



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
LONG RANGE PLANNING

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Tiny House Fact Sheet 2020

What are Tiny Houses (THs) and Moveable Tiny Houses (MTHs)?

Humboldt County has adopted definitions for Tiny Houses and Moveable Tiny Houses in its ADU ordinance.

Tiny House

- Separate, independent living quarters designed for permanent, year-round dwelling.
- Built or installed on a permanent foundation or anchored by a State approved foundation system (as for required for manufactured homes).
- No larger than 400 square feet, with at least 120 square feet of first floor interior living space.
- Includes basic functional areas for cooking, sleeping, and sanitation.

Moveable Tiny House (Tiny House on wheels)

- Separate, independent living quarters designed for permanent, year-round dwelling.
- Licensed and registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles, and certified by a qualified third-party inspector accredited through ASTM to meet either: (i) National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1192 RV standards, or (ii) If certified after January 1, 2021, meets National Standards Institute (ANSI) 119.5 Park Model standards.
- Is towable by a bumper hitch, frame-towing hitch, or fifth-wheel connection, and not designed to move under its own power.
- No larger than 400 square feet, with at least 120 square feet of first floor interior living space.
- Includes basic functional areas for cooking, sleeping, and sanitation.
- It substantially complies with local building, health, and safety codes so that it qualifies as a permanent dwelling.

Requirements for Moveable Tiny Houses to be used as Accessory Dwelling Units are found in Sections 69.05.5.5 “Applicable codes”, and 69.05.5.6 “Design standards”.

How is a Tiny House different from a Moveable Tiny House?

A tiny house is built or installed on a permanent foundation. A Moveable Tiny House is built on a chassis and meets park model RV standard (ANSI). It may also be made to meet building codes (CBC or alternative) once installed at a site.

Both are classified as a permanent, year-round dwelling if used as accessory dwelling units. A Tiny House that meets codes is allowed as a single-family dwelling outside the ADU setting as well.

How is a Moveable Tiny House (tiny house on wheels) different from an RV?

Besides meeting park model RV standards, MTHs have additional criteria in their definition. (See HCC Sections 69.05.5.5 and 69.05.5.6). MTHs used as dwellings must meet health and safety requirements for all dwellings, including sanitation and utility installation requirements.

What's different with the new AUD Ordinance?

THs and MTHs are defined in county code.

THs and MTHs are classified as permanent dwellings if they meet criteria in definitions and the ADU ordinance.

Where are Tiny Houses allowed now? (short answer)

- If a Tiny House is an RV (built on a chassis), it is allowed in mobilehome parks or special occupancy parks, and as an accessory dwelling unit.
- If it is a “stick” built home that is built or installed on a permanent foundation, it may be located wherever single-family homes are allowed.

Where Can I live in a Tiny House or Moveable Tiny House in Humboldt County? (long answer)

A Tiny House on a foundation is treated like a small stick-built house (400 square feet and under) where it is not used as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). That means it is allowed wherever a single-family dwelling is allowed, as long as it meets current codes.

If a Tiny House is used as an ADU, that is, accessory to another single-family unit on the same parcel, it qualifies for streamlined permitting and special allowances provided it meets certain conditions. Those conditions are specified in the 2020 ADU ordinance for inland locations (HCC 69.05), and California Govt. Code 65852.2 for

parcels in the coastal zone. (See also, ADU Checklists).

A Moveable Tiny House (MTH) as defined below is also known as a Tiny House on Wheels. At this time, Moveable Tiny Houses are allowed as permanent dwellings in inland areas of Humboldt County only when used as ADUs. They continue to be allowed in Manufactured Home Parks and Special Occupancy Parks. MTHs are not allowed as permanent dwellings in the Coastal Zone at this time.