

City of



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

2600 Fresno St. Room 3043

Fresno, CA 93721

Ph: 559-621-8082 Fx: 559-498-4357

MEMO

DATE: August 31, 2005
TO: Nick Yovino, Director
FROM: Jerry Bishop
SUBJECT: ISO Containers

The department policy dealing with ISO containers doesn't appear to reflect current attitudes. The Fire Department has been approving installations in the field, in some instances for several years and applicants feel they are in compliance based on this approval. Per current policy Code Enforcement is citing sites for non-approved containers including those with Fire Department clearance. Several of these cases have appeared at the Directors meeting or privately with the Director and approval agreements have been reached. I believe that we should revise the current policy to allow a process whereby this can be accomplished without special handling.

I have met with representatives of the Fire Department, our own building and structural staff and have reached a consensus as to Building and Fire Code requirements. We don't propose any changes to the planning process and believe that an entitlement is appropriate. For purposes of the building codes we have created the following general guidelines but reserve the right to modify based on individual circumstances.

1. Provide site plan and all planning requirements
2. Single height (no stacking)
3. Storage use only (no habitable space)
4. No flammable/combustible liquids or hazardous materials allowed.
5. No utilities (electricity, water, sewer)
6. No connecting structures between containers.
7. Minimum of 10' from buildings and property lines.
8. Maintain surrounding ground free of weeds and grass.

This approach would provide Building and Fire to allow most any structure that Planning allows. It will not cover all conditions but will give us general requirements that will significantly reduce confusion. Since the department is allowing multiple installations based on Director determination it behooves us to provide a mechanism that allows this ability under the building codes. Under these guidelines and after Planning approval Building would issue a minimum fee building permit and require an inspection to insure unit placement and any requirements generated by the entitlement.

City of



2600 Fresno Street • Third Floor
Fresno, California 93721-3604
(559) 621-8003 • FAX (559) 498-1012
www.fresno.gov

Planning and Development Department

Nick P. Yovino
Director

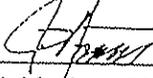
BUILDING INDUSTRY BULLETIN

TO: ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, GENERAL CONTRACTORS, AND ASSOCIATIONS

SUBJECT: USE OF DAY FREIGHT ISO CONTAINERS AS PREFABRICATED STORAGE - STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 14, 2004

BULLETIN NUMBER: IB 04-01

APPROVED: 

Nick Yovino, Director

GENERAL

Numerous businesses and governmental institutions in Fresno have found it convenient and economical to utilize dry freight ISO containers (ISO containers) for both temporary and permanent storage on-site. The current City of Fresno Zoning Ordinance does not specifically permit the use of ISO containers for on-site storage. It has become well known, however, that materials delivered for construction or during peak periods for certain businesses can safely and effectively be stored in the ISO containers:

In light of this reality, the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce encouraged the City to adopt an ordinance and standards to ensure that businesses have the legal ability to utilize ISO containers while adequately protecting the health, safety, welfare, esthetics, and property values of the community. Consistent standards need to be adopted to provide guidance to businesses and to protect the community values described. In addition, the City needs to be provided with appropriate monitoring tools and fees to adequately police and enforce the standards.

POLICY

The Fresno Municipal Code requires a Site Plan Review/CUP for any structure placed on a property. Therefore, a complete Site Plan Review/CUP will be required when any ISO container is placed on any property for use in the storage of non-hazardous, non-toxic, and non-flammable materials.

Only ISO containers may be approved for use as a prefabricated storage facility. ISO containers are not approved for any use other than storage or cargo transport in any zoning district.

ISO containers shall only be approved for storage in conjunction with a non-residential use, with the exception of churches located in a residential area.

Fresno Municipal Code Section 12-313 requires a Site Plan Review be obtained for any ISO container placed on a property. Such a review shall be applied for coincident with the application for a Site Plan Review/CUP. The Site Plan Review shall be issued only after such building has been completed in conformity with the provisions of the Fresno Municipal Code and an approved site plan.

In addition to the zoning code requirements listed above, all ISO containers used for storage shall comply with all applicable sections of the Uniform Fire Code and the Fresno Fire Code.

ISO containers used as storage in non-industrial districts shall be screened in an approved manner and shall otherwise not be visible from the street or neighboring property. In addition, ISO containers should not be located adjacent to a residential area unless they are completely screened by concrete block walls, landscaping, or other approved visual barriers.

ISO containers used for storage must be structurally sound.

Any ISO container shall only be used for storage of materials in a manner consistent with its originally designed purpose and capacity. Such use shall also be consistent with the uses allowed in the zoning district where the property is located. Under no circumstances shall an ISO container be used to store flammable, explosive, or toxic chemicals or products.

While ISO containers are subject to rigid engineering standards that allow them to be stacked and withstand extreme conditions during multi-level transport on both ship and rail, that transport is subject to rigid protocols for securing the containers. Due to earthquake hazards and the potential for stacked containers to be upset when struck with trucks or other vehicles that may be operating in a commercial area, the stacking of containers will be prohibited.

SUMMARY

Only ISO containers may be approved for use as prefabricated storage facilities. A complete Site Plan Review/CUP will be required when any ISO container is placed on any property for storage use. ISO containers shall only be approved for storage in conjunction with a non-residential use, with the exception of churches located in a residential area. In addition, the Site Plan Review/CUP and other applicable permits shall be required for any ISO container, on a case-by-case basis, and prior to use as a storage facility. Any stacking of ISO containers is prohibited. ISO containers used for storage shall comply with all applicable sections of the Uniform Fire Code and the Fresno Fire Code. ISO containers used for storage in non-industrial districts shall be screened by an approved opaque fence, wall, or landscaping, and shall otherwise not be visible from the street or neighboring property.



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DATE: June 29, 2004

TO: PLANNING DIVISION STAFF

THROUGH: NICK YOVINO, Director 
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FROM: GILBERT J. HARO, Planning Manager 
ROBERT C. LEWIS, Supervising Planner 
PLANNING DIVISION

SUBJECT: USE OF DRY FREIGHT ISO CONTAINERS AS PREFABRICATED STORAGE

USE LIMITATIONS

On June 14, 2004, the Planning and Development Department Director approved a department policy allowing for the use of ISO cargo containers for temporary and permanent storage of non-hazardous, non-toxic and non-flammable materials. A copy of this policy as contained in a "Building Industry Bulletin" was provided to you on June 29, 2004.

The cargo containers will be allowed only in conjunction with a non-residential use in a non-residential zone district or in conjunction with an existing and approved church use in both a non-residential and a residential zone district. The use of the containers shall not be allowed for a commercial storage business and shall be used only for the storage of the excess merchandise or equipment of an existing business. The container shall not have any electrical, sewer or water connection and shall not be used for habitation. The containers shall not be stacked or connected and must be spaced a minimum of six (6) feet apart. The restriction on types of materials to be stored is intended to restrict highly flammable or hazardous materials, including, but not limited to, gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, kerosene, paint thinner, pesticides, toxic or caustic chemicals and solutions, explosives or fireworks, and other similar items.

PROCESS

The review and approval process to place the ISO containers on a site shall be subject to a major revised site plan review or conditional use permit based upon the existing entitlement or use of the site. The required site plan shall show the entire site and contain all appropriate details. An operational statement shall be provided indicating type and term of storage use. Any method proposed to secure the containers or the area containing the containers shall be detailed on the entitlement site plan. The ISO containers will not be allowed on vacant land and the number and location of all containers will be subject to the review and approval of the Planning and Development Director.

ISO Containers

Page 2

June 29, 2004

The containers shall be kept clean and in good repair, and shall not be relocated without prior approval of the Director. Failure to comply with approved conditions of site plan review or conditional use permit may result in the revocation and/or denial of the use of cargo containers on a site. Any existing use of cargo containers, with the exception of approved redemption centers (cans, bottles, and plastic), shall not be considered to be previously approved ("grandfathered").

RCL:jjw-K:\Common\Memo\ISO Containers

- c: Ray Villa, Code Enforcement Manager
- John Robertson, Housing Program Supervisor
- Jerry Bishop, Building and Safety Services Manager
- Steve Risley, Building and Safety Services Manager