

Freedom Yurt Structures, LLC



**FREEDOM
YURT-CABINS**

YURT CABINS AND BUILDING CODES

When purchasing a Freedom Yurt Cabin, some of the first questions are regarding the permitting process. Unfortunately, there are no clean answers, and the process can be complicated in some jurisdictions. However, with the right knowledge and approach, the permitting process can be straightforward. We at Freedom Yurt Structures are here to assist you with this process.

It is good to begin this process by understanding that code requirements will vary from state to state and by counties and local communities. Within each jurisdiction there will be different interpretations of the code and zoning ordinances. Most code officials have very little experience with alternative living structures and may require some education about our unique wooden yurt structure. Because of our wood construction and real insulation, Freedom Yurt Cabins are more like a conventional cabin kit than a fabric yurt. These common building materials should help the permitting process go more smoothly.

Before you buy a Freedom Yurt Cabin, we recommend that you check with your local building department about the rules in your area and how local officials are likely to interpret your proposed structure. Are you intending for your Freedom Yurt Cabin to be temporary or permanent? Will you have a bathroom and kitchen? Will you be using it for commercial/business uses? You also may need to check with your local Health Department regarding the requirement of septic systems versus composting toilets.

Here are some questions to ask your local officials:

- What version of codes are they using? Do they use the International Residential Code (IRC)? Or do they have a statewide building code like California or Michigan?
- What are the local zoning regulations?
- Does your local jurisdiction allow Alternative Methods of Construction in their building codes?
- What are the snow load, seismic rating, and wind speed requirements for your specific location? Are there any other special requirements?

Here are some things to keep in mind as you go through the permitting process:

- Freedom Yurt Cabins are not regular yurts and therefore are not regulated under the Membrane Structures part of the building code. They are more conventional and therefore will be regulated under the conventional parts of the code, making them easier to permit by the building official.
- How you classify your Freedom Yurt Cabin will determine the permitting process. If you are using it as a temporary structure, for six months or less, permitting may be very easy. Request the temporary permitting regulations from your local jurisdiction, and if they do not have any, ask them how they will permit your Freedom Yurt Cabin for the type of use you intend. If you will be occupying your Freedom Yurt Cabin for an extended period of time (i.e. as a permanent living facility) you will probably need to comply with health code regulations (i.e. septic systems) and water supply requirements (i.e. wells or water delivery), as well as electrical and plumbing regulations, and energy use requirements.

- Fabric yurts and Freedom Yurt Cabins go through the exact same permitting process. The method of construction should not determine whether you are using it as a temporary or permanent structure. Freedom Yurt Cabins are very predictable from a structural perspective, and the building officials are very familiar with wood construction. Therefore the permitting process should be more straightforward with a Freedom Yurt Cabin.

Here's how Freedom Yurt Structures (FYS) can help:

- For a reasonable fee, you can receive a set of site-specific, wet-stamped plans from our engineer who is licensed in 15 states. These states are CA, CO, DC, GA, HI, KS, MA, MD, NC, NJ, OR, TX, UT, VA, and WV. These stamped plans help provide legitimacy and legality when obtaining a building permit from your local government agency. However, having these stamped plans does not guarantee your planning committee's approval.
- If your state is not listed, FYS will be able to supply engineering specs, if necessary, to a local engineer certified by your state who can sign off the plans for the local building department. The engineering specifications must relate to the strength and stability of the yurt as a complete assembly, not just the component parts (like rafters).
- You can use the information on our website to show your code official examples of the structure you are trying to erect.
- FYS can give you a generic copy of the Yurt Cabin Building Plans for free, as well as supply you with specific information about your Yurt Cabin that you need for your locale such as snow loads, wind specs, seismic rating, fire retardance, and insulation requirements.

Yurts and the Energy Code

One of the biggest code hurdles for small prefabricated structures is insulation. This is most important in permanent structures where a heat source will be installed.

Freedom Yurt Cabins have much more insulation than fabric yurts, and therefore will perform better and are able to be modeled using conventional software packages. Unlike fabric yurts, Freedom Yurt Cabins do not use “reflective insulation,” which does not exist in the current building code lexicon. It is less of a challenge to pass energy compliance in warmer climates than colder climates. How you designate your Freedom Yurt Cabin (temporary or permanent) will determine the level of compliance you must meet.

Some things to remember when it comes to energy compliance:

- You may be able to receive an exemption if you use a renewable heat source. Pellet stoves and wood burners are examples of renewable heat sources. Solar and wind power are also renewable and can be coupled with electric heaters.
- You may find some code flexibility if the structure is not being heated continuously (such as when occupancy is “transient and intermittent,” as with camping rentals or a vacation retreat).