



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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Pioneering pathways to prosperity.

FAQ's About Recreational Vehicle (RV) Regulations in Wasco County

A few important notes:

- These rules stem from state law and are implemented through a local land use ordinance adopted by Wasco County.
- Tiny homes (small stick-built homes) are not RVs; Park model RVs are RVs. Please contact State Building Codes at 541-506-2650 for more information.

Can I store or occupy RV(s) on my property? It depends.

Without a dwelling, an RV(s) can be parked on your property for a total of 30 days out of any six month period. During this time, the RV(s) can be occupied. Utilities cannot be permitted on a property without a dwelling.

With a dwelling, you (or your guests) may occupy an RV(s) for a total of 60 days in any 12 month period, but it may be stored (unoccupied and not hooked up) indefinitely. RV(s) in this scenario may be temporarily hooked up to the dwelling's utilities to briefly empty, fill, or charge.

Dwelling is defined on page 2.

Are there exceptions? Yes.

Temporary Use Permits (TUP) are good for two years, and can be issued in limited instances to provide for (a) RVs as housing during the construction of a permitted project, and (b) RVs as housing in the event of a documented medical hardship. If you or a family member is aged, infirm, or otherwise incapable of maintaining a separate residence you may apply for a temporary medical hardship dwelling in an RV. In either event, the RV must be placed within 100 feet of the dwelling and hooked up to the same utilities. TUP's can be renewed, but the RV must be removed at the end of the project or hardship.

What about a guest house, variance, zone change, or non-conforming use applications?

Guest House: Guest houses are an allowed use in many zones in Wasco County. However, guest houses must also meet State Building Code standards for safe occupation, which would exclude RVs from consideration. Pursuant to State Building Codes, RVs cannot be used for permanent guest houses.

Variance: Variances can be applied to dimensional standards such as lot dimensions, setbacks, yard area, lot coverage, height of structures, vision clearance, fences, walls, etc. Variances are not intended to vary a "use" such as what constitutes a dwelling. In order to qualify for a variance, the request has to meet all five of the following criteria: (1) exceptional circumstances exist that do not generally apply to other properties and over which the owner has no control; (2) it is necessary for preservation of a property right enjoyed by others; (3) it is not detrimental to others or in conflict with the

Comprehensive Plan; (4) it is the minimum to alleviate a difficulty; and (5) it is not a self-created hardship.

Zone Change: To comply with State Building Codes requirements, there are no zones in Wasco County that allow RVs to be used as a permanent dwelling. A zone change will not change this. In several zones, new RV parks can be permitted and developed to allow for safe permanent use of RVs as dwellings.

Non-Conforming Use: This refers to a use that was lawfully established before the rules existed or changed that now make new instances of that use unlawful. The permanent use of an RV as a dwelling does not qualify, unless it can be reliably demonstrated that it had been continuously used as such since prior to the adoption of Wasco County's ordinance in 1974.

Additional Considerations:

Permit Fees & Timelines for Temporary Use of RVs as Dwellings

- Permit requirements depend on your zoning.
- Ministerial (Type 1) applications cost \$326 and typically require 2 to 3 weeks for staff review.
- Non-Ministerial (Type 2) applications cost between \$719 and \$2,156 depending on the type of permit being pursued (Temporary Use, Subject-to-Standards, or Conditional Use) and typically require 2 to 4 months for staff review.

Relevant Definitions from Wasco County Land Use and Development Ordinance Section 1.090:

Dwelling Unit: *"A lawfully established dwelling is a single-family dwelling which:*

- a. Has intact exterior walls and roof structure;*
- b. Has indoor plumbing consisting of a kitchen sink, toilet and bathing facilities connected to a sanitary waste disposal system;*
- c. Has interior wiring for interior lights; and*
- d. Has a heating system."*

Family Hardship Dwelling: *"A mobile home or recreational vehicle used temporarily during a family hardship situation when an additional dwelling is allowed to house aged or infirm person or persons physically incapable of maintaining a complete separate residence apart from their family."*

Recreational Vehicle or Camping Vehicle: *"A vacation trailer or other unit with or without motive power which is designed for human occupancy and to be used temporarily for recreational or emergency purposes, but not for residential purposes, and is identified as a recreational vehicle by the manufacturer..."*

Recreational Vehicle Park: *"A lot or tract where the primary land use is the parking, on a fee or other basis, occupied by motor homes, truck campers, travel trailers, or other recreational vehicles."*