



## Overview

"Tiny houses" have received a lot of attention and interest in recent years. A tiny house is typically defined as a single-family home, generally 400 square feet or less, excluding lofts. Tiny homes are built in different ways, and it is important to identify which types of tiny homes fall within the scope and application of building codes. The four types of tiny homes are:

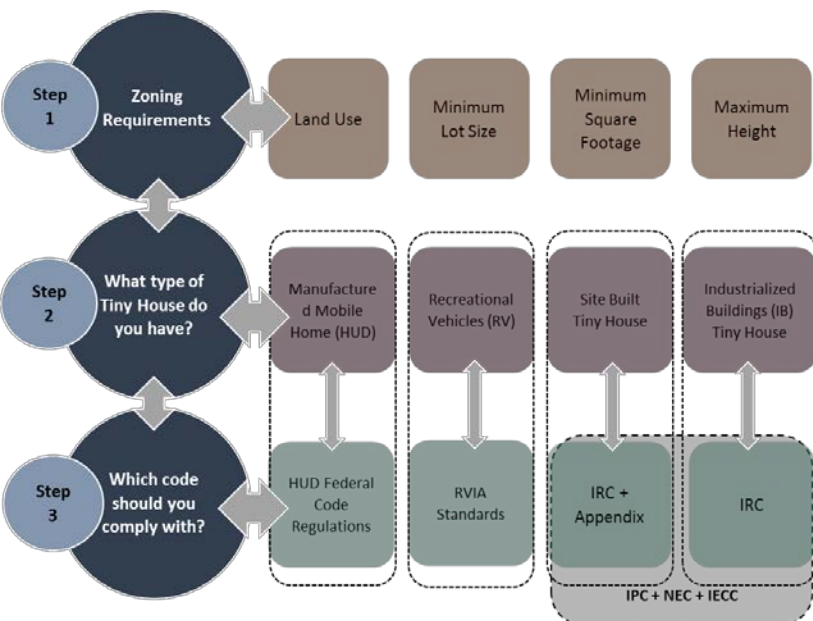
1. **Recreational vehicles**
2. **Manufactured (mobile) homes**
3. **Residential (modular) Industrialized Buildings**
4. **Site-built dwellings**

Regulations for each of these four types may vary, but generally, the state's building codes only apply to tiny homes that are modular dwellings and site-built dwellings. Recreational vehicles and manufactured homes are not regulated by building codes but fall under other HUD and other industry standards.



## Zoning Requirements

Tiny houses, like all other houses and recreational vehicles, are subject the zoning requirements of local governments which vary widely by jurisdiction. Some aspects typically regulated by local zoning laws include: land use, location, height, width, type of foundation, number of stories, and minimum size of lots and buildings. It therefore becomes an important first step for the builder and prospective tiny home owner to obtain permission from the local government to site the tiny home within their jurisdiction.



## Which Codes Apply?

The following codes apply for tiny houses:

- *International Residential Code (IRC), Current edition with Georgia Amendments*
- *International Plumbing Code (IPC), Current edition with Georgia Amendments*
- *International Energy Efficiency Code (IECC) Current edition with Georgia Amendments*
- *National Electrical Code (NEC) Current edition*
- *International Swimming Pool And Spa Code (ISPSA) with Georgia Amendments*

Some of the code-related issues that might affect the design and construction of tiny homes are:

- Room Size and Dimension
- Lofts
- Headroom
- Means of Escape
- Egress Width
- Stairs

## Application of Building Codes

Tiny homes are dwelling units and therefore they are subject to the same building code regulations as any other traditional site-built or stick-built home. A dwelling is defined as a building provided with permanent provisions for sleeping, cooking, eating, living, and sanitation.

In order to help address these concerns, the 2012 IRC has been amended to change the minimum habitable room size from 120 sf to 70 sf and add a new Appendix for Tiny House Construction. However, the Appendix must be adopted locally to be enforced. Copies of these amendments are available at

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/constructi/ncodes/programs/codeamendments.asp>



## Recreational Vehicles

A recreational vehicle (RV) is a motor home, travel trailer, truck camper or camping trailer designed for recreational or emergency human habitation. RVs must comply with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) *A119.2 Standard on Recreational Vehicles*. They are intended for recreational or seasonal use only.

Tiny homes that are built on a utility trailer chassis with wheels are often referred to as Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOWs). Remaining in a mobile-ready state, they are wheeled vehicles which do not fall within the scope of state's building codes. THOW's are typically classified as recreational vehicles or park models.

A park model is a vehicular-type unit with a floor area of 400 square feet or less. They are factory built to meet the *ANSI A119.5, Park Model Recreational Vehicle Standard*. Park models can be semi or permanently sited.

Siting of RVs, Park Models and THOWs is regulated and controlled by local planning and zoning ordinances. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) regulates RVs as vehicles for title and licensing purposes through your county vehicle licensing agency. For questions about the RV and Park model standards, contact the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association at (703) 620-6003 or visit their webpage at <http://www.rvia.org/>

## Residential Industrialized (Modular) Buildings

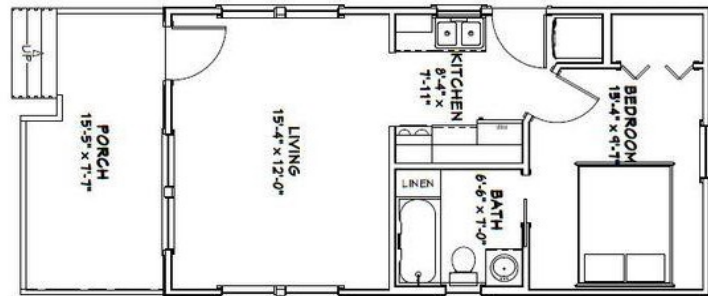
A residential industrialized (modular) building is defined as a dwelling unit designed and constructed to comply with the Georgia State Residential Code and is fabricated or assembled wholly or in part in a manufacturing facility and cannot be inspected at the installation site without disassembly, damage to, or destruction thereof.

*They may or may not contain a permanent metal chassis but shall be affixed to permanent load-bearing foundation.* Residential industrialized (modular) buildings are built to the same code requirements as stick-built homes.

Every industrialized building (IB) is fully inspected during the open construction phase in the factory by independent third party agencies. Upon completion, a DCA insignia is affixed to each module or unit which certifies it complies with the state's construction codes and rules for its intended application and use. However, local governments retain full control over all matters relating to a building's installation at a site, including subdivision controls, zoning issues, site grading, foundation installations and utility hook-ups.

For questions about modular buildings, contact the DCA IB Program Office at (404) 679-3118 or visit: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/constructioncodes/programs/industrialized.asp>.

## Tiny House Generic Floor Plan



## Manufactured (Mobile) Homes

Manufactured (mobile) homes are factory built on a metal chassis which complies with the HUD federal code regulations. All manufactured homes must meet the National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. Section 5401. Manufactured homes are not regulated by the building codes.

For questions about HUD manufactured (mobile) homes, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office, Manufactured Housing Division, at (404) 565-9498 or visit [www.gainsurance.org/FireMarshal?ManufacturedHousing.aspx](http://www.gainsurance.org/FireMarshal?ManufacturedHousing.aspx)

## Site-Built Dwellings

Site-built or stick-built dwellings are residential buildings or structures that are built on the construction site. Typically, they are built on permanent foundations and are not designed or intended to be moved or relocated.

All site-built or stick-built dwellings must comply with the current International Residential Code (IRC) for One and Two Family Dwellings and must be constructed by a State Licensed Contractor. When approved by the local government, tiny houses on permanent foundations and must be constructed by state licensed contractors where required by state law.

For questions about site-built dwellings, contact the Construction Codes Office at (404) 679-3118 or visit: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/constructioncodes/programs/industrialized.asp>.