



County of Lassen
Department of Planning and Building Services

• Planning • Building • Environmental Health • Code Enforcement • Surveyor • Surface Mining

Maurice L. Anderson, Director
707 Nevada Street, Suite 5
Susanville, CA 96130-3912
Main Phone: 530 251-8269
Fax: 530 251-8373
email: landuse@co.lassen.ca.us
website: www.co.lassen.ca.us

August 27, 2024

TO: Contractors, Engineers, Landowners, Agents,
and other Interested Parties

Zoning and Building
Inspection Requests
Phone: 530 257-5263

FROM: Maurice L. Anderson, Director
Mike Johnson, Building Official

SUBJECT: Building permit requirements for sea-land cargo containers (intermodal shipping containers)

With the 2022 cycle of the California Building Code (CBC), the California Building Standards Commission added Section 3115 (Intermodal Shipping Containers) (CBC, Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), effective January 1, 2023, to require a building permit for placement of cargo containers. Therefore, effective July 31, 2024, a building permit is required for the permanent placement (more than 180 days) of a cargo container on a parcel. As such, the attached bulletin has been prepared to summarize the permitting requirements.

An intermodal shipping container (cargo container) is a metal shipping container which was designed to be used to transport goods and materials by truck, train, ship and/or air, and which is used for the storage of goods, merchandise, or equipment, excepting any such metal shipping container that is on a chassis.

Please contact the Building Division of the Department of Planning and Building Services for with any questions on the submittal requirements.

MLA/MJ:gfn

Enclosure: Bulletin – Cargo Containers for Incidental Storage Process and Instructions

cc: Board of Supervisors
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Cargo Containers for Incidental Storage Process and Instructions

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES
707 Nevada Street, Suite 5 · Susanville, CA 96130-3912
(530) 251-8269 · (530) 251-8373 (fax)
www.co.lassen.ca.us

The purpose of this information bulletin is to explain permitting requirements for using cargo containers on private property in Lassen County. Cargo containers are also known as intermodal shipping containers. An intermodal shipping container is a metal shipping container which was designed to be used to transport goods and materials by truck, train, ship and/or air, and which is used for the storage of goods, merchandise, or equipment, excepting any such metal shipping container that is on a chassis.

With the 2022 cycle of the California Building Code, the California Building Standards Commission added Section 3115 (Intermodal Shipping Containers) (CBC, Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), effective January 1, 2023. As such, effective August 1, 2024, a building permit is now required for the placement of a cargo container on private property in Lassen County (with the exceptions noted below). If the requirements of this bulletin can be met, a cargo container may be placed without engineering.

Please consult with the Building Division for building application requirements and fees.

Building Permit Submittal Requirements

1. Planning review to establish correct zoning, if allowed in zoning, setbacks, etc.
2. A completed and signed building permit application.
3. Plans and information for the installation of an Intermodal Shipping Container (Cargo Container), shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. A cover sheet that indicates the project address; accessors parcel number; owners name, address and phone number; a scope of work; the zoning; and a statement that the container is a "U" occupancy for private storage only and shall not be used for any other purpose. "Private storage" in this case means storage only of goods incidental to the existing permitted use and not available for public access or use.
 - b. Cargo containers require anchorage to the ground at all four corners of the container using an earth auger or other system approved by the Building Official. Each anchor will need to have a minimum hold down pressure of 2,600 pounds. If the requirements of this bulletin are not met, cargo containers may require anchorage of the container to a foundation system designed by a registered engineer.
 - c. A site plan that indicates all the required setbacks for a U occupancy storage building are met, the general topography of the property including slope of grade around all four orientations of the proposed cargo container.
 - d. The cargo container shall be placed on level, stable, earth and at least five feet away from slopes greater than one vertical to three horizontal.
 - e. Clearance between ground and container floor shall not exceed 12 inches. If a container is raised above grade the corner anchor lengths will need to be increased to account for the additional height.
 - f. Grade around the cargo container shall be sloped away from container so that runoff goes around the container and not under it.
 - g. The cargo container shall not be attached to other structures or other containers. Containers shall not be "stacked."

- h. The cargo container shall be an industry-standard shipping container. The container shall be constructed of steel or aluminum with a minimum 14-gauge thickness except for a wood floor within the metal shell. The container and its manufactured physical dimensions (width, length, and height) and shall not be altered. Structural plans and calculations are not required for the container itself.
 - i. The cargo container shall not contain or utilize electrical, plumbing, gas or mechanical components or utilities.
 4. Cargo containers are for storage only and shall not be installed in flood hazard areas.
 5. The applicable codes for this type of permit are found in the current edition of the CBC, more specifically sections 107 (Construction Documents), Chapter 16 (Structural Design) and Section 3115 (Intermodal Shipping Containers)

Zoning requirements

Cargo containers are not allowed in the O-H district (Historical Site District), O-D district (Primitive Area District) and O-S district (Open Space District). A primary use of the subject property must be established before a cargo container can be placed on a property (e.g. residential use for residentially zoned properties, agricultural use for agriculturally zoned properties, industrial use for industrially zoned properties or commercial use for commercially zoned properties). Additionally, cargo containers cannot be placed in setback areas or in exclusion areas. An exclusion area is an area established by the map that created a parcel where certain buildings or uses are not allowed. To check your Zoning and set back regulations you may Email the Lassen County Department of Planning and Building Services at landuse@co.lassen.ca.us.

Agricultural Exemption for Intermodal Shipping Containers

Cargo containers may be placed without a building permit with an approved agricultural exemption pursuant to the Guidelines for Agricultural Exemptions (see Board of Supervisors Resolution 24-020).

Temporary use of Intermodal Shipping Containers

Cargo containers may be temporarily placed without a building permit for up to 90 days, or during the time there is an active issued building permit. An extension of 90 days will be available upon request from the Building Department. Any such temporary placement shall not be in an exclusion area or within a required setback.

Can an Intermodal Shipping Container be stacked on top of another or installed on wheels or skids?

Cargo containers cannot be placed on top or stacked. Containers shall not be attached to other structures nor other containers. Cargo containers on wheels or on a chassis are considered truck trailers, which cannot be permitted as a permanent building or structure.

Can I modify an Intermodal Shipping Container by cutting windows or adding a roof spanning two containers?

Yes, subject to the provisions of the California Building Code Title 24, Part 2, Chapter 31, Section 3115, other provisions of the California Building Code, and an approved building permit, cargo containers may be modified. Any proposed modification of a cargo container requires engineering. We recommend consulting with a registered design professional regarding any proposed modifications.