



San Juan County  
Community Development & Planning

135 Rhone Street, P.O. Box 947 Friday Harbor, WA. 98250  
(360) 378-2354 (360) 378-2116 Fax (360) 378-3922  
cdp@sanjuanco.com | www.sanjuanco.com

**\*POLICY RESCINDED SEPTEMBER 2023 - REFERENCES OUTDATED COUNTY CODE\***

**POLICIES/PROCEDURES/INTERPRETATIONS**

Height of Accessory Use Shoreline Structures

René M. Beliveau  
Deputy Director/Chief Building Official

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ISSUE: The method for determining the height of Accessory Use Shore Line Structures is different from that of non-shoreline structures. Additionally, the code language for determination of height is confusing.

ANALYSIS: Height of Accessory Use Shoreline Structure is regulated by Section 18.50.330 E (2)(a) & (b) of the San Juan County Code which state:

1. The following accessory uses and developments, when associated with an exempt single-family residence, are defined as "normal appurtenances" and are therefore exempt as provided in SJCC 18.50.020 E (2)(g):
  - a. One garage building and/or one accessory dwelling unit each of which covers no more than 1,000 square feet of land area and is no taller than 16 feet above existing grade as measured along a plumb line at any point; or a combination of these uses in a single structure no larger than 2,000 square feet which is no taller than 16 feet above existing grade as measured along a plumb line at any point; or a combination of these uses in a single structure no larger than 1,000 square feet on each floor and no taller than 28 feet above existing grade. In no case shall an accessory dwelling unit exceed 1,000 square feet;
  - b. No more than two separate outbuildings no larger than 200 square feet each, no taller than 16 feet above average grade level, and not used for human habitation; provided, that in addition, one outbuilding for any other residential purpose may be substituted for an accessory dwelling unit or garage if the structures do not exceed size limits specified in subsection E (2)(a) of this section;

Section 18.20.080 ("Height, shoreline") contains specific methods for measuring buildings within the shoreline areas. This definition defines the height of shoreline structures as being:

" . . . measured from average grade level to the highest point of a structure; provided, that television antennas, chimneys, and similar appurtenances shall not be used in calculating height, except where they obstruct the view of the shoreline of a substantial number of residences on areas adjoining such shorelines, excluding temporary construction equipment (WAC 173-27-030)."

Section 18.20.070 defines "Grade, average level" as meaning:

" . . . the average of the natural or existing topography of the lot, parcel or tract of real property which will be directly under the center of all exterior walls of a proposed building or structure."

INTERPRETATION: Based on the above sections it is determined that the maximum height of Accessory Use Shoreline Structures shall be determined as follows:

1. Permitted Accessory Structures over 200 square feet:
  - a. Single story structures:  
No point of the structure may exceed 16 feet above the existing grade located directly below such point.
  - b. Multiple story structures:  
No portion of the structure may exceed 28 feet above a calculated elevation (bench mark) equal to the average of existing grades located under the center of all exterior walls of a proposed structure.
2. Permitted Accessory Structures 200 square feet or less:  
No portion of the structure may exceed 16 feet above a calculated elevation (bench mark) equal to the average of existing grades located under the center of all exterior walls of a proposed structure.