



“Tiny House” Living in the City of St. Petersburg

There has been a growing trend towards smaller homes known as “tiny homes.” People choose a compact living arrangement for a variety of reasons, including: housing affordability, greater mobility, reduced environmental impact, and a simpler lifestyle. A typical “tiny home” is defined by most sources as a habitable structure that is between 100 and 400 square feet.

The term “tiny home” is not specifically defined in the City’s Land Development Regulations (LDRs), which regulate all development and use of property in the City of St. Petersburg or in the Florida Building Code which establishes minimum life safety requirements for buildings throughout our state. The codes applicable to the location and use of a “tiny home” depend on how the “tiny home” is constructed (on wheels vs. set on a foundation).

Given the area’s high population density, built out land mass, and high risk for hurricanes and flooding, it is the responsibility of the City of St. Petersburg to regulate the built environment in a way that protects the health, safety and welfare of all citizens residing in the city.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

My tiny home is on wheels (e.g. a trailer). Where may I legally store/park my tiny home? May I use it for my residence?

1. A tiny home on wheels may be located in a mobile home park, which provide for utility and electric hook-ups so that you can reside in the home. Mobile Homes are licensed HUD or the Florida State Department of Motor Vehicles.
2. You can store a tiny home on a residential property with an existing single-family home, but you cannot live in it. Your tiny home on a trailer is considered to be “domestic equipment” and is subject to domestic equipment regulations, see City Code Section 16.40.100.
 - The size of the Tiny Home is limited to 35 feet in overall length, eight feet in width and 12 feet in overall height.
 - No more than two pieces of domestic equipment may be parked or stored on neighborhood zoned property outside a legally constructed fully enclosed structure.
 - There are locational requirements restricting placement behind the existing house (not allowed in the front yard, except on weekends).
 - **It cannot be used as a residence**
 - **It cannot be located on vacant property**

My tiny home is an on-site structure, set on a foundation. What zoning districts allow tiny homes? Are there any restrictions?

1. If built as a permanent on-site structure, the “tiny home” is allowed on vacant land, subject to the same zoning requirements as any new single-family home, including building setbacks, design requirements, and parking requirements of the applicable zoning district, and is subject to the Florida Building Code.

Additionally, a cluster of tiny homes on one lot may be permitted under multi-family zoning. You need to submit a building permit application with plans. Please see the Residential Plans Submittal Checklist:

http://www.stpete.org/construction_services_and_permitting/docs/Residential%20Plan%20Review%20Checklist.pdf

2. A “tiny home” may also be built on a property with an existing single-family home, as an “Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)” within certain zoning districts on a lot with a minimum lot size of 5,800 square feet (see Section 16.50.010.). Use Specific Development Standards including design requirements, visual buffering, and parking and accessibility, need to be followed and can be found in LDR Section 16.50.010. Accessory Dwelling and Accessory Living Space. Please contact us to determine if the property is eligible.

What are the requirements for connecting Sewer and Water? Providing Electricity and Heat?

A building permit is required to establish utility and electrical connections, which are required as part of the Florida Building Code and the National Electrical Code (NEC NFPA 70). “Off-the-grid” living is not permitted within our dense, urban City. Florida building code standards include the following requirements:

Electricity: All occupied dwelling units shall have a reliable and safe source of electricity (Section 8-166). A Photovoltaic Solar Energy System may be sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

Sewer: Facilities are to be connected to the City sewer system (Section 27-247).

Water Supply: All water shall be supplied through the public potable water supply (Section 8-163).

Gray water systems utilized for indoor flushing only have been permitted by the City according to Florida Building Code regulations (see http://floridabuilding2.iccsafe.org/app/book/content/2014_Florida/Plumbing%20Code/Chapter%2013.html).

Heat: Each dwelling unit which is held out to the public for the purpose of providing living or rooming quarters shall be equipped with permanent heating equipment, which shall be capable of safely and adequately heating to a minimum air temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit, measured three feet above the floor.

Each occupied dwelling shall have a hot water heater or be supplied by a central hot water system capable of supplying hot water when being used to the kitchen sink, lavatory and the tub or shower, heated to a temperature of not less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (Section 8-167). A solar water heater that meets code requirements may be acceptable.

Please contact Development Review Services at DevRev@StPete.org or 727-893-7471 for any zoning related questions or the Construction Services & Permitting Division at Permits@StPete.org or 727-893-7231 for questions related to building permits, building codes, and utilities.