



Santa Barbara County Flood Control & Water Conservation District

**ATTACHED AND DETACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN
THE SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST**

Project Name: _____ **Date:** _____

County Case Number (s): _____

APN (s): _____ **Year Built (N/A if proposed):** _____

Project Description:

GENERAL NOTES TO CONSIDER

1. For projects within the FEMA Preliminary Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), also known as the FEMA Preliminary Floodplain, the District requires that the applicant’s team of professionals determine the FEMA Preliminary Base Flood Elevation (BFE) for design considerations. If requested the District can provide a range of values for the BFE. The District will review and approve the final BFE value once a formal submittal has been made
2. If development is outside of The FEMA Preliminary Floodplain, or if the FEMA Preliminary and Regulatory Floodplain overlap and it is not clear which water surface elevation governs, you may reach out to the Flood Control Development Review Department for guidance. A licensed architect, engineer or surveyor may determine the BFE. Please note that the more conservative value of the FEMA Preliminary or Regulatory BFE will govern for development.
3. If development is proposed within the FEMA Preliminary or Regulatory Floodway, then the District will require a no-rise certificate and hydraulic analysis to be submitted, signed, and stamped by a licensed Civil Engineer.
4. Per SBCC Ordinance 15A, the finished floors of all habitable floors must be elevated **to or above** the FEMA Preliminary or Regulatory BFE+2 FT (whichever governs). Any level and/or room that includes a restroom will also need to satisfy this finished floor requirement.

Revised 01/2026 | While every effort has been made to ensure that this list is complete and reliable, the County of Santa Barbara does not assume liability for any damages caused by any errors or omissions in the list, nor as a result of improper use of this list.

5. Per SBCC Ordinance 15A, all equipment and utilities must be elevated to or above the FEMA Preliminary or Regulatory BFE+2 FT (whichever governs), or may be specially designed to prevent water from accumulating within components during conditions of flooding. HVAC units for non-new or non-substantially improved construction may be placed in watertight enclosures. See FEMA publication P-348.
6. If a residential addition is proposed or if an attached non-habitable portion (i.e. attached garage) of an existing residential structure is to be converted to habitable space (i.e. JADU), the project may be subject to the substantial improvement determination process. Should the costs of the proposed conversion/improvements and costs incurred, over the last 10 years, equal or exceed 50% of the depreciated market value of the existing structure, then the entire structure must be brought into compliance with the requirements of the NFIP as listed in this checklist. This may include, but is not limited to, raising the finished floor, using flood damage resistant materials, elevating all equipment/machinery, etc.
7. If a detached non-habitable structure is to be converted to a habitable structure, the structure will be subject to compliance with the requirements of the NFIP as listed in this checklist.
8. Per SBCC Ordinance 15B, if proposed development is near a FEMA regulated creek (shown on FIRM maps in link below) then there exists a 50FT setback (or 200 FT setback for major rivers) from Top of Bank in which no development may occur (with minor exceptions).

All related forms can be found on the Flood Control Development Review Website under the “Development Forms” section: <https://www.countyofsb.org/2194/Development-Review-Floodplain-Management>

CHECKLIST REQUIRED TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO SUBMITTING PLANS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS. PLANS WILL NEED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Ministerial or Plan Check fees must be provided at time of submittal. Please check with the District to determine fee amounts.
- Ministerial Review fees must be accompanied by a ministerial review form, and Plan Check Deposits must be accompanied by an Agreement for Payment of Plan Check Fees form, at the time of fee submittal.
- For all new construction within 100 feet from a watercourse, schedule a site visit to confirm the top of bank and 50 foot top of bank setback. Approval of the proposed work may differ depending on the findings from said site visit. Schedule a site visit by emailing fccontact@countyofsb.org or calling 805-568-3440.
- For **residential additions and conversions** of attached non-habitable enclosures, **submit only** (Do not complete the remainder of the checklist until instructed to do so):
 - A completed cost breakdown worksheet that reflects proposed work
 - A uniform residential appraisal report that represents the estimated depreciated market value of the structure receiving improvements. Appraisal report must estimate the value of the structure *before any work to be validated with this permit was constructed*.

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- Plans must include a table with calculations showing square inches (in²) of coverage per vent, total square footage (ft²) of enclosed area, and total number of vents required.
- Plans must include foundation plans with vent locations. In the event that stem walls or other foundation structures enclose any area within the crawlspace, each enclosed area must have the appropriate vent placement and number of vents. However, the interior vents do not count towards the total gross enclosed space calculations.
- Plans must include vent dimensions and details.
- The bottom of openings shall be no higher than 12 inches above grade (interior or exterior).
- Mesh screening may be no smaller than 1/8".
- Use of louvers or mesh screening will reduce net effective open area by as much as 30%, and this must be accounted for in the net effective open area calculations.
- Louvers on non-engineered vents must be disabled in the open position. Add the following note to the vent detail: "Disable louvers in the open position".
- See FEMA publication TB-1 for further details.
- Plans must include flood resistant materials for areas of the structure below the FEMA Preliminary or Regulatory BFE+2ft (whichever governs). See FEMA publication TB-2 for list of approved materials (i.e. pressure treated wood, marine grade plywood, etc.). These materials must be called-out on the plans.
- Non-habitable enclosures (sheds, storage, garages) may have a finished floor elevation below BFE + 2 FT, but
 - Must have a minimum of two flood opening vents that are sized according to Ordinance 15A,
 - Must be used solely for parking of vehicles, access to residence, and for limited storage,
 - Applicant must submit a Non Conversion Agreement signed by the owner that confirms that the structure will not be converted to a habitable structure prior to demonstrating compliance with Ordinance 15A.
- Below-grade crawlspaces and basements are not allowed in the FEMA Preliminary or Regulatory Floodplain. Interior crawlspace must be at same elevation as exterior or higher. The following are required for crawlspaces:
 - The foundation wall height must be less than 4 feet from the bottom of the floor joist/truss to the top of the footing or interior grade/floor (whichever is higher).
 - The distance from the crawlspace floor to the top of the next higher floor must be less than or equal to 5 feet. This dimension must be noted on the plans.
 - Flood openings are required in the foundation walls surrounding enclosed crawlspaces.
- Plans must include the following Flood Control notes:

FLOOD CONTROL NOTES:

1. [If applicable] The FEMA Preliminary BFE is _____ and is shown on sheet _____.
 2. [If applicable] The FEMA Regulatory BFE is _____ and is shown on sheet _____.
 3. The Design Flood Elevation (DFE=BFE+2ft) is _____ and the Finished Floor Elevation (FFE) of the habitable space is _____ as shown on sheet _____.
 4. The **FEMA Preliminary BFE, Regulatory BFE**, and Finished Floor elevations are shown on elevation and plan views on sheet(s) _____.
 5. All utilities, including electrical/mechanical equipment must be elevated to or above the FEMA **Preliminary or Regulatory BFE+2ft** including electric panels, utilities, pumps, etc. per details on Sheet _____.
 6. Flood resistant materials are required below the FEMA **Preliminary or Regulatory BFE+2ft** per SBCC 15A per FEMA publication TB-2 and as shown in detail on Sheet _____.
 7. Backflow prevention devices shall be installed on all new plumbing (including drain openings below the DFE) per detail on Sheet _____.
 8. Flood vents are required for all enclosed areas below the FEMA **Preliminary or Regulatory BFE+2ft** and are to be sized according to SBCC 15A standards of one square inch of opening per one square foot of gross enclosed space subject to flooding. The bottom of openings shall be no higher than 12 inches above highest adjacent grade. Screens covering flood opening vents shall be a minimum of 1/8". Vent dimensions and screening material are shown on Sheet _____. See FEMA publication TB-1.
 9. Calculations showing square inches of coverage per vent and total number of vents required are shown on Sheet _____. Photos of ALL vents no more than 12 inches above grade will be required prior to occupancy clearance.
 10. A preliminary FEMA Elevation Certificate is required prior to the placement of the slab or finished floor. An approved final FEMA Elevation Certificate is required prior to occupancy clearance for all new or substantially improved structures.
 11. ***Use the following note for crawlspaces:*** Below-grade crawlspaces are not allowed in the FEMA Regulatory Floodplain or in the FEMA Preliminary Floodplain. The following requirements are shown on the crawlspace detail on Sheet _____.
 - A. Maximum 4 feet foundation wall height as measured from the bottom of the crawlspace floor joist/truss to the top of the footing or interior crawlspace grade/floor (whichever is higher).
 - B. Maximum 5 feet distance between the crawlspace grade/floor to the top of the next higher finished floor.
 - C. Flood opening vents are required as shown on the foundation walls surrounding enclosed crawlspaces.
- For all new structures, prior to vertical construction (wall construction), the applicant shall submit a FEMA Elevation Certificate to the District using the effective BFE (even if the Preliminary BFE governs)

NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) SUBMITTING PLANS:

DATE: _____ CONTACT NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE RECEIVED: _____