



Department of Land Use & Transportation
Planning and Development Services

Tiny Houses Frequently Asked Questions

“Tiny houses” (or tiny homes) are increasingly popular with residents in unincorporated Washington County. These homes can provide affordable housing opportunities compared to other dwelling types. However, construction of all dwellings must meet County requirements.



What is a “Dwelling Unit”?

Washington County Community Development Code (CDC) defines a “Dwelling Unit” as ‘A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons which generally includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.’

What classifies a dwelling as a tiny house?

The 2018 Oregon Reach Code, Part II, defines a tiny house as a dwelling that is 400 square feet or less in floor area, excluding lofts. The CDC does not address dwelling size.

Can I add a tiny house to my property?

A tiny house built on a foundation is classified as an R-3 occupancy (a one-family dwelling unit, as intended for permanent living) in the Oregon Reach Code and is generally allowed in unincorporated Washington County wherever a dwelling is permitted as either a primary dwelling or an accessory dwelling.

What if my tiny house is on wheels?

A tiny house on wheels is classified as an R-5 occupancy (intended for temporary or emergency use or as allowed by the building official) in the Oregon Reach Code and is prohibited in urban unincorporated Washington County for use as a dwelling unit.

I live in the rural area, can I use a tiny house on wheels as a dwelling?

A tiny house on wheels *may* be permitted as a temporary health hardship dwelling in the rural area under qualifying conditions. If permitted through the health hardship application process, the use includes one temporary living accommodation, for a period not to exceed two years.

Can I remove the wheels on my tiny home and attach it to a foundation?

The CDC does not allow a tiny house with an occupancy rating of Group R-5 structure to be converted to an occupancy Group R-3 structure for use as a dwelling.

I have more questions about tiny houses in Washington County, who do I contact?

For more information about tiny houses, contact the Current Planning section at 503-846-8761 or lutdev@co.washington.or.us. To learn more about the development process in Washington County, visit www.co.washington.or.us/development.

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