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# R101.2, R202

## Scope—Accessory Structures

**CHANGE TYPE:** Modification

**CHANGE SUMMARY:** The maximum height for accessory structures has been increased from two to three stories above grade plane. Technical requirements have been removed from the definition, and accessory structures are now permitted to be unlimited in area.

**2015 CODE: R101.2 Scope.** The provisions of the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-family Dwellings* shall apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, removal and demolition of detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories above grade plane in height with a separate means of egress and their accessory structures not more than three stories above grade plane in height.

### SECTION R202 DEFINITIONS

**ACCESSORY STRUCTURE.** A structure ~~not greater than 3,000 square feet (279 m<sup>2</sup>) in floor area, and not more than two stories in height, the use of which that is customarily accessory to and incidental to that of dwelling(s) and which that is located on the same lot.~~

**CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE:** In previous editions of the IRC, the definition in Section R202 placed limitations of 3,000 square feet in area and two stories on accessory structures. The 3,000-square-foot limitation was introduced in the 2006 IRC based on a concern of the potential fire load



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Accessory building

in residential accessory buildings. The area limitation has been removed from the 2015 IRC based on the residential setting of these buildings, the need for larger accessory buildings in rural areas, and the fact that dwellings and townhomes constructed under the IRC are unlimited in area. The change also recognizes that zoning regulations typically set limits for area and height of accessory buildings based on the density of housing and other factors unique to the individual jurisdiction. It was judged more appropriate to allow jurisdictions to decide what limits are placed on accessory buildings. For example, in rural areas with large lots and acreages, very large accessory buildings are routinely constructed for vehicle and farm equipment storage and to house hobby shops and workshops. In addition, definitions are not intended to contain technical requirements such as area and height limitations, which should be addressed in the applicable sections in the body of the code. The definition maintains the key elements for permitting accessory buildings to be constructed under the IRC—that they must be accessory to and incidental to that of the dwelling and located on the same lot as the dwelling.

The height limitation for accessory buildings has also been removed from the definition and placed in the scoping provisions of the IRC. The maximum height has increased to three stories above grade plane for consistency with the height limitations for dwellings and townhomes.