



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 International Residential Code (IRC), Appendix Q, 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 IRC, Appendix Q, and is generally allowed in unincorporated Washington County wherever a dwelling is permitted as either a primary dwelling or an accessory dwelling must be approved through an Alternate Materials & Methods (AMM) form.

### What if my tiny house is on wheels?

A tiny house on wheels is classified as a Recreational Vehicle (RV)\* per the 2017 Oregon Recreational Vehicle Code (intended for temporary or emergency use or as allowed by the building official) and is prohibited in urban unincorporated Washington County for use as a dwelling unit.

*\*RVs must be registered with the State of Oregon and have an insignia.*

### 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?

RVs CANNOT be used to qualify as a dwelling. 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](mailto:lutdev@co.washington.or.us). To learn more about the development process in Washington County, visit [www.co.washington.or.us/development](http://www.co.washington.or.us/development).

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