

# Tiny Homes and Tiny Home Communities

## Definitions, Types, and Permitting in Washington State

### Tiny Home Definitions

**Popular:** An independent, small-footprint dwelling, usually under 400 sf, often on wheels.

**WA State Law:** Dwelling that may be built on wheels; is no larger than 400 sf, not including lofts; includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation; and is built to Washington State Building Code including IRC Appendix Q as amended by WA State.

### Types

**Foundation-built Tiny Home:** Home constructed atop permanent foundation built to IRC standards. Can be built on- or off-site.

#### **THOW: Tiny Home on Wheels**

- Built to IRC standards. If tractor/chassis is secured to permanent foundation, may be permitted for permanent occupancy.
- Built to ANSI standards (no wider than 8'6" in travel mode). Also referred to as **Tiny Home RV**. Not permissible as permanent dwelling in Washington.

**Micro Home or Tiny Shelter:** An independent rooming unit, typically ranging from 70 to 200 sf, that may not include a kitchen or bathroom but is wired and insulated. Allowed as temporary interim housing under special ordinances.

### What Tiny Homes Are Not (by WA State Law definition)

**Park Model RV (PMRV):** Trailer-type RV designed for temporary accommodation designed to ANSI 119.5 standard. Note: Some tiny homes are built to the PMRV (ANSI) standard. These are referred to as Tiny Home RVs (see above).

**Manufactured Home:** HUD approved dwelling of at least 320 sf on permanent chassis, permissible as permanent dwelling. Before 1976, these were called mobile homes.

**RV:** Self-propelled vehicle designed as temporary living quarters designed to NFPA standards.

### Occupancy Permitting Routes

**Site Built:** Local building department inspects and permits.

**Off-Site Build:** Washington State Department of Licensing and Industry inspects and permits construction. Local building department permits foundation tie-down and utility hook-ups.

**Third Party Inspection:** Independent impartial inspection services provided by a qualified company. Currently, there is no provision for third party inspection of a Tiny Home RV as a permanent dwelling in WA State.

### Tiny Home Communities Definitions

**Popular:** Grouping of tiny homes, typically sharing amenities such as common space or a common house.

**WA State Law:** Real property rented or held out for rent for the placement of tiny houses utilizing the binding site plan process (RCW 35.21.686). [Depending on land ownership, this definition does not apply to all communities under the popular definition.]

### Types

**Tiny Home Community or Village:** 3 or more permanent tiny homes located on parcel of land.

**Permanent Supportive Housing Community:** Permanent village of tiny homes with shared facilities, e.g. kitchen, laundry, showers, and meeting space, serving the formerly unsheltered.

**Transitional Encampment:** Semi-permanent community of micro-homes; can include shared facilities.

**RV Park:** Place where people with RVs can stay overnight, or longer, in allotted spaces. Some RV parks accept THOWs.

**Manufactured Housing/Mobile Home Park:** Temporary or permanent zone for manufactured and/or mobile homes and sometimes park model RVs.

### Potential Permitting Routes

**Binding Site Plan:** Used for the purpose of lease, limited to mobile homes, travel trailers and now tiny home communities.

**Ordinance:** City or county may write ordinances to allow tiny home communities.

**Zoning Amendment:** Enactment of high density zones to allow for 3 or more small-footprint dwelling units per lot.

### Acronyms

ANSI: American National Standards Institute

IRC: International Residential Code

HUD: Housing and Urban Development

NFPA: National Fire Protection Association

RV: Recreational Vehicle

### Sources

**ESSB 5383: Concerning tiny houses.**

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/bills/summary/BillNumber=5383&Year=2019>

**Washington State Department of Labor and Industries – Tiny Homes web page:** <https://lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/manufactured-modular-mobile-structures/tiny-homes/>

**What Exactly is a Tiny House?:** [www.tinyhousebuild.com](http://www.tinyhousebuild.com)