

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE GUIDANCE
(as compiled from FEMA policy memos and NFIP Flood Insurance Manual)

Accessory structures are defined by FEMA as structures used solely for parking (two-car detached garages or smaller) or limited storage (small, low cost storage sheds).

They are included under the general definition of structure and are consequently subject to all floodplain management regulations pertaining to structures. However, when an accessory structure represents a minimal investment, meets the requirements outlined below, and complies with all other provisions of NFIP regulations (including floodway encroachment), these structures may be wet-flood proofed and do not have to be elevated or dry flood proofed.

Such structures must meet the following requirements:

1. Accessory structures shall not be used for human habitation and the building must only be used for parking and/or storage.
2. Accessory structures shall be designed to have low flood damage potential and be constructed using flood resistant materials below the base flood elevation.
3. Accessory structures shall be constructed and placed on the building site so as to offer the minimum resistance to the flow of floodwaters and have the required openings to allow floodwaters in and out (see below or refer to Technical Bulletin 1-93 for more information about the required openings standard).
4. Accessory structures shall be adequately anchored to resist flotation, collapse, and lateral movement.
5. All building utility equipment (such as electrical and heating) shall be elevated or flood proofed.

For accessory structures that are subject to flooding, the "openings" requirement cited above should be designed to automatically equalize hydrostatic flood forces on exterior walls by allowing for the entry and exit of floodwaters. Designs for meeting this requirement must either:

- Be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect, or
- Meet or exceed a minimum of two openings having a total net area of not less than one square inch for every square foot of enclosed area subject to flooding. The bottom of all openings must be no higher than one foot above grade. Openings may be equipped with screens, louvers, valves, or other coverings or devices provided that they allow for the automatic entry and exit of floodwaters.