



Recovery and Rebuilding:

Travel Trailers, Recreational Vehicles & Other Temporary Accommodations after the CZU Lightning Fire

Meeting Housing Needs During Disaster Recovery

Occupying recreational vehicles (RVs) and other types of temporary structures or accommodations is allowed with approval of an administrative Temporary Permit (“TP”) issued by the County Planning Department. TPs may be issued for previously legally developed sites in the burn area that were damaged by the fire, and for legally developed sites that are not in the burn area when the temporary accommodation houses people who were displaced by fire. A TP will NOT be issued for any vacant parcel or, at least at this time, for an illegally developed parcel inside or outside the burn area. The Board of Supervisors has requested that programs to recognize illegal structures in some manner be explored, and it may be that the policy about non permitted structures and TPs may be modified in the future.

The TP will be issued by staff after an expedited review, to ensure that basic safety standards are in place. Temporary accommodations approved through a TP are not required to meet all current standards that apply to permanent uses or structures. This approach can support temporary or phased occupancy while rebuilding.

In some cases, a “Temporary Occupancy Permit” (“TOP”) issued by the Building Official, a different type of Temporary Permit, may also come into play. For example, a TOP can allow habitable occupancy of a structure that is undergoing repair.

Required Clearances

Temporary accommodations can be authorized by County Planning Department staff only **after all required clearances have been obtained**. For sites inside the burn area this will include a Debris Removal Clearance issued by Environmental Health regarding site cleanup operations, including both “Phase One” (Hazardous materials) and “Phase Two” (Ash and non-hazardous materials). In addition, for any parcel, Geologic Clearance may be required to certify that the site has been evaluated for geologic hazards (potential debris flows, landslides etc.) and determined to be safe for human habitation. An additional Fire Access Clearance from the Fire Marshall may also be required in some difficult to access areas.

NO PERMIT WILL BE ISSUED FOR TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY IN AN AREA WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS. For more information on required clearances see “Application Requirements” at the end of this document.

Temporary Permit – Basic Requirements

Temporary Permits may be issued for residences on legally developed parcels that allow single-family residential uses, subject to the issuance of a Temporary Permit and provided that the temporary accommodation has an approved source of water, sewage disposal system and electricity, and can be reasonably shown to free from health and safety hazards.

Temporary accommodations may include, but are not limited to, trailers, recreational vehicles (RVs), tiny homes, temporary modular structures, storage containers or yurts that are modified to meet building code standards for habitability, and similar configurations, as well as existing legal structures that have not previously been habitable. Basic habitability, safety and housing standards must be met by any type of proposed accommodation or structure. For more information on habitability requirements contact: FireRebuild@santacruzcounty.us

Number of RVs or Temporary Accommodations or Structures: A maximum of one (1) temporary accommodation for habitation is allowed on any residentially, agriculturally or commercially-zoned parcel that allows residential uses and where the unit can be served by the septic/sewer capacity or includes a self-contained system. On a case by case basis, additional units may be permitted where there is a demonstrated need and all units can be adequately served by utilities.

Time Limitation: Temporary Permits are valid for an initial period *up to* three years unless otherwise specified, with further one-year extensions possible if the rebuild is in process. For temporary habitable accommodations on parcels located outside of the burn area, proof will be required that the structure is inhabited by persons displaced by the fire who are still in the process of reconstruction. The Temporary Permit will expire once final inspection of the new home is complete.

Location of Temporary Structures

Inside the Burn Area: Temporary housing shall be located outside the boundaries of any recorded easements, but may be located within zoning ordinance setback areas, other than riparian setbacks, if such placement of the temporary accommodation is necessary to allow for unobstructed reconstruction on the site.

Outside of the Burn Area: Temporary housing must be installed within the property boundaries and outside of any front, rear, or side yard setbacks. Please verify that the setbacks for the subject parcel are shown on the plot plan submitted with your application and are consistent with the zone district. Temporary accommodations cannot encroach on any existing drainage, utility or access easements and shall avoid septic and leach field areas and other site constraints.

For information on zone districts development standards, go to the Planning Department website at www.sccoplanning.com. Your zone district is available via the link "Mapping & GIS" (right side bar), click on "legend" on left side, and select the "Zoning" overlay. Setbacks for each district are available on the Planning Department website at www.sccoplanning.com via the link "County Code" on the left sidebar. Go to Title 13, left sidebar, section 13.10.323(B).

Other Siting and Sewage Connection considerations: Temporary residential structures must be placed on level areas. Work to create a level area for placement of a temporary housing structure, or to create access to a level area may require a separate grading permit from the County Planning Department. Construction of retaining walls to create a level area requires a separate building permit.

Standards

Except for existing legal structures, temporary accommodations and temporary structures for habitation are limited to those that are not on a permanent foundation, such as a "Recreational Vehicles" or "Travel Trailer (5th wheel)" and can be removed from a site after expiration of the Temporary Permit. Issuance

of a Temporary Permit shall not be interpreted as an indication that permanent permitted status will be achieved in the future.

“Modular Homes” must be approved through the California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) as a manufactured or factory-built home.

“Tiny Homes” and other structures must meet the requirements and be certified by the appropriate State Agency as a Manufactured Home (“MH”), Factory-Built Housing (“FBH”), Recreational Vehicle (“RV”), Park Trailer (“PT”), Camping Cabin (“CC”), or meet and be reviewed and inspected for compliance, with the California Residential Code or California Building Code (CRC or CBC).

NOTE: Manufactured homes, modular homes, and some tiny homes may be able to be approved as either the primary unit or an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Note that ADUs have size limitations and standards that must be met. For fire recovery purposes the County will permit construction of an ADU in advance of permitting the replacement home that it would be accessory to. For more information on ADUs please refer the Planning Department website at www.sccoplanning.com, under the link “Accessory Dwelling Units”. If the structure is proposed to remain, located either within or outside the burn areas, a Building Permit will be required consistent with the standard application process.

Occupancy of existing legal structures that are not currently permitted for human habitation, or of structures that have sustained partial damage in the recent fire, as well as occupancy of a portion of a replacement dwelling before the building is completed, requires the issuance of A Temporary Occupancy Permit (TOP). Under the California Building Code, temporary occupancy may be approved if the Building Official can make the finding that no substantial life, safety, or health hazards exist by allowing occupancy of the building. Prior to approving a Temporary Occupancy Permit, Planning Department staff will verify that all required approvals, including but not limited to zoning, water / well, septic or sewer, encroachment and fire safety are obtained as needed. In addition, a building inspector will inspect the building to verify that it is safe for occupancy. Additional work or corrections to existing work may be required before temporary occupancy is approved by the Building Official. For more information on habitability requirements for structures contact:

FireRebuild@santacruzcounty.us

Utility Connections

Inside the Burn Area: All temporary residential structures or accommodations shall be connected to utilities in accordance with the following criteria:

A Water Source meeting one of the following criteria:

1. Public water supply, (contact the appropriate water agency for requirements).
2. Existing well that has been approved by the County Environmental Health as producing water that is safe for domestic consumption.
3. Other water source approved by the County Environmental Health.

An approved sewage disposal system meeting one of the following criteria:

1. Public sewer system, (contact the County Sanitation Department at dpw.lateralprogram@santacruzcounty.us).
2. Existing on-site sewage disposal (septic) system that has been approved by the County and determined by Environmental Health to be intact, adequately sized, and functioning following the disaster. Sewage connections should be made to allow for gravity flow to disposal location, otherwise a grinder pump will be required. Connections to septic tanks shall be made at the inlet end. A Plumbing Permit is required for the P-Trap connection.

3. Other method of sewage disposal approved by the County Environmental Health. An approved source of electricity meeting one of the following criteria:
 - Permitted electrical service hook-up (PG&E). A Debris Removal Clearance is required **BEFORE** issuance of an Electrical Permit for temporary power.
 - Other power source approved by the County Building Official or Planning Director. Use of generators is prohibited as a source of energy. Limited periods of generator use to periodically supplement batteries where adequately sized solar is the primary energy source may be allowed on a case by case basis.

Outside the Burn Area: Separate connections to electricity, water services and sewer are not allowed for temporary residential structures or accommodations. Water and electricity may be obtained directly from the existing development on the parcel and occupants may use existing bathroom facilities. Self-contained recreational vehicles (RVs) located on existing developed parcels that are served by public sewer are required to discharge waste at an authorized dump station.

NOTE: The use of extension cords to power a temporary living space such as an RV is not recommended. Extension cords are designed to power equipment on a day to day basis and are not sunlight resistant. It is therefore recommended that a permit be obtained for a more permanent wiring method. This method should include but is not limited to underground conduit with the proper size and type of wire, a permanent plug, and a watertight enclosure.

For parcels not served by a public sewer, the temporary residential structure shall be connected to the septic system or other approved arrangement in accordance with Environmental Health regulations.

Temporary Storage

Temporary and removable storage structures, such as shipping containers or other commercially rentable structures, may be installed on any parcel within the burn area for the storage of goods during the reconstruction of destroyed structures and are subject to the same location requirements as for temporary residential structures. No permit will be issued for temporary storage **structures until a Debris Removal Clearance has been issued by Environmental Health** regarding site cleanup operations, including both “Phase One” (Hazardous materials) and “Phase Two” (Ash and non-hazardous materials).

Application Requirements

Clearances – Inside the Burn Area:

- Debris Removal Clearances - issued by Environmental Health (Two phases):
 - **Phase One - Hazardous Materials Debris Removal Clearance**
 - **Phase Two - Ash and Non-Hazardous Material Debris Removal Clearance**

NOTE: If you plan to do Phase Two clean-up privately instead of participating in the public program, it may be feasible to be approved for a temporary residence when Environmental Health approves your private plan. If you plan to arrange Phase Two clean-up through a private

plan, please be aware that you are then disqualified from government funded Phase Two clean-up. All Phase Two private plans must be reviewed and approved by Environmental Health.

For more information about Phase One and Phase Two debris removal and Debris Removal Clearance, please visit the County fire recovery web site at:

<https://www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery/EHResources.aspx>

- **Temporary Clearance – issued by Environmental Health**

This clearance is required for confirmation of on-site potable water and a functioning septic system. Self-contained RV's proposed on a temporary, *short term basis* will be considered on a case-by-case basis; however, the intent of the program is to ensure temporary accommodations are ultimately connected to an on-site septic system or sewer. Contact Environmental Health staff for more information at: env.hlth@santacruzcounty.us

For sites within the burn area that are located on sewer (as opposed to septic), contact the County Sanitation Department at dpw.lateralprogram@santacruzcounty.us for **sewer connection requirements**.

- **Geologic Hazard Clearance – issued by Planning Department**

Prior to issuance of a TP, properties that are mapped as being within the debris flow hazard area must be evaluated by a private consulting geologist to determine that the location of the proposed temporary accommodations will be safe from geologic hazards. The County Geologist will review the evaluation prepared by the private consulting geologist prior to issuing a clearance.

Clearances – Outside the Burn Area:

- **Temporary - Clearance – issued by Environmental Health**

On sites served by septic systems a clearance, as described above for the burn area, is required to confirm a functioning septic system.

- **Geologic Hazard Clearance – issued by Planning Department**

On sites that are mapped as being within the debris flow hazard area, as described above for the burn area, a clearance is required for confirmation that the location of the proposed temporary accommodations will be safe from geologic hazards.

Associated Permits:

- **Over-the-Counter Electrical and Plumbing Permits are required for temporary power and for connections to the septic system (“P-Trap” installation) – issued by the Building Department.**

Following confirmation that all required clearances have been issued and zoning requirements are met, you will be notified by staff that your TP permit has been conditionally approved, pending submittal of an Over-the-Counter Building Permit for installation of a temporary power pole (if not using solar) and “P-trap” installation (if applicable, see below).

P-Trap Applicability: A “P-Trap” is a plumbing fixture that, when connected to a toilet in an RV, tiny home, or other type of accessory structure, stops sewer or septic gases from passing into the living space. A “P-Trap” shall be installed on all toilets that are connected to septic or sewer.

Application Form:

For all other application requirements please see the Temporary Permit Application Form. You may access the Temporary Permit application here:

https://www.sccoplanning.com/Portals/2/County/Planning/CZU_Fire/Temp%20Residence%20Permit%20Application%209.9.20.pdf