

# Town of Dexter, Maine

## Recreational Vehicle and Camper Use Ordinance

### Section 1. Authority

This Ordinance is enacted pursuant to the Home Rule authority granted under the Constitution of the State of Maine and **Title 30-A M.R.S.A. §3001**, enabling municipalities to enact ordinances to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

### Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Ordinance is to:

- Establish standards for the placement and occupancy of recreational vehicles and campers;
- Protect public health and safety by ensuring adequate sanitary facilities;
- Allow reasonable use of recreational vehicles for temporary and long-term occupancy under regulated conditions;
- Prevent unsafe or unsanitary living conditions.

### Section 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Ordinance:

- **Recreational Vehicle (RV) / Camper:** A vehicle or structure designed for temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel use, including motorhomes, travel trailers, and fifth-wheel trailers.
- **Occupancy:** Use of a recreational vehicle for sleeping, eating, or living purposes.
- **Primary Residence:** The dwelling where an individual resides for the majority of the calendar year.
- **Approved Subsurface Wastewater Disposal System:** A system designed and installed in compliance with the Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules.

### Section 4. Temporary Occupancy

1. A recreational vehicle may be occupied on a lot for **up to ninety (90) days per calendar year** without requiring full residential utility connections.
2. Temporary occupancy shall not require a subsurface wastewater disposal system, provided that:
  - No sewage is discharged onto the ground; and
  - Waste is disposed of in a lawful manner.

## **Section 5. Extended Occupancy**

1. Occupancy of a recreational vehicle for **more than ninety (90) days per calendar year** shall be permitted only if:
  - The lot is served by an **approved subsurface wastewater disposal system**; and
  - The system is properly connected to the recreational vehicle or otherwise available for sanitary use.
2. The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) may require proof of system design, installation, and capacity.

## **Section 6. Permanent Occupancy**

1. A recreational vehicle may serve as a **primary residence** provided that:
  - The requirements of Section 5 are met; and
  - The use complies with all applicable land use, zoning, and building standards.
2. Nothing in this Ordinance shall exempt a property from:
  - Shoreland Zoning requirements;
  - Minimum lot size or setback requirements;
  - Any other applicable Town ordinance.

## **Section 7. Location and Placement**

1. Recreational vehicles shall be located on a legally established lot.
2. All setback requirements of the applicable zoning district shall be met unless otherwise permitted.
3. No more than **one (1) occupied recreational vehicle** shall be permitted per lot unless otherwise approved by the Planning Board.

## **Section 8. Prohibited Activities**

The following are prohibited:

- Discharge of wastewater or sewage onto the ground;
- Occupancy of a recreational vehicle in violation of time limits without required utilities;
- Use of extension cords or utilities in a manner that creates a safety hazard;
- Occupancy on lots without legal access or ownership/permission.

## **Section 9. Permits**

1. A permit from the Code Enforcement Officer shall be required for:
  - Occupancy exceeding ninety (90) days; or
  - Establishment of a recreational vehicle as a primary residence.
2. The permit application shall include:
  - Property owner authorization;
  - Description of wastewater disposal method;
  - Site plan, if required by the CEO.

## **Section 10. Enforcement**

1. This Ordinance shall be enforced by the Code Enforcement Officer.
2. Violations shall constitute a land use violation subject to:
  - Penalties pursuant to **Title 30-A M.R.S.A. §4452**;
  - Fines of not less than \$100 per day per violation;
  - Legal action including removal of the recreational vehicle.
3. Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

## **Section 11. Severability**

If any provision of this Ordinance is found invalid, such invalidity shall not affect remaining provisions.

## **Section 12. Effective Date**

This Ordinance shall take effect upon adoption by the Town of Dexter Town Meeting.

## Optional Add-Ons (if you want more “teeth”)

I can layer these in if you want:

- Require **annual registration/inspection of RV residences**
- Limit to **owner-occupied lots only**
- Add **winterization standards (heat, insulation)**
- Tie to **building permit if used during home construction**
- Require **Planning Board approval for multiple units**

## Why this works well

- Mirrors **Litchfield’s flexibility** (90 days + septic = allowed)
- Avoids Union-style legal issues (outright bans)
- Strong enforcement language (important for Maine courts)
- Cleanly aligns with **state statutes**

If you want, I can:

- Tailor this to **Dexter’s current zoning ordinance format**
- Add **Shoreland Zone-specific language** (important in Maine)
- Or draft the **warrant article + public hearing version** for adoption at Town Meeting