

Detached Minor Residential Units – DMRU

National Environmental Standards

Guidance on the National Environmental Standards for Detached Minor Residential Units (NES-DMRU)

New rules have recently come into effect to make it easier for people to build Detached Minor Residential Units, also known as granny flats, in some zones.

These changes aim to provide homeowners with greater flexibility and to support increased housing supply. The Planning requirements are set out in this Guide.

Definitions

DMRU means a minor residential unit that is completely detached from its principal residential unit.

Location

DMRU can be established in the following zones:

Residential Zone means:

- General Residential Zone
- Large Lot Residential Zone
- Medium Density Residential Zone.

Rural Zone means:

- General Rural Zone
- Rural Lifestyle Zone
- Settlement Zone.

Other Zones:

- Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga
- Mixed Use Zone.

Density

The following density rules apply for a detached minor residential unit providing a principal unit exists on the site.

Zone	Maximum DMRU per site
Residential, Rural, Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga, and Mixed Use Zone	1

Floor area

Zone	Maximum floor area
Residential Zones (excluding the Medium Density Residential Zone)	80m ²
Rural Zones (excluding Settlement Zone)	90m ²
Settlement Zone	80m ²
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Māori Land)	90m ² NOTE: District Plan rules apply for Papakāinga housing.
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Non-Māori Land)	90m ²
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Tuahiwi Precinct)	80m ²
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Large Lot Residential Precinct)	80m ²
Mixed Use Zone	70m ²

Advice notes

1. For the Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Māori Land), Medium Residential Zone and the Mixed Use Zone, the floor area is measured from the inside of the exterior walls.
2. For all other Zones, the floor area is measured to the outside of the exterior walls.
3. If the floor area is over 70m², the exemptions in the Building Act will no longer be met and you'll need a Building Consent. Please contact a Council Building Processor to find out more, at duty.processor@wmk.govt.nz or 0800 965 468.
4. For attached minor residential units, please refer to the relevant District Plan provisions.

Maximum building coverage

Building coverage means the percentage of the net site area covered by the building footprint.

Calculating building coverage involves dividing the total area of all building footprints on a site by the total site area, then multiplying by 100 to get a percentage.

NOTE: You need to include any land area that's covered by roof, including eaves, and exclude any access leg, right-of-way or designated areas.

How to apply the formula

$(\text{Total Building Footprint area} / \text{Total Site area}) \times 100 = \text{Building coverage (\%)}$

Example:

- Site area: 900m²
- Building Footprint: 190m² (principal unit) + 70m² (detached minor residential unit) = 260m²
- Calculation: $(260 / 900) \times 100 = 28.88\%$ Building coverage.

Zone	Maximum building coverage
Residential Zones	50%
Rural Zones	20%
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Māori Land)	1. For sites 1ha or less in area, there is no maximum building coverage standard, and 2. for sites greater than 1ha, the maximum building coverage is 35% of the site.
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Non-Māori Land) refer to Rural Lifestyle chapter	20%
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Tuahiwi Precinct) refer to Settlement Zone chapter	45%
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Large Lot Residential Precinct) refer to Large Lot Residential chapter	20%
Mixed Use Zone	Nil

Setbacks

The setbacks are measured from the nearest point of the building or structure.

Zone	Minor residential unit	Minimum setback
Residential zones, Rural Zones, Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga and Mixed Use Zone	from principal unit	2m

Zone	Boundary	Minimum setback
Residential zones	Road boundary	2m
	Internal boundary	2m
Rural zones	Road boundary	10m
	Internal boundary	5m
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Māori Land)	Road boundary	20m from the road boundary with any strategic road. 10m from the road boundary with any arterial road or collector road. 6m from the road boundary of any road where the existing road reserve width is less than 16m. 3m for specific properties on Topito Road, refer to the District Plan. 3m from the road boundary of all other roads.
	Internal boundary	- For sites 1ha or less in area, the minimum building setback shall be 3m and shall apply to the legal boundary containing a site where it adjoins another site which is not held in the same ownership or used for the same development. - For sites greater than 1ha, the minimum for buildings and structures shall be 10m and shall apply to the legal boundary containing a site where it adjoins another site which is not held in the same ownership or used for the same development.
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Non-Māori Land)	Road boundary	20m
	Internal boundary	20m
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Tuahiwi Precinct)	Road boundary	2m from the road boundary with any local road or collector road. 6m from any road boundary with any strategic or arterial road.
	Internal boundary	1m
Special Purpose Zone - Kāinga Nohoanga (Large Lot Residential Precinct)	Road boundary	10m
	Internal boundary	5m
Mixed Use Zone	Road boundary	10m from the road boundary with any arterial road or collector road. 10m from the road boundary where the road is separating the site from Residential Zones, Rural Zones or Open Space and Recreation Zones. 3m from the road boundary of all other roads, or - The distance specified in MUZ-APP1 of the Partially Operative District Plan.
	Internal boundaries adjoining any Residential Zones, Rural Zones, or Open Space and Recreation Zones	3m

Other District Plan provisions that also apply

1. A DMRU must comply with the rules and standards in the District Plan that deal with:
 - i. Subdivision
 - ii. Matters relating to Section 6 – Matters of National Importance, which includes:
 - a) Natural character of the coastal environment.
 - b) Outstanding natural features and landscapes.
 - c) Significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.
 - d) Public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers.
 - e) Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, Wāhi Tapu, and other taonga.
 - f) Historic heritage.
 - g) Customary rights.
 - h) Significant risks from natural hazards.
2. A DMRU must comply with the rules and standards in the District Plan that:
 - a) Apply to the DMRU's principal residential unit, and
 - b) Manage effects relating to health and safety, including those relating to:
 - i. Any natural hazard risk not already taken into account under subclause (1)(ii)(h) (for example, minimal floor level requirements to manage flooding effects).
 - ii. Reverse sensitivity.
 - iii. Site-specific infrastructure requirements (for example, infrastructure requirements associated with fire-fighting water supply, drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater).

Other matters for your consideration

Consents/rules/regulations that you should also be aware of:

Regulations

- District Plan
- Resource Management Act 1991
- Building Act 2004 (includes the Building Code).

Consents

- Land Use Consent
- Building Consent
- Discharge Consent (Environment Canterbury)
- Conditions on a Resource Consent
- Consent notices registered on the Record of Title.

Rates

Council rates will be subject to change once your minor residential unit is approved/established on a site. You can contact the rates department on 0800 965 468 or email rates@wmk.govt.nz

Development contributions

For information about the charges, calculations and for any general enquiries regarding development contributions for a minor residential unit, contact Council at subdivapp@wmk.govt.nz

Information about the Development Contributions Policy can be found at: waimakariri.govt.nz/consents-and-licences/resource-consents-and-planning/development-contributions

Want more information

For more information, please refer to Ministry for the Environment website: environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/legislation/nes-dmru/

You can also contact our planning staff for more information at duty.planner@wmk.govt.nz or phone 0800 965 468.

Disclaimer

This fact sheet is intended as a guide only and does not replace the requirements under the National Environmental Standard or the Partially Operative District Plan.