COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development Resource Agency

BUILDING SERVICES

Technical Policy
Residential Free Standing
Membrane Structures

To: Building Services

From: Tim Wegner, Chief Building Official

Approved: Tim Wegner, Chief Building Official

Effective Date: May 12, 2014

ISSUE:
Placer County residents desire to utilize non-permanent shade structures to house personal belongings, including vehicles, and as outdoor shade covers. The California Residential Code is silent with regard to membrane structures, and for this reason the County recognizes the need for the development of this policy.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:
Membrane structures have been installed without permit or not at all due to vague or non-existent building standards for such use.

ANALYSIS:
Today, prefabricated membrane structures, intended for use as outdoor shade structures, can be purchased from local retailers. In review of the California Residential Code, staff has determined these free-standing membrane structures may be installed without benefit of a County building permit when meeting the provisions of the policy below.

POLICY:
Free-standing membrane type structures are exempt from Placer County permitting requirements when ALL of the following criteria are met:

1. **Structures are pre-manufactured and of the free-standing type with membrane covers as roofing and siding material:** A non-pressurized building wherein the structure is composed of rigid framework to support a tensioned membrane which provides the weather barrier, composed entirely of factory built metal or plastic to shelter household items, vehicles, used as patio shades, and similar;

2. Is accessory to one-family or two-family dwellings;

3. Is not greater than 200 square feet in area;

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4. When the structure is **Portable,** meaning the structure is constructed without a permanent foundation and is capable of being moved intact;

5. When meeting Placer County Planning/zoning setback requirements;

6. When maintaining a minimum clearance of 10 feet from other buildings and a minimum of 5 feet from property lines, or County Planning/zoning setback whichever is greater;

7. When the maximum height does not exceed 12 feet measured to the structure ridge from the lowest adjacent grade;

8. When the structure is properly anchored to earth/grade per the manufacturer's recommendations;

9. When not used as a residence or as living quarters;

10. When there's no electrical, plumbing or mechanical systems;

11. In the Tahoe basin, all membrane-covered frame structures must not create land coverage as defined by TRPA.