

Tiny Homes



In recent years, due to the cost of housing and the desire to live with less of an environmental impact, it has become popular to build smaller homes. Over time, the refinement of these homes has made them smaller and for this posting, portable. At times on metal or wood frames with or without wheels. The popular term for these small residential buildings is *Tiny Homes*. Due to popularity, you can find many websites and television programs featuring all types of designs and building techniques.

For the reasons mentioned above, this movement has sparked a lot of interest in BC. For some, this raises the question: Can I build my own *Tiny Home*? Alternatively: Can I build one for someone else?

This posting is to clarify that Tiny Home designs that are intended to be occupied throughout the year are permitted in the Province of BC; however, before you get out the tools or purchase one, consider the following. For the purpose of safety, health, accessibility, fire protection and energy performance, the Province of BC regulates the construction, alterations, repairs and the demolition of buildings. The regulation being the BC Building Code (this does not include the City of Vancouver).

Since Tiny Homes are typically built as *portable* buildings, from now on I will be referring to them as portable buildings. All residential buildings, portable or not, fall under the regulation of the BC Building Code, of which there is a portable building compliance path. The compliance path for portable buildings falls under the term, Factory-Constructed Buildings. The reason for this term is in order for all buildings to be compliant with the regulation there must be evidence that their design and construction is compliant with the provisions of the BC Building Code. To make sure that compliance is achieved all portable buildings must be built by a company that is able to certify that the building, when completed, is compliant with the BC Building Code. Keep in mind, that these buildings are also designed to be moved, unlike a typical residential site built building. These companies are independently inspected so when a Local Government accepts a building permit for this type of building they can rely on the certification provided by the company.

Without getting into detail, the only way you can build a Tiny Home (portable building) in BC is by being certified.

When considering purchasing a Tiny Home (factory built) it is important to make sure you are buying a certified building and to check the Local Government zoning regulations and developer building schemes to insure that the building is permitted on the intended property.