



## Construction Guidelines for Tiny Homes

*The following is a summary of codes and regulations with respect to the construction of “tiny homes.”*  
**Please note:** This is not intended to be and all inclusive list of requirements. For any additional requirements please refer to the 2012 International Residential Code (as amended) and the City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinances. For specific questions regarding your tiny home project please contact our office at (865) 215-2999.

### Permit Requirements

Any new construction will require the submittal of construction drawings and a site plan (drawn to scale or dimensioned to all lot lines other structures on the same lot) indicating how the tiny house will be constructed and how it will be located on the building site. Upon approval, appropriate building and sub-trade permits may be issued at which time work may begin. Structures shall be inspected by City of Knoxville inspectors throughout the construction process. No structure shall be occupied without a *Certificate of Occupancy*, which is issued after passing final inspection by the City of Knoxville.

### Space Limitations--Habitable Space

Habitable Space is defined as a space in a building for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage, or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable space and do not contribute to minimum habitable space required.

### Maximum Number of Occupants/Minimum Size

Minimum square footage shall not account for the required cooking facilities and toilet facility areas, which are required in addition to the minimum clear floor area of 120 sq. feet for a single occupant and 220 sq. feet for two occupants and 320 sq. feet for three occupants. The maximum number of occupants shall not exceed three.

### Construction Requirements (Overview)

- Structures built to ANSI A119.5: Park Model Recreational Vehicle Standard shall not be acceptable.
- Tiny homes must have at least one habitable room with not less than 120 sq. feet of clear floor area.

- Other habitable rooms must have not less than 70 sq. feet of floor area (except for kitchens).
- Habitable rooms must not be less than 7 feet in any horizontal dimension.
- Ceiling heights must be a minimum 7 feet in habitable spaces, hallways, bathrooms and toilet rooms.
- Ceiling height effect on floor area: Portions of a sloped ceiling measuring less than 5ft or a furred ceiling measuring less than 7 feet from the finished floor; floor areas below these ceilings shall not be permitted to contribute to the minimum required habitable area for that room.
- Tiny homes shall be provided with a kitchen sink, cooking appliances and refrigeration facilities each providing the minimum clear working space of 30 inches in front.
- Habitable rooms shall be provided with light and ventilation via operable glazing not less than 8% of floor area.
- Tiny homes shall provide a heating facility capable of maintaining a minimum 68°F.
- Tiny homes shall be provided with connection to an APPROVED method of sewage disposal and an APPROVED water supply providing hot and cold water.
- Units shall be provided with a separate bathroom containing a water closet, lavatory and bathtub or shower.
- Units shall meet the *means of egress* requirements of IRC R311.1 and the *Emergency Escape and Rescue* opening provisions of R310.1.1: Minimum opening area, height, width and operational constraints.
- Stairways shall not be less than 36 inches wide, have a maximum 8 inch riser and 9 inch tread unless built as a spiral stairway in accordance with R311.7.9.1. Ladders/"Ship ladders" are NOT APPROVED.
- Tiny homes shall be built upon permanent foundations meeting the 2012 International Residential Code Ch. 4.
- Electrical systems shall be in accordance with the 2011 National Electrical Code (as amended).
- Tiny homes MUST meet any zoning requirements: setbacks, lot sizes, off street parking, etc. in addition to any community protective covenant requirements where applicable.
- Tiny homes shall meet all building thermal envelope requirements (as amended) of the 2012 ICC Energy Conservation Code.