



INFORMATION BULLETIN

BU-030

Eff: 02-18-2008 Rev: 09-30-2020

Intermodal Shipping Containers Used as Accessory Storage

The purpose of this Information Bulletin (“IB”) is to highlight the pertinent sections of the Long Beach Municipal Code (“LBMC”) and the Departmental policy that governs the use and location of intermodal shipping containers (“containers”) when used as accessory storage units on private properties. Containers may be used and located when in compliance with the Zoning regulations. It may be considered as a piece of equipment and not a building or structure for the purposes of Building and Fire regulations; including to be exempted from the State’s Accessibility Regulation in Title 24, Part 2, of the California Code of Regulations (i.e., California Building Code, Chapter 11A or 11B).

Applicants will be required to obtain approval from the Planning Bureau. A construction permit from the Building and Safety Bureau is not required when all applicable provisions contained in this IB are satisfied. Permits or approvals from other City agencies or departments may be required depending on the location and material stored within the containers.

It is not the intent of this IB to address intermodal shipping containers located on terminals within the port, rail yards, or trucking facilities; used as temporary storage at active construction sites having a valid building permit; at event sites having a valid special event permit; approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development as Factory-Built Housing, Manufactured Home, Commercial Modular, or Special Purpose Commercial Modular units; or stand-alone units in industrial zoning districts. For additional information regarding containers that are permitted to be repurposed as buildings or structures, refer to Information Bulletin BU-031 Intermodal Shipping Containers Repurposed as Buildings or Structures.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Applicants that intend to use containers as accessory storage must determine the zoning district the containers are to be located. Zoning districts may have conditions to allow or prohibit its use. They are as follows:

1. Industrial Zoning Districts. All outdoor storage located in any industrial zones requires a Conditional Use Permit pursuant to the LBMC Chapter 21.33 Industrial Districts.
2. All Other Zoning Districts. No other zoning districts address the use of containers. As such, it is not permitted by right.

BUILDING AND FIRE REGULATIONS

Applicants that intend to use containers as accessory storage and to consider it as a piece of equipment and not buildings or structures must satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. Location. Containers shall be located as follows:
 - A minimum of 5'-0" from all property lines adjoining adjacent properties.
 - A minimum of 10'-0" from the exterior openings (e.g., doors, windows, etc.) of any buildings or structures.
 - A minimum distance so as to not block, obstruct, or reduce any required means of egress (e.g., exit door, egress window, egress courtyard, exit width, etc.), open spaces, natural light or ventilation, vent shafts, parking spaces, access driveways, or etc. of buildings or structures on the property or adjacent properties.

2. Requirements and Restrictions. Containers shall meet or satisfy all of the following criteria:
 - Not to be used for human occupancy.
 - Not stacked on top of each other or joined in any manner.
 - Not installed with any electrical, plumbing, heating or air conditioning systems.
 - Not stored with any hazardous materials (unless approved by the Fire Code Official).
 - Not stored with food related products (unless approved by the Health Official).
 - Not contained with openings other than the existing corrugated double hinged doors used for access or vents for ventilation.
 - Not altered in any manner except for removing or replacing existing wood flooring (if any), blasting existing paint to bare metal and repainting, or minor repairs.
 - Not located over utility, sewer or other easements.
 - Not to exceed 9'-6" height x 8'-0" width x 40'-0" length.
 - Not permanently anchored to the ground.
 - Maintained in a good condition and free of graffiti at all time.

The Planning, Building and Safety, and Fire Prevention Bureaus' reserve the right to deny the use of containers as storage as well as the ability to impose additional corrective conditions, if, in the Bureaus' opinion, such denial or corrective conditions are proven necessary for the protection of occupants of the building or adjacent properties. Furthermore, any subsequent change in the use or occupancy, including but not limited to, additions, alterations or repairs of the container, building or structure shall be a cause for re-examining the approval and conditions, if any, contained in this IB.

To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Development Services Department at longbeach.gov/lbds and 562.570.3807. A minimum of three business days is requested to ensure availability; attempts will be made to accommodate requests with shorter notice.