



200 square foot Exemption

Bulletin 70

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

This bulletin is designed to clarify exemption #1 of the International Residential Code (IRC) and Pierce County Code Title 17C:

"One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet (18.58 m²)".

Criteria:

1. Must be built to meet current building code. This means the structure must have *four walls*. Permanent, site-built porch covers, carports, and other post-only support systems do not meet code and are *not* exempt.
2. No more than 8 feet wall height from grade to wall/roof connection, with a 12-foot maximum height (12/12 roof pitch maximum).
3. Interior storage loft areas are allowed with ladder access only.
4. 24-inch eaves/overhang maximum, measured as length, not parallel to the ground.
5. Adjacent decks less than 30 inches tall are allowed. See Bulletin 3 for exempt decks.
6. All structures under this exemption must be a minimum of 5' from property lines. If closer, then fire-resistant construction is required per IRC Table R302.1(1).
7. Exempt accessory structures are not required to be fire protected and can be next to homes without a setback requirement (IRC, Table R302.1 (1), Exception 2).

*This exemption ***does not apply*** to habitable space, tiny homes, heated space, additions or remodels to existing structures, or any other non-exempt structures or construction.

**Permitting from other departments addressing setbacks (property line, septic etc), critical areas (wetland, shoreline, landslide etc.) may be required.

It is the homeowner's responsibility to verify the location of the exempt structure is allowed by all regulatory departments.

The following are also exempt:

Gazebos:

1. Pre-fabricated; not stick built, altered from or intended to be another structure.
2. Less than 200 sq feet of floor area.
3. Overhangs of 24 inches or less.
4. Placed directly on the ground or slab, not on an existing structure or deck.
5. Installed per manufacturer's specifications.



Pre-fabricated deck or patio covers provided they meet the following:

1. 200 sq feet of floor area or less.
2. Must be pre-fabricated, not built.
3. Free standing and self-supporting; not attached to any other structure.
4. May not be permanent in nature. No permanent footings.
5. Can have metal, membrane, plastic or other material as a roof; no glass.
6. May be placed on existing decks. It is the homeowner's responsibility to verify structural integrity of the existing deck prior to placement.
7. Installed per manufacturer's specifications.



Arbor: A garden feature intended to act as an arch way to train trees or climbing plants to create a natural, walled "tunnel".

Trellis: A single panel, garden feature intended to train plants or create decorative "walls" in a yard.



Pergola: An outdoor garden feature consisting of vertical posts or pillars, support cross beams and an open, lattice roof.



Must meet ALL of the following:

1. Residential properties and use only.
2. Free standing and self-supporting. They may not be attached to any other structure.
3. Less than 200 sq feet of floor area.
4. Installed per manufacturer's specifications.

Well and Pump Houses:

1. Potable water supply must be permitted and inspected using current Uniform Plumbing Code.



Corrugated plastic roofs supported by metal or wooden framing, intended to cover farm animals, gardens, tools, or other similar uses that also met the criteria above are also exempt.

