7. A Good Neighbor brochure for short-term rentals is provided to each renter describing the appropriate etiquette of residing in a Vacation Rental.
- C. If the standards described in either PCC [18A.37.040](#) A. or B. above are exceeded or otherwise cannot be met, the proposed use shall require a Conditional Use Permit. (Ord. [2017-12s](#) § 2 (part), 2017; Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-24s2](#) § 1 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.050 Cargo Container Storage.



Single-family residential uses located on lots greater than 2.5 acres in rural zone classifications shall be permitted to utilize a cargo container for storage purposes when a Level F1 Fence, per PCC [18J.15.040](#) H.5., or Level L2 landscape buffer, per PCC [18J.15.040](#) H.2., surrounds the cargo container(s), provided the cargo container shall not be visible from any County arterial road. A cargo container authorized pursuant to this subsection shall be painted and have any corporate identification, symbol or logos removed. The use of semi-trailers for storage purposes is not permitted. (Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-24s2](#) § 1 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.060 Animals.



- A. Animals may be allowed, subject to the following requirements:
1. Any combination of five dogs or cats that individually exceed seven months of age are permitted. Any combination of six or more dogs or cats that individually exceed seven months of age are permitted if allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.33.260](#) D., Animal Production, Boarding and Slaughtering and as shown on the appropriate Use Table and licensed pursuant to Chapter [5.24](#) PCC.
 2. No person shall have, maintain, or possess any wolf, fox, chimpanzee, or other exotic, vicious, or poisonous animal or reptile except as set forth in Chapter [6.16](#) PCC.
- B. **Urban Area Requirements.**
1. For lots less than one-half acre:
 - a. Two small livestock are allowed, all other livestock are prohibited; and
 - b. Five or fewer small animals, excluding dogs and cats allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.37.060](#) A.1. above, are allowed. Roosters, peacocks, and male turkeys are prohibited.
 2. For lots from one-half acre to less than 5 acres:
 - a. Two small livestock are allowed and other livestock shall not exceed 2 which are 12 months or more of age; and

- b. Twelve or fewer small animals, excluding dogs and cats allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.37.060](#) A.1. above, are allowed per acre. Roosters, peacocks, and male turkeys are prohibited on lots less than one acre.
3. For lots 5 acres or greater in size, there shall be no restriction on the number of livestock and small animals kept excluding dogs and cats allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.37.060](#) A.1 above.
4. Enclosures such as, but not limited to, homes, garages, cages, barns, stables, and coops shall not be located in a front yard, and shall be set back as follows from adjacent residential property lines that are not held in common ownership:
 - a. 15 feet for poultry or rabbits;
 - b. 10 feet for other small animals and small livestock;
 - c. 45 feet for livestock; and
 - d. 75 feet for kennels and catteries.
 - e. For purposes of this Section, a fenced area where animals are free roaming is not considered an animal enclosure.

C. Rural Area Requirements.

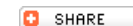
1. For lots less than one-half acre:
 - a. Two small livestock are allowed, all other livestock are prohibited; and
 - b. No more than 24 small animals, excluding dogs and cats allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.37.060](#) A.1 above.
2. For lots one-half acre or greater in size, there shall be no restriction on the number of small livestock, livestock or small animals kept excluding dogs and cats allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.37.060](#) A.1 above.
3. Enclosures such as, but not limited to, homes, garages, cages, barns, stables, and coops shall not be located in a front yard, and shall be set back as follows from adjacent residential property lines that are not held in common ownership:
 - a. 5 feet for poultry or rabbits;
 - b. 10 feet for other small animals and small livestock;
 - c. 45 feet for livestock; and
 - d. 75 feet for kennels and catteries.
 - e. For purposes of this Section, a fenced area where animals are free roaming is not considered an animal enclosure.

D. Best Management Practices on Lots Less Than One-Half Acre.

1. Manure shall be collected and stored in covered containers. Animal manure shall not be deposited or allowed to accumulate in any ditch, ravine, stream, river, pond, marine water, or surface of the ground, or on any road right-of-way where it may become a nuisance or menace to health as determined by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.
2. All critical area buffers and setbacks, building department, solid waste, aquifer recharge and health department regulations apply.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.070 Motor Tracks.



- A. Motor tracks may be allowed subject to the following restrictions, in addition to any applicable development regulations:
1. Rural zones only;
 2. Parcels must be equal to or exceed 5 contiguous acres in size;
 3. Track shall be within an area not to exceed 2 acres in size;
 4. No portion of the usable track may be within 50 feet of any property line and no closer than 250 feet to a principal residential structure on any abutting property;

5. The track shall only be utilized during daylight hours; no earlier than 8 a.m. and no later than 6 p.m. year round; and

6. Use of the track is limited to the occupant(s) of the single-family residence.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.080 Vehicle Parking.



In addition to motor vehicles typically associated with a residential use such as a mini-van, sedan, or pick-up truck, the following vehicle parking is allowed:

A. The parking of one vehicle up to 18,000 pounds gross vehicle weight used by the resident may be allowed provided the vehicle is parked wholly within the driveway or another location specifically designed to accommodate vehicle parking. The vehicle may exceed 18,000 pounds gross vehicle weight if under contract with local authorities, such as the Sheriff and/or State Patrol, to provide assistance to automobile accidents or provide assistance during inclement weather conditions.

B. The allowable gross vehicle weight shall increase to 30,000 pounds for lots which are greater than 5 acres in size when located within a rural zone classification.

C. The parking or storage of semi-trucks and semi-trailers is prohibited except as allowed pursuant to PCC [18A.37.080](#) A.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-24s2](#) § 1 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.090 Wind Power.



A. Wind power electrical generation equipment meeting the following standards shall be allowed accessory to a single-family residence:

1. The equipment may not exceed more than one unit per principal residence, and shall have a total rating of less than 10kW under normal wind conditions;
2. Equipment shall not be located in a front yard setback. All equipment shall comply with setbacks of the zone classification;
3. Height limits for the underlying zone shall apply. The height limit may be exceeded provided the equipment is set back one additional foot for every foot said equipment exceeds the height limitation of the underlying zone classification;
4. Minimum distance between the ground and any protruding blades shall not be less than 15 feet as measured from the lowest point of the arc of the blades;
5. The outer and innermost guy wires must be clearly visible through the use of covers, flagging or other methods to a height of 6 feet above the guy wire anchors;
6. Guy wire anchors must be a minimum of 10 feet from all property lines;
7. Must be in compliance with applicable county, state and federal regulations;
8. Equipment shall not be installed along the major axis of an existing microwave communications link where the operation system is likely to produce an unacceptable level of electromagnetic interference, unless the applicant provides sufficient evidence satisfactory to the Planning Director indicating that the degree of expected interference is insignificant;
9. All equipment shall be located and installed in compliance with the guidelines of the Federal Aviation Regulations if located on property adjacent to an airport runway approach or clearance zone;
10. Noise generated at any property line shall not exceed that allowed under Chapter [8.76](#) PCC; and
11. In urban zones, power lines for a detached unit shall be located underground.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.100 Day Care.



A. Home-Based Day-Care facilities may be allowed to operate from a residence and are required to comply with the following standards:

1. Outdoor recreation shall be enclosed by a Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) approved fence;
2. Play equipment shall not be located in any required front or interior yard setback area; and
3. The maximum number of individuals receiving daycare services at the facility shall not exceed 12 individuals.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.110 Home Occupation.



A. Home Occupation and Cottage Industry may be allowed provided the following standards are met:

1. **General Standards.** These general standards apply to all home occupation and cottage industries:
 - a. The activity shall not create noticeable glare, noise, odor, vibration, smoke, dust, heat, or cause interference with radio or television receivers at or beyond the property lines;
 - b. Activities shall be performed completely inside the residence, an accessory structure, or a combination of the two;
 - c. Structures used for a cottage industry shall comply with building and fire code requirements for permits, occupancy, and inspection;
 - d. The activity shall be clearly incidental and secondary to the residential use of the property and shall not change the residential character of the dwelling or neighborhood;
 - e. Manufacturing shall be limited to the small-scale assembly of already manufactured parts but does not preclude production of small, individually handcrafted items, furniture, or other wood items;
 - f. Customers and clients are allowed between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. and sales in connection with the home occupation are limited to merchandise handcrafted on site or items accessory to a service (i.e., hair care products for beauty salon);
 - g. Signage is regulated by Title [18B](#) PCC, Development Regulations – Signs;
 - h. Off-street parking shall include one space per non-resident employee and one for each related vehicle (unless the employee drives the cottage industry vehicle only) in addition to the parking required for the single-family residence according to PCC [18A.35.040](#), Off-Street Parking; and
 - i. Use of hazardous materials or equipment must comply with the requirements of the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Fire Code.
2. Home Occupations may be allowed in urban and rural zones when in compliance with the following standards, in addition to the general standards:
 - a. The home occupation shall be limited to an area not more than 500 square feet or a size equivalent to 50 percent of total floor area of the living space within the residence, whichever is less;
 - b. Only the resident can perform the home occupation;
 - c. One vehicle up to 18,000 pounds gross vehicle weight is allowed; and
 - d. There shall be no outside display or storage of materials, merchandise, or equipment.
 - e. Hazardous materials stored or used in quantities that require a permit in International Fire Code are not allowed. Check with the Fire Prevention Bureau

regarding quantities.

3. Cottage Industry Level I may be allowed in urban and rural zones with approval of an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) and compliance with the following standards:
 - a. The cottage industry shall be limited to 1,000 square feet or a size equivalent to 50 percent of total floor area of the living space within the residence, whichever is less;
 - b. Two non-resident employees are permitted;
 - c. Two 18,000 pounds gross vehicle weight vehicles are allowed; and
 - d. A Level 3 landscaping buffer shall be provided between cottage industry activities and neighboring residential dwellings. See PCC [18J.15.040](#) for landscape buffer standards.
4. Cottage Industry Level II may be allowed in rural zones only upon issuance of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and compliance with the following standards:
 - a. The cottage industry shall be limited to 1,500 square feet or a size equivalent to 50 percent of total floor area of the living space within the residence, whichever is less. Properties which are 5 acres or greater may exceed this requirement at the Examiner's discretion;
 - b. Four non-resident employees are allowed;
 - c. Three 18,000 pounds gross vehicle weight vehicles and one vehicle in excess of 18,000 pounds gross vehicle weight are allowed;
 - d. Activities and outside storage of materials and equipment are allowed provided the site is sufficiently screened;
 - e. Activities involving outdoor events, such as wedding facilities, shall be limited to six outdoor events per year, with no more than one event per month; properties which are greater than 10 acres in size may exceed this standard at the Hearing Examiner's discretion;
 - f. Outside material and vehicle storage shall be screened from neighboring residential dwellings with a Level 3 landscape buffer and F1 fencing. See PCC [18J.15.040](#) for landscape and fence buffer standards; and
 - g. A Level 3 landscape buffer shall be provided between cottage industry activities and neighboring residential dwellings. See PCC [18J.15.040](#) for landscape buffer standards.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016)

18A.37.120 Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).



- A. The establishment of an ADU shall be subject to the following general requirements:
 1. One ADU shall be allowed per lot of record as an accessory use in conjunction with any detached single-family structure in all zones. ADUs shall not be permitted on lots created under Chapter [18J.17](#) PCC, Small Lot Design. ADUs shall not be included in density calculations.
 2. An ADU shall be converted to another permitted use or shall be removed if one of the two dwelling units is not owner occupied.
 3. An ADU shall be permitted as a second dwelling unit attached to, or detached from, the principal dwelling.
 4. A detached ADU may be any dwelling permitted in the applicable land use classification.
 5. New construction of a detached ADU or conversion of an existing detached structure to an ADU shall not be permitted within the required front, side, or rear yard setback. An exception to the required rear yard setback may be allowed if the rear yard abuts an alley.

6. If an ADU is created by constructing a new detached structure, the building height of the ADU shall not be greater than the principal dwelling's building height, unless the ADU is above a detached garage.

B. **Size.** An ADU shall be no greater than 1,000 square feet when located in an Urban Growth Area. When located outside an Urban Growth Area, the size may increase to 1,250 square feet.

1. The following areas shall be counted when calculating the size of an ADU: any area with a ceiling height of 7 feet or more; all bathroom and basement areas with a ceiling height of 6 feet, 8 inches or more; and any areas with sloped ceilings where 50 percent of said area has a ceiling height of 5 feet or more.

2. When calculating the square footage of an attached ADU, all measurements shall be taken from the interior walls.

3. When calculating the square footage of a detached ADU, all measurements shall be taken from the exterior walls and shall include each level of the structure, excluding only the garage, covered porches, and any levels not accessed by a permanent stairway structure.

C. **Design.** The following standards shall apply when the separation between the principal dwelling and proposed accessory dwelling is less than 100 linear feet:

1. The entrance to an attached ADU shall not be directed toward any front yard unless utilizing an existing doorway.

2. Detached ADUs shall be no closer to the front lot line than the front edge of the principal dwelling. This provision shall not apply to waterfront lots regulated pursuant to Title [18S](#) PCC, Development Policies and Regulations – Shorelines.

3. **Parking.** One off-street parking space shall be required for the ADU in addition to off-street parking required for the principal dwelling pursuant to PCC [18A.35.040](#), Off-Street Parking.

D. **Application.** Any owner occupant seeking to establish an ADU shall apply for approval in accordance with established procedures. These procedures shall include:

1. The owner occupant shall apply for a Building Permit for an ADU. A complete application form must demonstrate that all size thresholds and design standards are met.

2. An affidavit affirming that the owner will occupy the principal dwelling or the ADU and agreeing to all the general requirements as provided in this Section is required.

3. Prior to issuance of Building Permits, the owner occupant shall record a notice on the property title acknowledging the existence of the ADU with the Pierce County Auditor. Such notice shall be in a form as specified by the Department and shall include as a minimum:

a. The legal description of the property which has been approved for an ADU;

b. The applicability of the restrictions and limitations contained in this Section;

c. A copy of the County-approved floor/site plan; and

d. The property owner's signature on the notice, which shall be notarized prior to recording the notice.

(Ord. [2016-33](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2016-14s](#) § 2 (part), 2016; Ord. [2013-45s4](#) § 3 (part), 2015)

Disclaimer: The Pierce County Council has the official version of the Pierce County Code. Users should contact the Code Reviser for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

County Website: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/>

County Telephone: (253) 798-7777

[Code Publishing Company](#).

[Mobile Version](#)