

Tiny Homes – Do they require consent?

'Tiny homes', or 'tiny houses' are becoming an increasingly popular option for people wanting to reduce costs and/or their environmental footprint living. Contrary to popular belief, however, in Central Otago tiny homes normally do require consent from Council.

The Central Otago District Plan does not have any specific provisions for tiny houses. Instead tiny homes typically fall with the Plan's definition of a *household unit*, which is a form of *residential activity*. A 'tiny home' will fall within the Plan's definition of a *household unit* where the following are provided:

- A place to sleep
- Cooking facilities (Including any plug-in cooktops, ovens or microwaves)
- Bathing and toilet facilities

If your tiny house is just a room for sleeping and is not self-contained, meaning it does not include cooking and bathing facilities and is reliant on another dwelling on the same site, it may be considered to be a sleepout, which are generally treated like any other extension to a dwelling.

What consents will I need?

If your site is in the Rural Resource Area you will require Resource Consent to establish residential activity regardless of whether or not the site is vacant. As with any other buildings, the tiny house must comply with all relevant District Plan standards. In addition to standards relating to yards, and height the Rural Resource Area also includes standards relating to separation distances between dwellings on different sites, as well as the visual effect of buildings and structures, including the types of exterior colours and materials that are permitted.

If your site is located in the Residential Resource Area you can establish a (single) residential activity as of right, so long as it complies with all relevant District Plan standards (i.e. yards, building height, site coverage etc). If one or more residential activities are already established on the site then you will require resource consent to establish your tiny house as a form of *multi-unit development*.

Please note that regardless of whether or not your particular project requires resource consent under the Resource Management Act 1991, it may or may not also require building consent under the Building Act 2004 (and *vice versa*). Please contact one of Council's Building Control Officers for more information on Building Act requirements for tiny houses.

Please note if you are residing in a caravan or other vehicle that is not considered a 'building', on a short-term basis this is not considered to constitute residential activity as defined by the District Plan.