Residential Setbacks and Development Standards

This is a summary of general area and setback standards for the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts. The majority of residential properties located within the City of Tacoma are zoned as R-1 or R-2. These standards apply to new single-family dwellings and additions.

**MINIMUM AREA AND SETBACKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Lot Area*</th>
<th>Lot Width*</th>
<th>Lot Frontage</th>
<th>Front Yard Setback</th>
<th>Side Yard Setback</th>
<th>Rear Yard Setback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-1</td>
<td>7,500 sq ft</td>
<td>50 ft</td>
<td>25 ft</td>
<td>25 ft</td>
<td>7.5 ft</td>
<td>25 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-2</td>
<td>5,000 sq ft</td>
<td>50 ft</td>
<td>25 ft</td>
<td>20 ft</td>
<td>5 ft</td>
<td>25 ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small-Lot Development for some lots may be allowed. See Tip Sheet P-145 for regulations regarding existing or proposed lots that are less than the minimum area or lot width noted above.

**OPEN YARD SPACE**

Every property must maintain open yard space. Open yard space cannot include vehicle driveway or parking areas and must:

- be located in the rear or side yard
- be equal to at least 10% of the parcel area,
- and have no dimensions less than 15 feet
- or 12 feet for parcels smaller than 3,500 sf

**SETBACK LINES**

Setback lines identify buildable area on a property. In most zoning districts there are minimum required front, side, and rear setbacks. Building setbacks are measured from the property lines, however, in the case of an alley abutting a rear yard, the rear setback may be measured from the centerline of the alley in the R-1 and R-2 districts.

**HEIGHT LIMITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Main Dwelling</th>
<th>Accessory Buildings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-1</td>
<td>35 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-2</td>
<td>35 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSD (View Sensitive)</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Height is established by a plane created above four base elevation points. Tip Sheet L-554 explains how to determine height. Solar panels/collectors are allowed to exceed the maximum height limit, provided they do not extend more than 12 inches above the surface of the roof, as measured to the upper side of the solar panel, and on pitched roofs do not extend above the ridgeline.

Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document. More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org (253) 591-5030
To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice). TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.
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PORCH AND DECK PROJECTIONS

- Uncovered decks over 8 feet above grade may extend up to 4 feet beyond the front or rear yard setback lines and up to 2 feet beyond the side yard setback line
- Uncovered decks between 30 inches and 8 feet above grade may extend up to 8 feet beyond the front or rear yard setback lines
- Covered porches that are open on 3 sides and on the level of the first floor, may extend up to 8 feet beyond the front yard setback line
- Depending on proximity to property lines or other structures, fire protection may be required, per the Building Code

CORNER LOTS

If a parcel has more than one frontage, such as in the case of corner lots, the most conforming setbacks are applied. When the rear property line of a corner parcel abuts the side property line of a neighboring parcel, the side yard setback on the street side of the corner parcel must be equal to at least half of the front yard setback provided by the property to the rear. In no case shall a side yard setback be less than 5 feet.

FRONT YARD AVERAGING

When there are legally existing main dwellings on both neighboring properties of a parcel, the average of the front yard setbacks provided by those dwellings may be used as the required front yard setback of the subject property.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- Tacoma Municipal Code Section: 13.06.100 - Residential Districts, 13.06.602 - General Restrictions
- Tacoma Municipal Code Section: 2.02 - Building Code

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