

CABINS

Minimum Floor Area and Room Dimensions

- The cabin must have 144 square feet of habitable space and a minimum width and length wall of 12 feet
- The cabin must have one or more habitable rooms - one at least 120 square feet in floor area (space for living, sleeping, eating or cooking)
- Other habitable rooms, except kitchens, need to be at least 70 square feet in floor area
- A 7-foot ceiling height is required for habitable rooms, hallways, corridors, bathrooms, toilet rooms, laundry rooms, and basements.

Additional Information & Requirements

1. All cabins must be designed and built to comply with Larimer County's Snow, Wind and Foundation requirements (all cabins must be placed on a permanent foundation). Building plans, building permits and inspection approvals are required for all cabins.
2. If plumbing is installed in the cabin all plumbing lines shall be equipped with drain down valves to remove water from the various systems to prevent freeze damage. Drain lines must also be protected with approved anti-freeze during winter months to prevent freeze damage. It is the owner's responsibility to provide the required maintenance to protect the plumbing system. **All plumbing work must be inspected and approved.**
3. Cabins may use a fireplace or wood stove for heating. If heat is provided by a fireplace or woodstove, no insulation is required. Other heat sources (such as propane or electric) require compliance with Larimer County minimum insulation requirements (exterior walls and crawlspaces, attic spaces and cantilevers), and such insulation must be covered by a Class III wall covering. All woodstoves and fireplaces must be inspected and approved.
4. Smoke detectors are required on each story, in each sleeping room, and outside each sleeping room. Carbon monoxide detectors are required outside each separate sleeping area. Code compliant egress windows are also required from each basement, bedroom and sleeping loft. Smoke detectors, egress windows and carbon monoxide detectors are inspected and must be approved at the final building inspection.



DEFINITIONS

A "cabin" is defined in the Larimer County Land Use Code as:

"A structure that contains at least one habitable room for living, sleeping, eating, cooking or sanitation that is designed, arranged and intended to be occupied by one occupant or living unit.

1. A cabin that includes a primary heat source and living facilities for sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation will be considered to be a single-family dwelling.
2. Cabins are permitted in the applicable zoning districts (See Section 4.1 of the Larimer County Land Use Code) only in the West Half of Range 70, in Ranges 71-78 and in Townships 11 and 12 in Ranges 68-78."
3. A Cabin is a principal use that precludes a property owner from having more than one cabin or a cabin and a dwelling on the same parcel.

Note: Cabins can be lived in all year round.

Primary Heat Source

A heating system capable of maintaining room temperatures at 68 degrees Fahrenheit at a point three feet above the floor and two feet from exterior walls in all habitable rooms during, cold inclement weather when the structure is not occupied.

Additional Information & Requirements

5. All guardrails and stairs must be inspected and approved to comply with adopted Larimer County Building Code requirements.

6. A letter of completion confirming all required inspection approvals for the cabin can be issued upon request. No certificate of occupancy (CO) is issued on cabins—COs are issued for single-family dwellings and commercial structures only.



Regardless of whether a letter of completion or CO is requested or issued, all required inspection approvals for the cabin must be obtained prior to using or occupying the structure, (i.e., foundation, setback, plumbing, electrical, framing, insulation, wildfire, etc.).

- A permit and final inspection approval is required from Larimer County Health Department. Cabins may have holding tanks or other approved types of sewer systems. **Consulting with Larimer County Health Department on system requirements is highly recommended.** (It is a good idea to address both your current and future use plans at the start of your project.) Contact the Health Department at (970) 498-6775.
- All electrical systems require a separate permit from the State of Colorado Electrical Board and final inspection approval from the Electrical Board. Applications for permits are available at the Larimer County Building Department but must be sent to the State of Colorado Electric Board for processing and electrical permit issuance. On cabins using battery or generator systems, consult the Colorado State Electrical Board for specific requirements. To convert a cabin to a single-family dwelling the electrical system must be brought completely up to code for typical full-time use as a single-family dwelling, and a permit from the Colorado State Electrical Board is required prior to any work on the electrical system. **Consulting with the Colorado State Electrical Board to see how these requirements might affect your project both now and in the future is highly recommended.** Contact the Electrical Board at (303) 894-2985 or (970) 223-9838.

7. Consult with the Larimer County Wildfire Safety Coordinator concerning specific requirements at your building site. Final inspection approval from the Wildfire Safety Coordinator is typically required under cabin permits. Contact phone number is 498-5303.

8. **A separate permit is required to convert a cabin into a single-family dwelling or other use.** (See Page 3 for more information).

Note: Remainder of TCEF fees are collected when cabin is converted to a single-family dwelling.

HOW DO I CLASSIFY MY CABIN AS A SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING?

In order to receive a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) the cabin must be classified as a single-family dwelling, and the following items must be present:

1. Approved electrical system for a single-family residence with permit from State of Colorado Electrical Board.
2. Approved sanitation system with permit/approvals by Larimer County Health Department or sanitation district having jurisdiction. (Indoor bathroom and kitchen sink **are required**).
3. Approved potable water system meeting requirements of County adopted Plumbing Code, and approval of other agencies required dependent upon type of system—public system, well or cistern.
4. Approved hot water heater installed.
5. Approved “primary” heat source. Such systems are to be gas or electric, unless some other system has been approved by the Larimer County Building Official as an approved alternate method of heating.

If any one of the above listed items is NOT present, the structure will be classified as a **Cabin and no CO will be issued**. (See the previous 8 listed items concerning Cabins.)

Regardless of whether a CO is issued or not, all required inspection approvals for the cabin must be obtained prior to using or occupying the structure. Such as:

Larimer County Building Department must inspect:

- Foundation, setback, plumbing, framing, insulation, wildfire, etc.
- Life-safety issues like egress windows, railings, clearances to combustible materials, etc.

State Electrical Board must inspect:

- All wiring in the cabin

Larimer County Department of Health & Environment requires:

- That a proper sewage disposal system is installed and approved prior to using or occupying the cabin.

