

Sea Containers

Information Sheet

The use of redundant steel shipping containers, otherwise known as “Sea Containers” for the purposes of storage on residential, commercial and industrial properties is not uncommon. This information sheet explains the requirements for the approval of and general requirements relating to locating a sea container on site for this purpose. This Information Sheet and FAQ’s should be used as a guide only. Before undertaking any development or works in this regard, please discuss your intentions with the Shire. If you need to make a development or a building application your time and money can be saved if you are thoroughly prepared.

Do Sea Containers Require Approvals?

Sea Containers require both Development (Planning) and Building Approval in most cases.

What Can Sea Containers Be Used For?

The sea container can only be used for the storage of items and goods related to the primary use on the site. For example, on a residential site the sea container shall be used only for the storage of items and household goods only. Similar for industrial sites, the storage shall be for the purposes of the industrial use on the site only.

Under no circumstances, can a sea container be used for habitation, regardless of where it is located.

Where Can Sea Containers Be Located?

Sea containers are not permitted on any land zoned Residential, Rural Residential, Rural Village, Rural Smallholding, Mixed Use, Tourism and Special Use other than as detailed below in a temporary situation during construction of an approved building.

A sea container cannot be located on a vacant or abandoned site. The sea container must be located on the site to which the storage relates to or is for. Approval for use of a sea container on a vacant residential site where it relates to the storage of items for the construction of a residential dwelling may be sought.

Temporary Sea Containers

In all zones, a sea container may be temporarily placed on a property to store building materials while construction of a house, commercial or industrial building is being carried out on the property, without requiring Development (Planning) Approval. A sea container must not be placed on the property prior to the issue of a Building Permit for the proposed permanent building and must be removed upon completion of construction or expiry of the Building Permit.

What Are My Alternatives To Sea Containers?

If you are requiring a permanent form of storage, an Outbuilding (Shed) is the most appropriate way to do this, not a sea container.

What About Safety And Structural Integrity Of The Sea Container?

All sea containers are considered to be sufficient structurally (dependant on condition), subject to them being adequately tied down or fixed generally to a concrete pad. As such, a Structural Engineer’s design for the tie down of the sea container is required to be provided in support of any application.

Temporary Placement Of Sea Containers On Verge

Sea containers can be temporarily located on the verge of a property, where a request has been submitted and approved by the Shire.

Please note that the following conditions apply:

- Sea container must be not be larger than 6m³ (20 foot)
- Can only be placed on the verge for a maximum of 14 days
- Must not be located on a pedestrian footpath
- Not to impede the vision of adjacent property owners
- Not to impede any street trees
- Not to impede on the vision of vehicles in the adjacent road network

How To Apply For Approval

Sea Containers Within A Shire Verge

To apply for temporary placement of a sea container on a verge, please discuss this with the Works and Services Department of the Shire well ahead of the time intended to have the sea container on the verge.

Sea Containers Within Private Lot Boundaries

Development (Planning) Approval

Sea containers are not permitted on any land zoned Residential, Rural Residential, Rural Village, Rural Smallholding, Mixed Use, Tourism and Special Use other than as detailed earlier in a temporary situation during construction of an approved building. Where a sea container is not intended to be used as part of the construction of an approved building, a temporary (no greater than 12 months) development approval may be sought to utilise the sea container on the private land, though strong justification is required to do so.

Building Approval

A Building Permit is required for all Sea Containers permanent or temporary. Details will be required from a structural engineer including footing and slab details, how the container is to be anchored down, elevations and site plans, along with application forms etc.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and further information may be requested.