

EFFICIENCY (TINY) HOUSING

Efficiency housing units, also known as “tiny houses”, are subject to a variety of rules and regulations, much like any other dwelling. There are several ways to construct and permit these types of dwellings. This handout will address some of the complexities that may arise.

MOTOR VEHICLES (DMV REGISTERED)

One way to construct and use a tiny house is as an ANSI-RVIA vehicle (RV) that is registered as a motor vehicle with the DMV. This requires that the unit is licensed and self-contained. The unit must also remain on the wheels and obtain its support from the wheels and chassis jacks. Blocks and tie-downs are not allowed under a motor vehicle. Any electrical, water or sewer hook-ups must meet the requirements of the currently adopted codes and the regulations set forth by the authorities having jurisdiction over these matters, such as, but not limited to, the local utility department, the health department, or the State of Colorado. A building permit is not required through PPRBD for a motor vehicle. Permits may be required for electrical, gas and plumbing connections. Permanent utility connections will not be allowed.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING (HUD OR IRC)

Another way to construct a tiny house is to follow the State Division of Housing’s guidelines for manufactured housing. A manufactured house is constructed to either the HUD or IRC standards and the construction is regulated by the State of Colorado. Contact the State Division of Housing for further information on how to get the home established as a manufactured house.

A manufactured house is allowed to be put on a block and tie-down foundation (temp set), or a permanent, frost protected foundation. If a block and tie-down foundation is used, the State Division of Housing’s installation manual must be used to install the home. If the home is being purchased as a manufactured home from a dealer, the installation instructions can also be used for installation. If a permanent foundation is being used, the foundation will need to be designed by a Colorado licensed design professional. Please see the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department’s handout for Residential Manufactured Buildings. Building permits are required through PPRBD for these types of structures.

SITE SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION

A tiny house that is constructed on site as a permanent dwelling, will be subject to the requirements of the current adopted codes of the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department. All dwelling units are required to have living facilities that provide permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation (to include a washer hookup). All plumbing fixtures must be supplied with a potable water source. Incinerating toilets are not allowed. Grey water systems, other than approved public or private (septic) systems, are very limited in use. Depending on the method of construction, engineering may be required for the structure. Please see PPRBD’s handout for Residential Construction. Building permits are required through PPRBD for these structures.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The zoning, sanitation, electric, and water authorities, among others, that have jurisdiction over the parcel of land being used all need to be contacted regarding the specific type of building being proposed. There may be differences in the applicable regulations regarding each different type of building. For example, a motor vehicle may have a time limit on how long it can be parked and lived in. It is the responsibility of the applicant to be thorough in the presentation of the type of building being proposed, the duration of stay, and the intent of use. Any misrepresentation regarding the structure could result in inaccurate information being obtained.