



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BOISE CITY HALL: 150 N. CAPITOL BLVD | MAIL: PO BOX 500, BOISE ID 83701-0500

CITYOFBOISE.ORG/PDS | P: 208-608-7100 | F: 208-384-3753 | TTY/TTD: 800-377-3529

Planning & Development Services Building Division Policy

Title: Cargo Shipping Container Policy

Code Name: *International Building Code (IBC)*
International Residential Code (IRC)

Code Sections: 104.11 Alternative Materials, Design and Methods of Construction and Equipment
R104.11 Alternative Materials, Design and Methods of Construction and Equipment

Code Language:

104.11 Alternative materials, design and methods of construction and equipment. The provisions of this code are not intended to prevent the installation of any material or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this code, provided that any such alternative has been approved. An alternative material, design or method of construction shall be approved where the building official finds that the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of this code, and that the material, method or work offered is, for the purpose intended, not less than the equivalent of that prescribed in this code in quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability and safety. Where the alternative material, design or method of construction is not approved, the building official shall respond in writing, stating the reasons why the alternative was not approved.

R104.11 Alternative materials, design and methods of construction and equipment. The provisions of this code are not intended to prevent the installation of any material or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this code, provided that any such alternative has been approved. An alternative material, design or method of construction shall be approved where the building official finds that the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of this code, and that the material, method or work offered is, for the purpose intended, not less than the equivalent of that prescribed in this code. Compliance with the specific performance-based provisions of the International Codes shall be an alternative to the specific requirements of this code. Where the alternative material, design or method of construction is not approved, the building official shall respond in writing, stating the reasons why the alternative was not approved.

Scope of Policy: To establish a policy on when a building permit is required or when is not required, for placement of cargo shipping containers on a site or parcel.

Policy: All cargo shipping containers shall receive approval from the City of Boise Planning and Zoning Division prior to the container being properly placed on a site or parcel, regardless of use or occupancy.

A building permit is not required for cargo shipping containers (one-story) that are typically unoccupied, utilized for non-hazardous storage use, are adequately detached from other structures, and are properly placed on a site or parcel. The containers shall not have plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems within. When meeting these criteria, they are viewed as a container and not a building or structure.

A building permit is required for any new installations, including where alterations occur, of a cargo shipping container having an occupancy classification or use other than non-hazardous storage, or when not detached, or not properly placed on a site. Permits are also required where installation includes plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems. Installation shall be required to meet all applicable requirements of the currently adopted codes, including any required structural engineering.

Any cargo shipping container placed within a flood hazard zone or in a hillside location shall be required to obtain a building permit regardless of use or occupancy.

Intent: This policy outlines requirements on when a building permit is required or is not required for placement of cargo shipping containers on a site or parcel. Prior to the placement of cargo shipping containers, approval from the Planning and Zoning Division must occur for verification of items such as zoning, setbacks, flood hazard areas or hillside locations, no matter if a building permit is required or not.

A building permit is not required when the containers are typically not occupied, utilized for non-hazardous storage, are adequately detached and properly placed on a site (away from other buildings on the site or from the property lines) and have no plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems within. When meeting these criteria, they are viewed as containers. Examples of this type of container have occurred at school fields, athletic/sports fields, and industrial sites. Cargo shipping containers, also known as intermodal freight containers, are originally designed for use in intercontinental traffic of freight and designed to be mounted on a rail car, truck or ship. These containers typically have substantial weight and significant strength.

A building permit is required for new installations or alterations of existing cargo shipping containers that have another occupancy or use besides non-hazardous storage, or when not detached or properly placed on the site, or have plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems installed. A building permit is always required when the installation is located in a flood hazard zone or in a hillside site. All applicable adopted building codes shall be met. These types of conditions change the circumstances of the container to now require a permit for evaluation and approval of code provisions as a building.

This policy replaces a previous version of this policy dated 9/15/98 on this subject with updated formatting and additional language.



Jason Blais
Building Official

8/24/23

Effective Date

Date Retired