



“CONEX BOXES” OR LAND/SEA SHIPPING CONTAINERS

The following policy is based on RMC Title 21 and Title 23 requirements. The term “shipping container” is used here to refer to any and all land/sea shipping containers or similar structures.

1. A shipping container is allowed in certain selected commercial and in industrial zones, provided it is being used as a shipping container and that all applicable Department of Transportation (DOT) licenses for the container are active and valid. The City may require you to show proof of active DOT licenses. Some of the commercial zones require site-obscuring fences to be placed around any outdoor storage, including one or more shipping containers; please talk with one of the City’s planners to determine whether your property requires a site-obscuring fence for outdoor storage, including outdoor storage of one or more shipping containers.
2. Any shipping container to which electricity is run constitutes a “building” under RMC Title 21 and therefore must meet item #5 below. You must obtain a building permit for such a container. Obtaining a building permit requires you to hire an engineer to design a foundation system and attachment for the storage container. All requirements of obtaining a permit, including a scaled site plan and a review, are applicable to shipping containers proposed to be used as buildings.
3. No shipping containers are allowed to be used in residential areas as storage buildings. A temporary placement permit of a shipping container in connection with a remodel or addition permit (after the building permit for the addition or remodel has actually been issued) is allowed up to 180 days for temporary storage ONLY after the building permit is issued. The temporary placement permit cannot be extended even if construction continues on the main project and you keep the building permit active, as the City does not want the attractive nuisance of a prolonged shipping container in residential areas. This temporary placement does not apply to new house permits in new subdivisions. Placing a shipping container on a City street is not allowed.
4. Commercial construction sites where there is an active building permit also are allowed 180 day temporary storage using a shipping container, the same as in item #3 above. The temporary placement permit cannot be extended beyond 180 days even if construction continues on the main project and you keep the building permit active. Please plan accordingly.
5. Shipping containers can be used in certain selected commercial and in industrial zones as storage buildings if a foundation is designed by an engineer and all other codes for placement on the property are met. Obtaining a building permit requires you to hire an engineer to design a foundation system and attachment for the storage container. The City does not have a “pre-designed” foundation for such containers, as they are considered by the building code as non-standard, non-prescriptive “buildings”. All requirements of obtaining a permit, including a scaled site plan and a review, are applicable to shipping containers proposed to be used as buildings.
6. Look-alike shipping container “buildings” or metal buildings marketed as “containers” or “portable storage” are regulated just like any other buildings, requiring foundations and proof of meeting building codes, and all permit processes shall apply. Please be aware that many companies have started making very cheap metal structures and trying to market them as portable storage units, when in reality they are just metal buildings that were not properly engineered. Proof of meeting building codes for a metal building means that an engineer designed the metal building to all building code requirements and stamped the design with a current seal of an engineer. Metal structures that are less than 200 s.f. require a placement permit only insofar as they are used as tool sheds, playhouses, or similar accessory structures per RMC Title 21.