

Things you need to know if you want to build a tiny/small house

Dunedin City Council Guidance November 2018

We suggest you do some research before starting construction. This may include visiting www.mbie.govt.nz to see some recent Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) determinations relating to tiny houses and relocatable buildings.

It's also a good idea to talk to our Building Services and Planning staff.

A small house is generally defined as being less than 93sq m and a tiny house is less than 37sq m. Tiny houses are often built on a trailer chassis.

Tiny/small houses usually fall into two categories.

- They are buildings that are either built or placed on a site and may be connected to services.
- They are structures on a trailer. The structure may be a vehicle or it may be a building depending on how it is used.

Things to consider

1. If a tiny or small house meets the definition of 'building' in section 8 of the Building Act 2004 it must comply with the New Zealand Building Code. Building consent will be needed before it is constructed or placed in a new location, or connected to services such as water and wastewater.
2. If the structure is on a trailer and meets the definition of 'vehicle' in the Land Transport Act 1998 then building consent is not required. However, if the vehicle becomes immovable, and is occupied by people on a permanent or long term basis, it ceases to be a vehicle and is defined as a building. This means it is subject to Building Act requirements, which may include having to prove the building complies with the Building Code. Building consent will be needed if the building is to be connected to services.
3. If you want to either place or build a tiny/small house on a site then it is possible that both building consent and resource consent will be required before you start work.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the Building Act and Schedule 1 exemptions. Copies of the Act and exemptions, and further information, are available at www.mbie.govt.nz. You are also welcome to call us on 03 477 4000 or visit the ground floor of the Civic Centre and talk to our staff.