

# SHIPPING CONTAINERS INFORMATION SHEET

AUGUST 2025

Shipping containers are durable steel units originally designed for transporting goods. While converting them into buildings or storage solutions can appear cost effective and practical, there are key considerations to address before doing so. This information sheet provides essential guidance on what to know before adapting containers for new purposes and what approvals you will require.

If you adapt a container as a permanent on-site structure, you will need to consider planning and building requirements.

## Containers for Temporary Storage

Some temporary uses of shipping containers, like storing building materials during construction—may not require Development Approval (Planning) or a Building Permit.

Exemptions from the requirement to obtain Development Approval or Building Permit include:

- Containers used for temporary storage are part of their original transport-related use and generally do not require approval. However, their use on-site should be limited to no more than seven days unless otherwise agreed in writing (up to one month).
- A container used as a site shed for construction purposes does not require approval if it is being used by a builder in connection with approved building work on the site. Once the work is complete, the container must be removed from the property.

In accordance with the Local Planning Policy 1.2 - Shipping Containers, exemptions from requiring Development Approval can be considered where:

- A request in writing is received, and a response is issued by the City approving the temporary nature of the shipping container; and
- A site plan has been provided to demonstrate that:
  - the shipping container will achieve all setback requirements;
  - the shipping container will not impact on pedestrian or vehicle movement; and
  - the placement of the shipping container will not impede sight lines.
- For building site storage - A building permit has been issued for the associated building;
- The shipping container will be removed immediately upon the completion of construction or the expiry of the building permit.

## Domestic Uses (Outbuilding)

All shipping containers used for domestic storage (sheds, outbuilding etc) in Western Australia require a building permit.

A Development Application (planning) may also be required depending on the zone and whether it meets the outbuilding requirements within LPS 2 and the Shipping Container Policy.

Please contact [planning@albany.wa.gov.au](mailto:planning@albany.wa.gov.au) for site specific information.

## Commercial Uses

Shipping containers used for commercial storage in Western Australia require both a building permit and a development approval.

**Building Permit:** A Building Permit is required for all sea containers, as they are considered a structure under the Building Code of Australia, they will be Classified depending on their use.

**Development Approval:** In most cases, a Development Application (Planning) is also required.

## Information Required

In addition to the details on the relevant standard checklist, as part of the development application and building permit stage, the following will be required:

Requirements	When is it required?	Included	Office
<b>Cover letter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Addressing the relevant Local Planning Policy (Shipping Containers)</li></ul>	Always		
<b>Site Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and location</li><li>Setbacks from property boundaries</li><li>Setbacks from other structures</li></ul>	Always		
<b>Elevations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All four elevations clearly labelled (North, South, East, West)</li><li>Dimensions and height</li><li>Natural Ground Level and Finished Floor Levels should be indicated on the elevation (ie show any cut or fill proposed)</li></ul>	Always		
<b>Footings and Tie-Downs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Appropriate footings and tie-downs details are required to ensure the container is safely anchored.</li><li>It is recommended to obtain independent advice from a structural engineer regarding tie-downs and footings.</li></ul>	At the Building Permit stage		

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Contact our Development Information Services team via [planning@albany.wa.gov.au](mailto:planning@albany.wa.gov.au) (08) 6820 3040  
102 North Road, Yakamia, Albany (9am – 4.00pm Mon – Fri)