

Cargo Containers

Converted to Storage Buildings

A **cargo container unit** is a vehicle or intermodal container designed and constructed to contain or carry freight, including semi-trailers without running gear, railroad car units and shipping containers. Containers do not include mobile homes, manufactured homes, factory-built homes, travel trailers, commercial coaches or other metal storage boxes not built to International Standards Organization container specifications.

Building Code Requirements

Cargo container units exceeding 120 square feet in floor area require a building permit.

The permit application shall include:

- Five (5) copies of a plot plan showing the location of the unit.
- Two (2) copies of either a foundation and/or anchorage system designed by an engineer, or minimum tie-down requirements submitted by the applicant (such as 'Minute-Man' auger anchors at each corner of each unit), depending on the criteria below. Minimum 3' deep anchors are required at each corner.

An engineered design for a foundation and anchorage system of the wall to the foundation must be provided when a converted cargo container unit meets **any** of the following criteria:

1. Exceeds 400 sq. ft. in floor area; or
2. Exceeds 10 feet in height; or
3. Is used for any purpose other than as a private storage building; or
4. Is accessed by the public; or
5. Must meet conditions attached to approval of a land use application.

The engineer must evaluate the container for compliance with minimum site-specific wind, snow, flood and seismic load requirements in the Larimer County Building Code, or the applicant may submit manufacturer's specifications confirming the unit meets these minimum requirements.



Land Use Code Requirements

Semi trailers with attached running gear are considered vehicles, not buildings, and are subject to Land Use, not Building Code regulations.

Cargo containers used for a storage warehouse facility in the C-Commercial or I-Industrial Zoning District must first be approved through a land use application process (such as Site plan or Special Review) before a building permit can be issued. Land Use approval may not be required for cargo container building permits in all other zoning districts within Larimer County.

Exception: Building Code regulations don't apply to cargo containers in the I-Industrial Zoning District classified by Planning staff as 'outdoor storage' instead of 'storage buildings.'

NOTE: Cargo containers cannot be placed in Flood Hazard Areas and must meet Land Use Code setback requirements from property lines, roads, and waterways, whether or not a permit is required. Permit applications will be reviewed by Planning and Engineering staff as well as the Building Department.