



MIKE CAUSEY, INSURANCE COMMISSIONER & STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
BRIAN TAYLOR, CHIEF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 15, 2019 (replaces October 21, 2015 Tiny Homes in North Carolina memo)

To: Code Officials, Manufacturers, Consumers, and other Interested Parties

From: C. Patrick Walker, PE  
Technical Services Manager  
Manufactured Building Division  
Office of State Fire Marshal/NC Department of Insurance

Re: Guidelines for Tiny Homes in North Carolina

There has been a nationwide movement recently regarding the usage of “Tiny Homes” as a viable single-family dwelling. Tiny Homes are acceptable as permanent single-family dwellings in North Carolina provided they meet the following minimum requirements.

**NOTE: This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of requirements.** All code references are to the *North Carolina State Residential Code, 2018 edition* unless otherwise noted.

**Tiny Homes in North Carolina**

**Administrative Requirements**

1. Must be permitted by the local building official having jurisdiction over the building site – *Section 106.1 - NC Administrative Code and Policies, 2018 Edition*
2. Must be of open construction so unit can be fully inspected by the local building official – *Section 107.1 - NC Administrative Code and Policies, 2018 Edition*
3. May be constructed of closed construction at an off-site location if the off-site construction is inspected and certified under the NC Modular Construction Program. *NC General Statute GS § 143-139.1*
4. Must meet local zoning and set-back requirements as applicable
5. Must meet community protective covenant requirements as applicable

**Construction Requirements**

1. Unit and its foundation must comply with the *North Carolina State Residential Code, 2018 Edition – Section 101.3.2.10 NC Administrative Code.*
2. Habitable Space is defined as a space in a building for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered *habitable spaces.* - *Section R202*

3. Habitable rooms must have not less than 70 square feet (6.5 m<sup>2</sup>) of floor area - *Section R304.1* - Exceptions: Kitchens
4. Habitable rooms must not be less than 7 feet (2134mm) in any horizontal dimension - *Section R304.2*
5. Ceilings Height Effect on Room Area – Portions of a sloped ceiling measuring less than 5 ft. or a furred ceiling measuring less than 7 ft. (2134mm) from the finished floor the finished ceiling shall not be considered as contributing to the minimum required habitable area for that room. *Section R304.3*
6. Ceiling heights must be a minimum 7 foot (2134mm) in habitable spaces, hallways, bathrooms, and toilet rooms – *Section R305*
7. Every dwelling unit must have toilet facilities – water closet, lavatory, and a bathtub or shower – *Section R306.1*
8. Must have a kitchen area with a sink – *Section R306.2*
9. All plumbing fixtures must be connected to a sanitary sewer or to an approved private sewage disposal system – *Section R306.3* (Storage tanks are not acceptable)
10. Must be provided with a heating facility – *Section R303.8*
11. Must meet the means of egress requirements - *Section R311*
12. Must meet the energy conservation requirements – *Section N1101.1*
13. **IF the unit is constructed through the NC Modular Construction Program**, the unit must also meet the following minimum construction and design standards for modular homes - *NC General Statute GS § 143-139.1.*,
  - (1) Roof pitch. - For homes with a single predominant roofline, the pitch of the roof shall be no less than five feet rise for every 12 feet of run.
  - (2) Eave projection. - The eave projections of the roof shall be no less than 10 inches, which may not include a gutter around the perimeter of the home, unless the roof pitch is 8/12 or greater.
  - (3) Exterior wall. - The minimum height of the exterior wall shall be at least seven feet six inches for the first story.
  - (4) Siding and roofing materials. - The materials and texture for the exterior materials shall be compatible in composition, appearance, and durability to the exterior materials commonly used in standard residential construction.
  - (5) Foundations. - The home shall be designed to require foundation supports around the perimeter. The supports may be in the form of piers, pier and curtain wall, piling foundations, a perimeter wall, or other approved perimeter supports. (1971, c. 1099; 1989, c. 653, s. 2; 2003-400, s. 17.)
14. **IF the unit is constructed through the HUD Manufactured Housing Construction Program** the unit must also contain a minimum of 320 sq. ft. of floor area when erected. *24 CFR 3280.2 - Definition of Manufactured Home*

**NCDOI NOTE:** This memo addresses structures intended for use as a permanent single-family dwelling. Units that are manufactured and certified by the **Recreational Vehicular Industry Association (RVIA)** are considered recreational vehicles and should be treated as such.

**NCDOI NOTE:** See the NCDOI Recreational Park Trailer Memo for Requirements for Recreational Park Trailers (Park Models, Park Model RV's)