Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

Community Risk Reduction Division **www.metrofire.ca.gov**

10545 Armstrong Ave., Suite 310 · Mather, CA 95655 · Phone (916) 859-4330 · Fax (916) 859-3717

SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN FIRE DISTRICT

CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE GUIDELINES

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/10/2025 REVISION DATE:

SCOPE

To create general guidelines for plan submittal and plan review of residential single-family dwellings that do not contain more than two dwelling units or duplex structures with no more than 1 attached ADU and fall under the following conditions:

- New dwelling, duplex, or ADU structure with a total covered area over 3,599 square feet;
- New dwelling, duplex, or ADU structure where the furthest portion of proposed structure cannot be reached within 150 feet of a public road or located on a private road with a setback of 150 feet or more (CFC 503.1.1);
- New dwelling, duplex, or ADU structure proposed in an unwatered area with no access to public water (water supplied by an individual well);
- Additions to existing homes that exceed 50% of the existing total covered area square footage and the new total structure exceeds 3,599 square feet.

DEFINITIONS

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) – secondary residential living space located on the same lot as another primary residence, providing complete, independent living facilities. ADUs can be detached, attached to the main house or within the existing structure.

Certificate of Release (COR) – General fire district permit where the plan review assesses requirements regarding access and water for residential single-family dwellings that do not contain more than two dwelling units or duplex structures with no more than 1 attached ADU.

Fire Flow – the flow rate of a water supply, measured at 20psi residual pressure, that is available for firefighting.

Home Hydrant – completely integrated fire riser, pump, and water storage tank designed to provide the required fire sprinkler demand for a home.

Steamer fire hydrant – a Clow 960 or an approved equal fire hydrant. One 4½- inch “steamer” outlet and two 2½-inch outlets are required. (NFPA 24 § 7.1.2)

Unwatered area – area not provided with public water infrastructure. An area will be considered unwatered if the nearest fire hydrant is located over 1,000 feet from the property.

Wharf fire hydrant – a fire hydrant equipped with one or two 2 ½ -inch outlets.

SPECIFICATIONS

1. Plans shall be submitted electronically through the Fire Prevention Mobile portal each time plans are submitted or resubmitted. Account login is accessed via www.mobile-eyes.com. The following shall be submitted for plan review:

    a. A COR form with sections 1, 2, 3, 7, & 8 completed
    b. Site plan for the proposed dwelling
    c. Current fire flow letter issued by the local water purveyor. The fire flow letter shall be dated within the last 12 months
    d. Road Access/Maintenance Agreement for any private roads required for access to the parcel
    e. Plan Review Fees (due upon submittal, refer to SMFD fee schedule). Fees include the initial plan review and one resubmittal. Additional resubmittals or resubmittals after approval shall require additional fees

2. All plans shall be drawn to scale or dimensions shall be provided.

3. At the minimum, the following information shall be provided on the plans:
    a. Project address
    b. Scope of work
    c. Applicable codes
    d. Square footage of all covered areas of the proposed structure
    e. Location of all existing and proposed structures on the property
    f. Location of the nearest fire hydrant within 1,000 feet of the property or well location if located in an unwatered area
    g. Type of fire hydrant (wharf or steamer)
    h. Location of the nearest public road to the property
    i. Dimensions of entire private road access to property or proposed dwelling

4. The provided fire flow of the nearest fire hydrant shall meet the requirements of 2022 SCC 1711, Section B105.1.

5. A fire hydrant shall be located within 300 feet of all portions of a proposed structure, as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building. (2022 SCC 1711, Section 507.5.1)

a. Exception: For Group R-3 dwellings equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system, the distance requirement shall be not more than 600 feet.

6. Existing single outlet 2 ½" wharf fire hydrants shall be changed to an approved steamer fire hydrant when any of the following conditions occur:
   a. modification of an existing structure resulting in an increased fire flow
   b. change in occupancy type, use, or character of the building that results in an increased life safety or fire risk as determined by the fire code official
   c. construction of a new building (2022 SCC 1711, Section C104.2).

7. If the hydrant nearest to the property is a wharf hydrant, then the "Promise to Upgrade Hydrant" letter shall be signed by the property owner prior to release of the fire permit and the steamer hydrant upgrade shall be verified upon final inspection.

8. Fire Sprinkler Plans shall be submitted for all new homes, additions to existing sprinklered homes, and for ADU's if the main dwelling is also sprinklered or located in an unwatered area. A fire sprinkler system is also required for all manufactured, mobile, and module homes, but are reviewed by HCD if pre-installed by the manufacturer. Metro Fire only reviews fire sprinkler plans for existing non-sprinklered manufactured, mobile, and modular homes that are purchased and placed on a property that does not meet the minimum fire flow requirements and fire sprinkler system needs to be retrofitted.
   a. If fire sprinkler plans are not submitted prior to COR approval or fire sprinkler system is required to meet fire flow, then the customer shall sign a "Promise to install" letter prior the release of COR plans and fire permit (red card). (CFC 903.2.8)

9. Residential fire sprinkler plans will not be accepted before certificate of release plans are submitted and approved.

10. An automatic fire sprinkler system is not required for an ADU under 1,200 square feet and the existing main dwelling is non-sprinklered. (SB 1069)
    However, if the ADU is located in an unwatered area or does not meet the minimum fire flow of 1,000 GPM @ 20 PSI for 1 hour, then a fire sprinkler system is an acceptable alternative.

11. Fire sprinkler system water supply in unwatered areas shall be provided by one of the following:
    a. Private well capable of providing the required fire sprinkler demand
    b. "Home hydrant"

12. Hose reach from the edge of the public road shall not exceed 150 feet to all exterior portions of the building. This dimension shall be shown along an approved route suitable for firefighter access (not over walls, fences, planters, signs, etc.).
    a. An extension of 50 feet on either side (100 feet total) can be approved by the original reviewer if fire sprinklers are installed or there are no more than 2 structures (including U structures) on the property (CFC 503.1.1).
    b. Additional extension might be granted by a supervisor on a case by case basis.

13. If the 150 feet hose reach requirement cannot be met even with the extension, then a fire apparatus access road shall be required. (CFC 503.2.8)

14. Fire apparatus access roads shall be minimum 20 feet wide with an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches (CFC 503.2.1). Exception: Fire apparatus access roads serving one or two single family dwellings may be reduced to 16 feet in width (FPS #3).

15. Fire access roads less than 28' wide shall be marked "No Parking Fire Lane" on both sides, either by signs posted adjacent to the fire lane every 50 feet or curbs painted red with 3-inch white letters every 25 feet. (CFC 503.3 and “Fire Access Lane Handout”).

16. Fire apparatus access roads that exceed 150 feet in length and dead-end shall be provided with an approved fire equipment turnaround. Details on the turnaround are provided in FPS #3. (CFC 503.2.5 and FPS #3)

17. All turns in the fire apparatus access roads shall have a minimum 25 feet inside and 50 feet outside turning radius. (CFC 503.2.4 and FPS #3)

18. Fire apparatus access roads shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be surfaced so as to provide all-weather driving capabilities. (CFC 503.2.3)
    a. Fire apparatus access roads shall be paved for properties zoned as “RD”. Exception: For parcels zoned as AG and AR, the fire apparatus access road can be constructed with a compacted dust free gravel substrate.

19. For new private fire access roads and turnarounds, a letter or report from a licensed civil or geotechnical engineer certifying that the fire apparatus access road and turnaround will be built to hold a minimum 80,000 lbs. shall be provided prior to release of the fire permit for the project. Verification of constructed roadway shall be provided by a registered geotechnical engineer prior to final of the project. (FPS #3)

20. For existing private fire access roads, documentation shall be provided for the approved civil plans by Metro Fire for the fire access road dimensions and materials and/or a geotechnical engineer report verifying the 80,000 lb. weight capacity of the road.

21. For shared private roads, the owner shall provide Fire Access Road Maintenance Agreement between parcels served by the access roadway. The Fire Access Road Maintenance Agreement shall be recorded with the Public Recorders Office having jurisdiction.

22. For private road access through multiple parcels, the owner shall provide a Fire Access Easement Agreement between all parcels served by the road. The Fire Access Easement Agreement shall be recorded with the Public Recorders Office having jurisdiction.

23. For Unwatered areas, the following are approved alternatives that do not require an AMMR submittal:

    a. New ADUs where fire sprinkler installation is not required based on the primary dwelling not being protected with fire sprinkler system, shall have an NFPA 13D residential fire sprinkler system installed with the standard minimum sprinkler density of 0.05 GPM/sqft.
    b. New primary dwellings under 6,200 covered sqft that would normally require a fire flow of 1,000 GPM shall have and NFPA 13D residential fire sprinkler system installed with an increased sprinkler density of 0.10 GPM/sqft.
    c. New primary dwellings over 6,200 covered sqft that would normally require a fire flow of greater than 1,000 GPM shall have an NFPA 13D residential fire sprinkler system installed with an increased sprinkler density of 0.10 GPM/sqft and sprinkler coverage in normally omitted areas (bathrooms, closets/pantries).

Defensible Space Note:

It is highly recommended that fire-resistant landscaping, clearance of combustible materials and fuel management be provided within a 100-ft perimeter of the residential structure to establish a defensible space and reduce potential vegetation fire risk. Additional information regarding defensible space and fire resistant landscaping materials may be found here:

https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/defensible-space/
https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/fire-smart-landscaping/