



Department of Permitting Services
Division of Building Construction
 255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor, Rockville, Maryland 20850

CODE INTERPRETATION/POLICY

Policy Name: Permits for Metal Storage/Sea Containers		
Code/Year IBC2009 and IRC 2009 MCC Chapter 59	Section of Code 101.2,105 R101,R105	Title of Code Section/Subsection Scope, Permit Application Scope, Permit Application Building Permit, Use- and-Occupancy Permit
Statement/Background of Issue <p>The Current building code (IBC/2009, IRC/2009), and the <u>Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 59</u>, require the issuance of a building permit before any structure may be constructed, moved, installed or enlarged. In addition, for other than structures used exclusively for agricultural purposes or incidental to a residential use, a use-and-occupancy permit must be obtained. The use and installation of metal storage containers, commonly known as Conex boxes or sea-containers, has proliferated throughout the County without obtaining the required permits. When discovered, many property owners have stated the containers are temporary, and only needed while construction activities are taking place on the property. However, the containers are in the place for months at a time, and many owners use them in place of permanent new buildings. They are often installed without inspections or regard for setback or other location requirements, used as occupiable buildings lacking the necessary safe egress.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to identify permitting requirements for these structures, and to certify these structures are inspected and certified for the safe use and installation.</p>		
Division Interpretation/Policy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building permits will not be required for metal storage containers installed on residentially zoned property for seven days or less. Building permits only are required for all metal storage containers installed on residentially zoned property for eight days or more as an accessory structure, used as or in place of the storage shed, except those structures used exclusively for agricultural purpose on land used exclusively for agriculture. Minimum setback and location requirements apply to all installations which require building permits. 2. Use-and-occupancy permits are required for all metal storage containers installed and used for storage purposes on commercial or industrial zoned property. In zones where "Storage, outdoor" is a permitted use, and empty containers are being stored, neither building nor use-and-occupancy permits are required for the container. Minimum setback and location requirements apply to all other installations. 3. Permanent metal storage containers are not permitted in the right-of-way. Metal storage containers as identified in #1 and #2, if located in the right of way on a temporary basis, will require an additional right of way permit. 		
Interpretation/Policy No. BCP11-06	Date March 1, 2011	Division Chief Hadi Mansouri <i>Hadi Mansouri</i>