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.