

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Department of Planning and Land Use

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PURPOSE

To provide a uniform policy on the review and issuance of building permits for cargo containers. This policy is used in conjunction with Section 6162 of the County Zoning Ordinance

BACKGROUND

The shipping industry has found that there is a market for new, used and surplus cargo containers. Re-sold containers are often being used as storage containers on individual lots. In some cases, the containers have been converted to habitable space for offices, concession stands, work shops and other similar uses. Over the years, complaints have been made that many cargo containers are unsightly and are incompatible with surrounding land uses and the community character. In response, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance (Section 6162) that regulates the look and location of such containers. MP-26 is being used to ensure consistency in ordinance interpretation and implementation.

PROCEDURES

Cargo containers shall be treated in the following manner:

1. Must fully comply with Section 6162 of the County of San Diego Zoning Ordinance.
2. Property owners claiming to be an agricultural operation must provide substantial evidence of use, **such as aerial photos of the last 30 years, showing the agricultural operation in place**, or dated photographs, business tax records, business receipts, customer orders, or other significant information related to an active agricultural operation.

The **burden of proof of use is the responsibility of the property owner**, they must show evidence that the agricultural operation has been in place for the last 30 years; or was legally established with the appropriate permits.

3. Every Cargo container shall be painted with one of the approved colors. The applicant shall select one color from the list of approved colors below as discussed under Section 6162(b)(5), to paint the container(s) on the parcel. This list includes the following:
 - a. Flat, non-reflective dark green to match the surrounding area;
 - b. Flat, non-reflective white (this color is typically limited to AG uses);
 - c. Flat, non-reflective, tan to match the surrounding area; or,
 - d. Other solid neutral color that matches the surrounding natural environment (applicant must provide pictures of surrounding area to show compliance)
4. Cargo containers can only be used for storage as required under Section 6162; any other use (e.g. office, residence) is prohibited.

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5. On sites where the primary use of the property is residential the following restrictions shall apply:
- a. The cargo container shall not be visible from that portion of any roadway (whether public or private road easement) that directly abuts the subject parcel.
 - b. Cargo containers that are visible from the roadway and not screened by existing landscaping as described above shall be screened with common construction materials that are similar in appearance with the main residence. A proposal to install new landscaping as a screening method is not acceptable.
6. For projects subject to Section 6162(7)(ii), the following condition must be placed on the building permit prior to issues.

“Pursuant to Section 6162(7)(ii) of the County Zoning Ordinance, the subject cargo container is only permitted for a period not to exceed 180 consecutive days, starting from the date of permit issuance. At the conclusion of the use, a demolition permit shall be required to confirm the removal of subject cargo container.”

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