Tiny Homes
Bulletin #65
For 2018 International Codes

Before you get started
Some homeowner’s associations (HOA) or other community-based governing collectives do not allow tiny homes. Pierce County’s code does not override 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. It 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.) and 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.
No more than 400 square feet total, excluding 'sleeping lofts'.