



Storage - Accessory Buildings Bulletin # 3

Department of Planning and Land Services, June 2007
Division of Building Safety and Inspection for 2006 I Codes

Storage - Accessory Buildings Exempt from Building Permit

Residential (Single Family, Manufactured Home, Duplex, and Townhouse)

The International Residential Code provides for small accessory structures to be built on a lot without a building permit. Pierce County has amended the code to allow only one (1) such structure without a permit. The amendment is found in the newly adopted Pierce County Code, Section 17C.90.040 item 1.

1. One-Single story accessory structure used as un heated tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet (18.58 m²) and it is at least three feet from a property line.

Pre-existing Buildings

- If you already have an accessory structure of 200 square feet or less (built without a permit), that is your exempt structure any additional structures will normally require a permit.
- You may have up to two (2) structures without a building permit provided the combined square footage is no more than 200.
- If you already have a structure that is smaller than the 200 square feet allowed, you may add on to it, without a permit, to bring it up to 200 square feet.
- If your structure is less than 200 square feet **and** was constructed with a permit you are still allowed to build one structure up to 200 square feet without a permit.

Setbacks

- The International Residential Code as amended by Pierce County requires at least a 3 foot setback from a property line for this non-permitted exception.
- The Pierce County Zoning Code for your property may require a larger setback. Have your parcel number handy and call 253-798-3739 to confirm setback requirements.

Commercial (Multifamily, and Non-Residential)

The International Building Code provides for small accessory structures to be built without a building permit. Pierce County has amended the code to allow only one (1) such structure without a permit. The amendment is found in the newly adopted Pierce County Code, Section 17C.20.060 item 1.

1. Single-story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11.15 m²).

Setbacks

- The International Building Code does not contain a minimum setback. Rather it requires additional fire resistive construction the closer it gets to a property line.
- The Pierce County Zoning Code for your property may require a setback that may affect the placement of your exempt structure. Have your parcel number handy and call 253-798-3739 to confirm setback requirements.

Note: For BOTH residential and commercial structures.

BUILDING AREA, The area included within surrounding exterior walls (or exterior walls and firewalls) exclusive of vent shafts and courts. Areas of the building not provided with surrounding walls shall be included in the building area if such areas are included within the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above.

Note: If the roof eaves extend no more than 24 inches from the exterior wall It will not be considered building area. **When the eave extends farther than 24” from the exterior wall, all of the area under the eave will be added to the building area.**

Minimum Code

Exemption from the permit requirements for any of the codes, shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of Pierce County. In other words, you still need to comply with zoning code requirements, grading and filling limitations, use proper wood size & grade, roofing material, siding, and anchorage.