



FACT SHEET » Tiny Homes



Courtesy of TinyTexasHomes.com

What Is a Tiny Home?

While there is no formal definition in nationally recognized codes and standards, a tiny home is typically a single-family home, generally 400 square feet or less, that is intended as a permanent, non-transitory occupancy.

➔ **DID YOU KNOW?** Adopted building codes might apply to tiny homes within the scope of the adopted building code.

Which Types of Tiny Homes Usually Fall Within the Scope and Application of Building Codes?

Tiny homes are built in different ways, and it is important to identify the types of tiny homes that fall within the scope and application of building codes or related regulations. Many tiny homes include features or attributes of the following:

- ▶ Recreational vehicles
- ▶ Manufactured homes
- ▶ Modular dwellings
- ▶ Site-built dwellings

Regulations for each of these four types may vary from state to state and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Generally, building codes apply only to tiny homes that are in the form of modular dwellings and site-built dwellings. Those taking the form of recreational vehicles and manufactured homes are not regulated by building codes but are under the regulation of other codes and standards.

Application of Building Codes

Tiny homes are dwellings and therefore could be subjected to the same building code regulations as any other home. A dwelling is defined as a building provided with permanent provisions for sleeping, cooking, eating, living, and sanitation.

Those who work to enforce code provisions on tiny homes may have difficulties because these homes introduce features that may not inherently comply with conventional code requirements.

Some accommodations may be made for special situations because of the impracticality of applying certain requirements. See provisions in building codes for “equivalencies” or “alternate designs or methods of construction.”



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Which Codes Apply?

The following codes apply when adopted, but in the current editions there are no provisions or exceptions specifically for tiny homes in these and other nationally recognized codes:

- ▶ *International Residential Code (IRC)*, from the International Code Council (ICC), which establishes regulations for homes
- ▶ *NFPA 5000®*, *Building Construction and Safety Code®*, from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- ▶ *NFPA 101®*, *Life Safety Code®*, correlates closely with *NFPA 5000*, and many of the tiny home issues are also regulated by *NFPA 101*.

Design and Construction Considerations

The following are some of the code-related issues that might affect the design and construction of tiny homes:

- ▶ Room Size and Dimension
- ▶ Lofts
- ▶ Headroom
- ▶ Means of Escape
- ▶ Egress Width
- ▶ Stairs

FOR MORE INFORMATION

READ different types of modern buildings present unique fire and life safety challenges: www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/publications/nfpa-journal/2017/march-april-2017/features/the-outliers

DOWNLOAD the NFPA white paper, "[Applying Building Codes to Tiny Homes.](#)" for a more detailed review of code requirements in relation to tiny homes. This paper was developed by

the Building Code Development Committee of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to assist in explaining the expectation of code enforcement practices on the construction of tiny homes.

Contact your local building department or building official for specific local information.



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