# Mendocino County Division of Environmental Health

## Guidelines for Accessory Dwelling Units

**Septic**

1. An Accessory Dwelling Unit that contains only one bedroom, is no larger than 1,200 square feet, and meets the requirements of the Mendocino County planning and building codes may be connected to an existing septic system if the following conditions are met.

    a. The existing permitted septic system must meet applicable state and county requirements for onsite waste disposal.

    b. If the property owner or county Environmental Health office cannot provide official documentation that the existing septic system meets applicable state and county requirements for onsite waste disposal systems, then the property owner shall hire a Qualified Site Evaluator to determine whether the existing septic system meets those conditions for approval.

    c. The property owner shall hire a Qualified Site Evaluator to identify a replacement area that meets applicable requirements and is sized to serve the total number of bedrooms originally in the primary residence plus the total number of bedrooms in the new second residence.

2. An Accessory Dwelling Unit that contains more than one bedroom and meets the requirements of the Mendocino County planning and building codes may be connected to an existing septic system if the following conditions are met.

    a. The property owner must obtain the proper building permits to convert one or more bedrooms in existing structure into other space so that the total combined number of bedrooms in the primary and second residence equal no more than one bedroom greater than the original permitted septic capacity.

    **Note: Necessary changes to existing bedrooms may include conversion of doors into open archways, the removal or conversion of closets into open shelving or other structures, or other modifications.**

    b. The property owner must also meet conditions 1 a–c, as applicable. The new replacement area must be sized to serve the total number of bedrooms originally in the primary residence, including any that have been removed or converted to facilitate permitting the second residential unit, plus the total number of bedrooms in the second residence.

3. If the property is located within a service district, the property owner must provide written approval from the service district specifically authorizing the connection of a Second Residential Unit.

**Water**

4. If the source of drinking water is a well or spring, the property owner shall hire a qualified person to determine whether the well or spring meets the county proof of water requirements for a second residential unit.

5. If the property is located within a service district, the property owner must provide written approval from the service district specifically authorizing the connection of a second residential unit.

**Accessory Dwelling Units, including travel trailers and recreational vehicles, must comply with all requirements of Mendocino County planning and building codes.**

Effective Date: November 2018