



### **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)**

Minnesota State Plumbing Code section 311.1 states “Every building shall have its own independent water and sewer connection”.

Exceptions to this requirement would be if the ADU property is unable to connect to city sanitary and water due to the site conditions. Examples of these conditions could include:

- Land locked
- Inability to trench to the city sanitary
- Terrain

Connection of the detached ADU sanitary to a sanitary system in a primary structure will not be allowed if the sanitary and water systems in the primary structure are not code compliant. A licensed plumbing contractor will be required to provide a report on the existing sanitary and water system.

A request for a building sewer from an accessory structure to connect to an existing primary structure’s building drain may only be submitted with the following conditions:

- Zoning Approval: Review the floor plan of the structure and sign off on the permit.
  - **First**, the city of Saint Paul Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) Zoning needs to determine if the proposed project can be approved and what the building will be used for.
- Building Code Compliance: Review the floor plan of the structure and sign off on the permit.
  - **Second**, the DSI Building Plan Examiners need to determine if the use requires alterations to the garage and if so, that it will be done to code. Will the garage be heated? Does it require frost footings? What is the plumbing building drain and building sewer for? Etc.
- DSI requests all efforts to install a separate building sewer to the street or main sewer have been exhausted. If so, to connect to the existing structure’s building drain, submittal of an “Alternate Method of Equivalency” form is required. Complete and submit for approval to the DSI Plumbing Section and include an explanation as to why utilities cannot be installed to the Public-Right-Of-Way.
  - **Third**, after the structures use is determined to be approved by Zoning and Building sign-off, DSI Plumbing can determine what sewer options could be entertained based on documentation provided with the Alternate Code Compliance Application. The building sewer must have its own separate connection to the sewer main in the street if a main sewer is available. If this cannot be accomplished, verification as to why must be provided.

All exceptions must be reviewed by the Building Official for approval prior to commencement of work.

In order to approve plumbing permits where there is a detached separate structure (ADU), with water and sewer connections unable to be connected to the public mains, the following is required:

- Plumbing Permit
- Completed Alternate Code Compliance Request Form
- Plumbing Plans
- Report by a licensed Plumbing contractor to adequacy of the existing sanitary and water supply system
- Plumbing Plan Review

Sewer Utilities and Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) have both indicated that DSI will receive the permits for these type of connections to the existing structure/house.

Independent utility connections “to the street” for water still go through SPRWS, and separate connections “to the street” for sewer still go through Sewer Utilities as has always been the case, BUT detached ADU’s and or any building, house, structure, etc., where the connections are to the existing structure/house will go through the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI). This work shall be completed by a Plumbing competency card holder or a licensed House Drain Contractor with the City of Saint Paul. All inside plumbing work shall be completed by a Plumbing competency card holder with the City of Saint Paul.

As a result of an alternate requiring approval by this AHJ, a plumbing plan review is performed to verify the need and the ability for the utilities to connect to the existing structure/house.

If an Alternate Code Compliance is submitted, it must be submitted by the Master Plumber of the shop that will be performing the work or a Minnesota licensed Engineer and include:

1. Alternate Code Compliance Request form.
2. All DSI Plumbing Permits and fees.
3. Plans
  - a. Documentation from Sewer Utilities on the availability of any/all existing public sewer mains.
  - b. A site plan that shows the existing buildings indicating measurements of the two structures in relation to the property line.
  - c. Elevations of the proposed garage building sewer and building drain connections in relation to both buildings.
  - d. Elevations of the proposed garage building sewer and the garage building water supply piping. Show insulating plans if minimum burial depths cannot be achieved.
  - e. Plumbing plans of the new plumbing in the new structure.
  - f. All tie-in points and sizes for both water supply and building sewer.
  - g. And any other pertinent information DSI would need to determine if the alternate can be approved and why. If the owner chooses to pursue this alternate, it must first be determined if the building can be used for the purpose intended.

If the alternate is approved by the Senior Plumbing Inspector, the alternate must also be sent to the Building Official for approval per Steve Ubl, the plumbing code, and per the Alternate Code Compliance Request Form.

**Separate buildings require a separate sewer and water service.** Any deviation from this code requirement would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and with an Alternate Code Compliance Request form, DSI Plumbing Permit, and plans submitted for approval to the DSI Plumbing Section. Submission of this information is not an approval and a Building Permit and/or building plans submitted or approved is not approval of the plumbing.

For consideration of a separate building sewer and water service connection, the application would require a design that includes plans indicating distances from the property line and other structures, elevations, material specifications, any other plumbing related items, and the reason why a connection to the street is not possible. For an alternate, plans can be submitted by the state and city licensed Master Plumber of the shop performing the work, or a Minnesota State licensed Mechanical Engineer.

All alternates are required to provide this information so a comprehensive review can be performed. A licensed Plumbing contractor will be required to provide a report on the existing sanitary system and water supply system.



**SAINT PAUL**  
MINNESOTA

**Steve Fernlund**  
*Senior Plumbing Inspector*  
Department of Safety and Inspections  
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
P: [651-266-9052](tel:651-266-9052)  
[steve.fernlund@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:steve.fernlund@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
[www.StPaul.gov](http://www.StPaul.gov)