



TINY HOMES Frequently Asked Questions

A Dwelling Unit is allowed in all zone districts within the County. However, **not all “Tiny Homes” are considered a Dwelling Unit.** In order to be considered a Dwelling Unit the following two requirements must be met:

1. A Dwelling Unit in Garfield County must be at least 20 feet wide by 20 feet long, regardless of overall square footage.
2. A Dwelling Unit must meet the International Residential building code (“IRC”)

The IRC stipulates that Dwelling Units are constructed using certain standards, some of those that are relevant to tiny homes include:

- A Dwelling Unit must have a foundation. As such, the unit cannot be on wheels which precludes Park Models and other typical Recreational Vehicles as allowable Dwelling Units. Units on a chassis may be allowable if they meet the foundation-related provision of the IRC.
- A Dwelling Unit must have a kitchen with a sink.
- A Dwelling Unit must have a toilet, lavatory, and a bathtub/shower and must have running hot and cold water.
- A Dwelling Unit must be hooked up to a sanitary sewer or approved On-Site Wastewater Disposal System (OWTS). The OWTS does allow for alternative types of sanitary sewer including composting toilets.
- The bathroom in a Dwelling Unit needs to be a separate room of roughly 5 feet by 5 feet with a door.
- A Dwelling Unit must have one habitable room of 70 square feet (kitchen may be a part of this room) with a minimum dimension of 7 feet in any horizontal dimension.
- A Dwelling Unit must have a minimum ceiling height of 7 feet.
- A Dwelling Unit must have a smoke and carbon monoxide alarm.
- Any stairs to a second floor sleeping loft must be Code compliant (not just a ladder).
- A Dwelling Unit must be a heated structure.
- A Dwelling Unit must meet all engineering requirements for Garfield County including snow load and wind load requirements.

It is worth noting that the International Code Council is currently considering incorporating an appendix addressing tiny homes as part of the forthcoming 2018 IRC. The draft of the IRC code defines Tiny Homes as a dwelling less than 400 square feet and addresses issues such as anchoring, minimum ceiling heights, habitable room dimensions, lofts, ladders and emergency escape and rescue openings. Staff anticipates reviewing this appendix when it is adopted and making a recommendation to the Board regarding adoption of this appendix and a potential modification to the required 20 foot long by 20 foot wide dimensional requirements found in the County's Land Use and Development Code.