



Tiny Homes

Bulletin 65

Division of Building, Safety, and Inspection for 2018 International Codes

Before you get started: *Some HOA's (Homeowner's Association) or other community based governing collectives do not allow Tiny Homes. Pierce County's code does not over-ride these restrictions so please verify prior to applying for a building permit.*

What is it?

A "tiny home" is a small residence less than 400 square feet, not including sleeping loft area, placed on a permanent foundation and intended for use as a residence. They must contain a living area, kitchen, and bathroom.

Tiny Home on Wheels?

- No building permit is required.
- Permits *are* required from other divisions, (planning, health, etc.) These are reviewed the same as a Recreational Vehicle (RV).

Types

- Site Built:
 - Comply with the current International Residential Code (IRC).
 - Meet minimum requirements for WA State Energy Code (WSEC).
 - Have approved water supply and sewage disposal. Composting or incinerator toilets and rainwater catchment for potable water is not allowed.
 - Meet all setback, driveway, and lot coverage requirements.
 - Permitted through the same process as a larger single-family residence.
- Factory Built:
 - Comply with WA State Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards.
 - Built through WA State Labor and Industries (L&I) *Factory Assembly Structures* program with a label/placard on the structure identifying the use.
 - Permitted the same as a manufactured home.

Minimum Dimensions for Construction

- General:
 - At least one room must have a floor area of 70 square feet.
 - All other habitable rooms must have a floor area at least 7 feet (measured horizontally) in any direction, *except* kitchens and sleeping lofts.
 - Must meet all requirements for bathroom fixture and appliance clearances.
- Ceilings:
 - Ceilings must be at least 6 feet 8 inches in height.
 - Bath/toilet/laundry rooms can be 6 feet 4 inches in height.
 - Sleeping loft ceilings may be less than 6 feet 4 inches.

- Sleeping Lofts:
 - Must have an area of 35 square feet.
 - ✓ *Portions of the loft with a sloped ceiling less than 3 feet from finished floor to finished ceiling will not be considered as part of the minimum 35 square feet **unless** the roof slope is 6/12. If this is the case the maximum ceiling height to count toward loft square footage is 16 inches.*
 - Must be at least 5 feet measured horizontally in any direction.
- Loft stairways:
 - Must have head room of 6 feet 2 inches until the stairway reaches the sleeping loft landing.
 - Minimum of 17 inches in width at or above handrail and 20 inches below handrail.
 - Risers must be between 7 inches and 12 inches in height, calculated using one of the following:
 - ✓ The tread depth shall be 20 inches minus four-thirds of the riser height.
 - ✓ The riser height shall be 15 inches minus three-fourths of the tread depth.
- Loft ladder:
 - Rung width not less than 12 inches with 10-12 inches between rungs spaced evenly with no more than 3/8 inch off center.
 - Must be able to support 200 lbs. load on any rung.
 - Installed 70-80 degrees from horizontal.
 - Alternating tread is allowed, with not less than 20 inches between the handrail and steps.
- Railings/guards:
 - Guards or railings are required for all walking surface greater than 30 inches, including sleeping lofts.
 - Loft guards must be 36 inches in height OR half of the clear height to the ceiling, whichever is less.
- Egress:
 - The egress door shall be side-hinged, have an opening width of 32 inches, with the door open 90 degrees. The minimum clear height of the door opening shall not be less than 6 foot, 6 inches in height.
- Egress Windows:
 - Sleeping rooms and sleeping lofts must have an egress window with an openable area of 5.7 square. Opening must be at least 24" high and 20" wide.
 - Windowsill may not be more than 44 inches above the floor, including loft floor.
 - Skylights may be used as sleeping loft egress provided, they meet the above requirements.

HABITABLE SPACE. A space in a building for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces, and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.

