

***Temporary Occupancy of Travel Trailers, Recreational Vehicles  
and Mobile Homes***

**PURPOSE**

To provide a permit process for the temporary occupancy of travel trailers, recreational vehicles and mobile homes and to ensure compliance with applicable zoning, building and health codes.

**GENERAL**

- A. Temporary occupancy of travel trailers, recreational vehicles or mobile homes is permitted during the construction or major remodeling of a single family dwelling subject to the following requirements: (Sub type - CONS)
1. Issuance of building permits for either a new single family dwelling or for the major remodeling of an existing single family dwelling.
  2. Installation of the approved sewage disposal system.
  3. Connection of the temporary unit to the approved sewage disposal system or to sewer.
  4. Temporary occupancy permit expires with expiration of building permit(s).
  5. Removal of the temporary unit prior to receiving a final inspection on the building permit(s).
  6. Compliance with Fire Safe Standards including but not limited to access, fire suppression and setbacks for temporary units that are 640 square feet or larger or as otherwise may be required.
- B. Temporary occupancy of travel trailers or recreational vehicles is permitted for the following purposes:
1. To house an ill, convalescent or otherwise disabled friend or relative needing care from the occupant of the primary residence; or a friend or relative providing necessary care for an ill, convalescent or otherwise disabled occupant of the primary residence subject to the following requirements: (Sub type - CGVR)
    - a. Documentation from a physician.
    - b. Connection of the temporary unit to an approved sewage disposal system or sewer.
    - c. Compliance with minimum setbacks.
    - d. Annual renewal of the temporary permit.
  2. To house agricultural employees for ninety (90) days on properties with a bonafide agricultural operation. All sewage from these temporary units shall be discharged into a lawful sewage disposal system, unless otherwise approved by PRMD. (Sub type - AGEM).

**AUTHORITY**

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Sonoma County Code Sections 26-88-010(p), 26-04-010(h)(4), 26-06-010(h)(4), 26-08-010(h)(3), 26-10-010(m)(3), 26-12-010(m)(3) and 26-16-010(e).

**PROCEDURE**

- A. **Applicant submits the following:** a) a completed temporary permit application; b) three (3) copies of a complete site plan; c) three (3) copies of electrical and sanitation connection details; d) three (3) sets of floor plans; e) two (2) copies of installation manuals for mobile homes and State approved manufactured homes; and, f) three (3) copies of exit stairs and deck detail, if required.
- B. **Permit Technician** verifies the address, initializes a TEM permit, and then routes the applicant to the appropriate cubicles. *Note: Travel trailers or recreational vehicles on tires may be allowed on properties located in a F2 (Floodplain) zoning district due to the foundation requirements imposed under FEMA regulations. Mobile homes may be allowed in the F2 zoning district if they are elevated above the BFE. No occupancy of travel trailers, motor homes or recreational vehicles is allowed in the F1 (Floodway) zoning district. (Refer applicant to Stormwater staff for questions.)*
- C. **Zoning Approval:** Planner identifies the purpose of the temporary unit, informs the applicant of zoning requirements and then completes the zoning section of the temporary permit application in order to issue the approval. If the trailer is for temporary occupancy while constructing or remodeling a single family dwelling, the planner verifies that a building permit has been issued for construction or major remodeling. The planner shall enter CONS in the Sub type field in Permits Plus (PP) for tracking purposes.

If the trailer is to house a caregiver, the applicant is advised that the permit cannot be issued without a medical statement and that the permit must be renewed annually. When the applicant provides the medical statement, the planner proceeds with zoning approval. PP entries in this case shall include CGVR in the Sub type field for purposes of tracking.

- D. **Well/Septic Approval:** For temporary trailers during construction, the REHS on duty at the cubicle will verify that the septic system has been installed, that a final inspection of the system has been completed and will then issue an office approval. If the septic system has not received a final inspection, an approval will not be issued.

For temporary trailers to house a caregiver, an office approval can be issued if the septic system record on file shows that the septic system has adequate capacity or if there is a record of the septic system and the applicant agrees to temporarily reduce sewage flow while the temporary trailer is on site. Flow reduction would include temporarily ceasing use of a bedroom while the temporary trailer is in use. A conditional statement on the permit will be required for septic approval. If there is no record of the septic system, a field clearance is required. The field review must substantiate adequate function and capacity in the septic

system for the intended use. Generally, the septic system must be uncovered for evaluation. If the septic system is inadequate or if the house is served by a cesspool, a new septic system will be required meeting at least the repair guidelines for septic systems.

For temporary housing of agricultural employees, unless a legal sewage dump station exists on the property, a Class I septic system is required. Sizing of the system is based upon 40 gallons per person per day. If housing is only occupied in the summer, winter groundwater testing may be waived. A formal waiver application and justification will be required. A conditional statement will be required which acknowledges the reduction in septic system sizing and any waivers that are approved.

If all the required items are in place, the REHS on duty at the cubicle completes the septic system approval section of the building permit and completes required PP entries.

- E. **Public Sewer Approval:** A sewer permit is required to approve a temporary trailer, recreational vehicle or mobile home on properties served by public sewer. PRMD engineering inspection staff will inspect the sewer connection.
  
- F. **Plan Check Approval:** The Building Inspector/Plans Examiner on duty at the cubicle is responsible for: a) review and approval of electrical, plumbing and setup details; b) determining if an exit deck (36" x 36" minimum with stairs to grade) is required; c) verifying that all creek and property line setback requirements and occupancy separations are met; d) providing the applicant a handout which includes sample drawings for setup, plumbing and septic connections; and, e) completing the approval by writing any conditions on the building permit under "Work Authorized."
  
- G. **Code Enforcement Approval:** The Code Enforcement inspector on duty at the cubicle will review the permit for approval if there is an active violation on the property or if the trailer, recreational vehicle or mobile home has been placed on the property before a permit has been issued. Civil penalties will be calculated and imposed if the permit is being submitted to legalize an existing illegal trailer, recreational vehicle or mobile home on the property. The Code Enforcement inspector may impose conditions on the permit.
  
- H. **Permit is Issued:** **The permit will be issued if all required approvals are obtained.** The original permit application with supporting documents is filed in the building permit file in the main file room. One copy is given to the Building Inspector who will inspect the electrical, plumbing, water, set up and other conditions as required by Department staff and noted on the permit and in PP. The cashier will also forward a *Field Inspection Record* form to the Building Inspector for sign-off after inspection. The applicant is instructed to call for inspection(s), just like any other building permit, including a final.
  
- I. **Permit Fees.**

- 1) Mobile home setup

- 2) Minimum electrical
- 3) Minimum plumbing
- 4) Minimum zoning clearance
- 5) Well/Septic office clearance fee or hourly rate for field clearance
- 6) Applicable public sewer fees as may be required. (See Sanitation staff.)

J. **Annual Renewal.** A trailer used to house a caregiver is required to be renewed annually. If the permit is renewed for the existing trailer, the applicant will be required to submit a completed temporary permit application and a medical statement from a physician. A new TEM permit will be initialized and the applicant will be referred to a Planner at the zoning cubicle. If approved by zoning, the applicant will be charged the minimum zoning approval fee for the renewed permit. No inspections are required.

K. **Tracking for Caregiver Trailers.** DIS Staff will produce reports from PP from those Sub types - CGVR - prior to the expiration of the permit and forward them to designated Planning staff. Computer generated letters (attached) will be mailed by Planning staff to advise the property owner(s)/applicant of the requirement to renew their annual permit. Application and other materials will be included with the letter.

Designated Planning staff will continue to track these trailers to ensure that the application is submitted. If the application is not submitted within the specified period of time or if the permit is not renewed, Planning staff will forward a copy of the letter with a referral to Code Enforcement. Code Enforcement will follow up with a Notice of Violation and proceed with an abatement action to require removal of the trailer or legalization through the permit process.

## **ATTACHMENT**

- A. Temporary Occupancy of Travel Trailers, Recreational Vehicles and Mobile Homes (PJR-008)
- B. Notice of Pending Expiration of Temporary Permit for Care Giver Housing  
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### **Approved by:**

/s/ Pete Parkinson

Pete Parkinson, Director

Lead Author: Debra Watts

12/7/01  
12/15/03  
8/11/04

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