



Tiny Homes/Tiny Houses in Larimer County

[HB22-1242](#) (“Regulate Tiny Homes Manufacture, Sale And Installation”) was signed into law by Governor Polis on May 17, 2022. The state Division of Housing adopted new **administrative rules** effective July 1, 2023. For more information, visit the [Colorado Building Codes and Standards Section](#).

Larimer County has jurisdiction only for unincorporated areas outside city and town limits. To place a tiny house or tiny home in an incorporated city or town, confer with that municipality’s planning and building departments.

What’s the difference between a “Tiny House” and a “Tiny Home”?

To be considered a dwelling unit, a Tiny House must either be built on-site with a permit issued by the local government, following the International Residential Code (IRC) including Appendix Q (where adopted) and placed on a permanent foundation, or a unit prefabricated off-site to either modular or manufactured standards under the jurisdiction of the state Division of Housing. Otherwise, a Tiny House is classified as a Recreational Vehicle (RV).

Under state law, a Tiny Home is defined as a structure permanently constructed on a vehicle chassis, not self-propelled, designed for long-term residency, containing electrical, mechanical, or plumbing services, manufactured off-site, which does not exceed 400 sq. ft. in floor area, excluding lofts. A Tiny Home is not a manufactured (HUD code) home, modular home, Recreational Vehicle (RV), Recreational Park Trailer/Park Model RV, semitrailer, or intermodal shipping container.

RVs are regulated by the county Land Use Code (LUC), not the building code. There are restrictions on where and when people can occupy and store RVs, which are not considered permanent homes and cannot legally be occupied year-round. See [Land Use Code](#) 3.5.3 F for more details. Check with Larimer County Clerk & Recorder [Vehicle Licensing](#) for registration and licensing requirements.

In contrast, a **Tiny Home/House built on a permanent foundation is treated like any other dwelling unit** under the LUC, which has no minimum size requirements for either primary or accessory dwellings. Any zoning district that allows residences also allows Tiny Homes/Houses on foundations. Gaining approval for a **Tiny Home/House as an accessory dwelling** follows the same procedures as any other proposed accessory living area. Please contact an On-call Planner for more information by emailing planning@larimer.org, calling (970) 498-7679 or using our [online appointment form](#).

A Tiny Home/House on a foundation can obtain a building permit and certificate of occupancy in one of two ways:

- Be prefabricated off-site by a Colorado-approved fabricator and installed by an approved installer, with a state tag on it and a county permit for on-site work including footings/foundation/setback, utility connections, stairs, and decks.
- Be designed to meet site-specific snow, wind, floodplain, wildfire hazard and other requirements, be constructed on-site with each stage of construction (footings, framing, etc.) inspected and approved by a county building inspector.

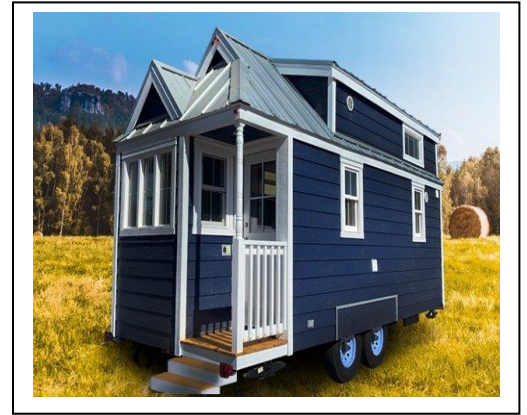
Tiny Homes built before the state adopted rules are considered “as-built” structures that must follow existing county [code compliance procedures](#). They must either be certified/labelled to the Park Model RV standard (ANSI A119.5) or verified as meeting IRC/Appendix AQ rules, evaluated by a licensed Colorado Professional Engineer, master electrician and master plumber, placed on a permanent foundation, have a county-approved septic or sewer connection, comply with wildfire hazard area rules, and obtain a building permit and an As-Built Certificate of Observable Compliance.

Engineered plans are required in areas with High Winds, Heavy Snow, expansive/collapsible soil, or otherwise outside IRC prescriptive structural requirements.

Building code requirements include:

- Minimum 70 sq. ft. floor area for all habitable rooms (except kitchens)
- Minimum 6’8” ceiling height, 6’4” in bathrooms/kitchens, less in lofts

- One egress window or door leading directly outside for all sleeping areas
- Handrails, guardrails, and stairs to code (with flexibility for loft access)
- Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms
- Plumbing, waste disposal, heating, and energy efficiency rules
- Electrical installation complying with the 2023 National Electrical Code



What is a permanent foundation? A structure designed to support the home from below, transmit all loads (snow, wind, etc.) to the ground while resisting lateral motion and overturning, and not be removed from the site. A permanent foundation can be any type contained in the IRC, such as concrete, masonry or all-weather wood footings and stem walls, slabs, or piers, or a county-approved engineered design including options like earth anchors, ground screws, helical piers, diamond piers, or ground frames.

For more information on foundations, building permits, and building codes, contact the [Building Division](#) by calling (970) 498-7660, emailing building@larimer.org, or visiting our counter at 200 West Oak St., Fort Collins, third floor, Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm.

Purging titles and property tax assessments

A Tiny Home/House with a permanent foundation and final inspection approval from county building may be considered real property that allows for [purging a vehicle title](#) and could change the classification of the property from vacant land to residential, pending on state law. The Assessor's Office will have to conduct a site visit on the property to confirm if the classification is residential, vacant land or other. The determination of the tax status of the property and the Tiny Home/House will be made by the Assessor's Office.

Wastewater Requirements for Tiny Homes/Houses

Whether your Tiny Home/House is built on a permanent foundation or used as an RV, wastewater generated inside must be properly managed.

Tiny Home/House on a Foundation

When a Tiny Home/House is built on a foundation, wastewater will need to be handled in one of the following ways;

- Connection to the public sewer system if available, or
- An On-Site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS)

An OWTS must meet setbacks to onsite and neighboring wells, lakes, or streams, and be designed based on site conditions in the area of the proposed installation. All wastewater must be directed to the public sewer or OWTS. Graywater (wastewater from showers, sinks, and laundry) is not permitted to be routed to a separate system or discharged on the ground.

Tiny House on Wheels

The options for managing wastewater for a Tiny House on wheels include those listed above as well as;

- Sealed Vault, OR
- Vaulted Privy or Outhouse

Vaults must be pumped out by a licensed pumper each time they fill. Because pumping is expensive, vault systems are generally only practical for seasonal or weekend use.

Contact the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment if you need additional information about the process for permitting and installing an OWTS. *Information is available on the Department's website via this link or searching for [Larimer County Environmental Health - Septic Systems \(OWTS\)](#), or by calling (970) 498-6775.*

Utility Connections for Tiny Homes/Houses

All dwellings must connect to their water and sewer district tap if one is available. Please contact your [serving utility](#), because applicable tap fees, and whether to require a separate meter and connection, are up to them. Outside of a water district, you need a well permit from the [Colorado Department of Water Resources](#). You must connect to the electrical grid with a tap from your [serving utility](#), unless you obtain a separate [solar PV permit](#) to be off grid. If gas is needed, you can either get a connection from your gas utility provider or use a small propane tank as the fuel source.