
BUILDING & SAFETY DIVISION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Policy No. PP-4 Railroad Cars and Storage Containers

Purpose:

To provide guidelines for the application, review, and criteria for railroad cars, storage or cargo containers and other structures desired to be located on a private property as buildings and used for a specific purpose.

Background:

These types of large metal containers have been used for temporary storage purposes in the retail arena during the holidays and special events. However, recently, they have become more popular for year-round storage. Currently there are several companies and individuals that sell these types of containers for storage and other uses. Whether a permit is required or not, all planning, zoning and fire department requirements must be met.

Policy:

A building permit may or may not be required for these containers based on the specifics of its use. See criteria for "A" and "B" below.

A. PERMIT REQUIRED. The container will be considered a Type VB building with unrated exterior walls for purposes of exterior wall and opening protection (2007 CBC Chapter 7) and a building permit will be required when any of the following are involved:

- Proposed use is for human habitation.
- When any electrical, plumbing or mechanical work is involved.
- When quantities of hazardous materials exceed those listed in 2007 CBC Chapter 3, Table 307.1(1) or 307.1(2).
- For refrigerated storage.
- Proposed use is a "mini-storage" type of business.
- When one or more containers are stacked upon another container.
- If additional square footage is being added to the container.
- When access is being provided to the top of the container

B. PERMIT NOT REQUIRED. A building permit will not be required when these containers are used solely for storage and do not meet any of the criteria in section A. above. However, the applicant is required to perform the following steps in both instances:

- Contact the Planning Department regarding zoning requirements (setbacks, screening, etc.)
- Contact the Fire Department regarding fire requirements (Use, location criteria, fire lane blockage, combustible storage, etc.)

Cyrus Abhar
Chief Building Official, City of Rancho Cordova