



Municipality of Anchorage



Policy AG.19

Intermodal Shipping Containers

Intermodal shipping containers (commonly referred to as “Connex” containers) used as temporary or permanent structures are required to comply with Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21 land use regulations and Title 23 building codes.

Building Permit Required

Building permits are required for installations located within the Building Safety Service Area (AMC 23.10.104.1).

Exceptions: A building permit is not required for the following:

1. The installation of one container per lot not exceeding 200 square feet of floor area as long as the container is used for storage only. Note however:
 - i. New installations of shipping containers are only allowed in residential districts on lots of 40,000 square feet or greater, and only one container is allowed per 40,000 square feet of lot area.
 - ii. Inside the Building Safety Service Area a land use permit is required when the container exceeds 150 square feet but is less than 200 square feet (AMC 21.03.100).
2. Containers located on legally permitted construction sites, including adjacent lots used for staging.
3. Containers staged on contractor’s property between jobs.
4. Containers staged for retail sale in sales lot.

Land Use Permit Required

Land use permits are required for installations located outside the building safety service area. Additionally, land use permits are required within the building safety service area for installations that do not require a building permit.

Exceptions: A land use permit is not required for the following:

1. Containers located on legally permitted construction sites, including adjacent lots used for staging.
2. Containers staged on contractor’s property between jobs.
3. Containers staged for retail sale in sales lot.

Land Use Requirements

1. Shipping containers are allowed in Anchorage and Chugiak/Eagle River areas as accessory buildings used for storage, but are specifically prohibited in Girdwood Residential areas (AMC 21.09.040.3).
2. New installations of shipping containers are only allowed in residential districts on lots of 40,000 square feet or greater. Only one container is allowed per 40,000 square feet of lot area (AMC 21.05.070D.11).
3. In commercial districts, shipping containers must be located to the rear of all principal structures or meet the screening requirements of AMC 21.05.070D.11.
4. A shipping container facing an abutting public street or residential property must be screened by structures, landscaping, and /or fences at least as high as the unit, or shall be sided and roofed using materials and colors which are similar to material and/or colors of the primary structure (AMC 21.05.070D.11.b).
5. Shipping containers are subject to yard and height requirements defined in AMC 21.06.020 Table 21.06-1 (Dimensional Standards).
6. Additional standards for shipping containers can be found at AMC 21.05.070D.11 (Use Regulations), 21.10.050H.6 (Chugiak - Eagle River) and 21.09.050C.3 (Girdwood).

Fire Separation Distance

In addition to the setback requirements in Title 21, container locations shall comply with the fire separation distance requirements in Title 23. This usually results in a 10 foot minimum separation distance between a container and property line that does not front on a public way.

Plot Plans

Plot plans are required in accordance with Handouts R.01, AG.06, and AG.08 for installations requiring either building or land use permits.

Plans and Calculations

In regards to installations requiring a *building permit*, please note the following:

1. Plans, structural calculations and soils reports are not required for individual metal shipping containers installed on grade as long as there is no attached construction.
2. All other installations (including but not limited to stacked containers, multiple connected containers and containers with attached construction) require plans, calculations and soils reports in accordance with Handouts R.01 and AG.06.
3. Structural calculations, when required, shall verify the proposed installation is stable for sliding and overturning. Calculations for installations with attached construction shall verify framing is sufficient for required load combinations.

Permit Fees

Permit fees are assessed in accordance with AMC Titles 21 and 23. Fees are based on use and area. A Container accessory to a single family home and used for storage is considered a Group U occupancy. Please consult a permit technician for the actual fee.



Kent Kohlhase, P.E., Building Official

Date: November 21, 2016

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