



City of South Lake Tahoe

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Residential Carport Canopy & Storage Structures

Introduction

This handout is a guide intended to assist the public in navigating the complex rules related to prefabricated, non-habitable structures installed on residential lots in the City of South Lake Tahoe. They are available in all shapes, sizes and materials and may be intended either for permanent or temporary use. Examples of such structures include; carports, canopies, storage units, garages, etc.

Temporary vs Permanent

In the City of South Lake Tahoe the regulation of structures on land is governed primarily by the city building and planning division and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). All three (3) agencies do have certain regulations pertaining to "temporary" or "short term" use of various structures. However, none of these regulations apply to the prefabricated carport, canopy and storage structures discussed in this guideline. In other words, whether or not such a structure is to be used temporarily or permanently is irrelevant and has no bearing on the regulatory requirements. The structure is either compliant or non-compliant and the rules for temporary and permanent are identical.

Banned Structures

Any fabric, canvas or plastic covered structure that is over 120 square feet in size, temporary or otherwise, is not permitted on any residential lot in the City of South Lake Tahoe. These structures do not comply with the required structural requirements as mandated in the California Building Code and the City of South Lake Tahoe Municipal Code. Because these structures are fundamentally unsafe due to the material that is used, there are no exceptions made for any reason for winter use and for any other time they must comply with all the mandates listed for Metal Clad structures. The City of South Lake Tahoe Code Enforcement shall issue warnings and subsequent citations requiring removal.

The City Code does not allow the fabric tents based on Article 6.15.170, Items E, F, H and I. Fabric tents violate the Building Code Section 7A and Section 1604.2 and Section 3103F.

Permissible Structures

There are several types of structures that are permissible if they comply with the various regulations pertaining to their installation.

- Alternative materials, designs or methods of construction may be used when the code equivalent for strength, effectiveness, fire resistance and safety is met.

Structures that are 120 square feet or less the City will not enforce for compliance at this time. The State mandates that these structures must be built to code even though a building permit is not required. These structures must meet all height and setback requirements of the City Code and comply with TRPA land coverage regulations.

Metal Clad Structures

Metal clad structures may be permitted if they comply with all of the following requirements:

1. The structure complies with all the required setbacks. This means that no portion shall be within the 20 foot front yard setback. This is measured from the property line to the edge of the unit. Do not measure from the edge of the street because this may not be your property line. This depends on the size of the parcel and public right-of-way.
2. If the structure covers any dirt surface or if you drive over any unpaved surface you must obtain TRPA's Land Coverage Verification and Site Assessment. With the allowable coverage known, then the project may proceed if it complies with the allowed maximum coverage requirements. This may require paving the driveway to the structure.
3. If the metal clad structure complies with setbacks and TRPA coverage requirements then the structure must also comply with all the Building Codes including the following:
 - a. Snow loads: This is a minimum of 150 pound ground snow load.
 - b. Wind speed: This is based on the ASCE 7-10 code cycle:
 - Risk Category 1: 110 mph
 - Risk Category 2: 120 mph
 - Risk Category 3: 130 mph
 - Risk Category 4: 130 mph
 - c. Seismic loads: This requires a CA Engineer to determine but the footings will be a minimum 18 inches deep with positive connections to the supporting posts.

All these items must be addressed by a CA Licensed Engineer and engineering calculations will be required. Plans must be submitted to the Building Division for review. If the application demonstrates that the proposed structure will comply with all requirements a permit will be issued. Inspections will follow to verify compliance to the approved plans.

This notice is to briefly state the requirements needed to have an approved structure. It is an outline to give the applicant guidelines on what will be required. If there are specific questions please contact the Building Department at 530-542-6010.

Dave Walker
Building Official