

Cargo Shipping Containers

Building Permit Requirements

Cargo containers, also known as intermodal freight containers, are standardized, reusable portable vessels that were originally designed for use in intercontinental traffic of freight and designed to be mounted on a rail car, truck or ship. When such containers are used as a building or structure, they are subject to the provisions of the building code as adopted and modified by King County. Accordingly, a building permit is required to locate and use such structures. The site and building construction plans shall be adequate to demonstrate compliance with building, fire and site regulatory standards. Structural calculations are required for altered or structurally connected containers.



As with other prefabricated structures such as portables or manufactured homes, building code approval of cargo containers may be obtained through the [Washington State, Department of Labor and Industries \(L&I\), Manufactured Homes & Other Mobile Structures](#).

Exemptions:

1. Residential accessory storage structures less than 200 SF
2. A container used for storage of construction materials and equipment associated with a valid building or grading permit for the property on which it is located.

Exempt structures as noted above shall be:

- a. Not located in required setbacks, parking spaces or fire lane
- b. Separated by at least 10' from all other buildings
- c. Comply with all other building and site requirements as determined appropriate
- d. Non-heated, not used as a habitable space

References

- 2015 Internal Building Code Sect. 105.1- Permit Required
- King County Code Sect. 16.02.240 - Work Exempt from Permit

