

## Important Information Regarding “Tiny Homes” and the RV Industry

The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) is often contacted by companies and individuals that are considering or are already actively engaged in building a product known as “Tiny Homes.” In fact, many folks seem to be thinking about getting into the tiny home business nowadays. However, the building of tiny homes has several critical questions that should be understood and considered beforehand. Not the least of which, these questions include: “What is the intended purpose of the product?” “Who are the customers and how will they be using the product?” and “How will this product be regulated?” We hope that the following information will help you to begin answering these questions.

### What is RVIA and Who Does it Represent?

RVIA is the national trade association that represents the manufacturers of recreation vehicles (“RVs”), which include motorhomes, travel trailers, fifth wheel trailers and truck campers, along with park model RVs (also known as PMRVs). RVIA also represents component part suppliers and other businesses that provide materials and services to the RV/PMRV industry.

RVs are defined as: vehicular-type units that are primarily designed as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or seasonal use; have their own motive power or are mounted on or towed by another vehicle; are regulated by the United States Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as a vehicle or vehicle equipment; do not require a special highway use permit for operation on the highways; can be easily transported and set up on a daily basis by an individual; and are certified by their manufacturer as complying with the NFPA 1192 Standard on Recreation Vehicles.

PMRVs are defined as: trailer type units that are primarily designed as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or seasonal use; are built on a single chassis mounted on wheels; have a gross trailer area not exceeding 400 square feet in the setup mode (or if less than 320 square feet in the setup mode would require a special highway movement permit); and are certified by their manufacturer as complying with ANSI A119.5 Park Model RV Standard.

The most important fact to take away from these basic definitions is that RVs and PMRVs are purpose-built as *temporary accommodations for camping and seasonal use*. They are not houses; they are not manufactured housing; and they are neither designed for nor intended to serve as permanent habitations.

### Can Tiny Homes Be RVs?

Tiny homes may qualify as RVs, but to do so they must be built as vehicles in compliance with NHTSA regulations (*see* the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards – also referred to as the FMVSS – which can be found at Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations). They must also comply with the NFPA 1192 RV Standard. Note that these products cannot require a special

movement permit to be transported on the highways. RVIA maintains an inspection program for its member RV manufacturers. Every eight weeks or so, staff inspectors make unannounced factory visits to ensure that manufacturers are fulfilling their obligation to comply with the provisions of the NFPA 1192 standard.

### Can Tiny Homes Be PMRVs?

Tiny homes may qualify as PMRVs, but to do so they must not exceed 400 square feet in the setup mode or, if less than 320 square feet in the setup mode, must require a special movement permit to be transported on the highway. They must also comply with the ANSI A119.5 PMRV Standard. RVIA maintains an inspection program for its member PMRV manufacturers. Every eight weeks or so, staff inspectors make unannounced factory visits to ensure that manufacturers are fulfilling their obligation to comply with the provisions of the ANSI A119.5 standard.

### What If Tiny Homes Are Intended For Permanent Residence?

If a manufacturer of tiny homes intends for its units to serve as a permanent residence -- and markets its tiny home products to consumers for that purpose -- then these units cannot be considered RVs or PMRVs. Instead, such tiny homes are required by law to comply with local building codes, state modular housing codes, and/or the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations for manufactured housing. RVIA does not represent manufactured housing products.