



DRINKING WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

DWEHD-368-125-002 – Structures on Licensed Campsites

Effective Date: January 29, 2026

ISSUE

Many of Michigan's campgrounds have structures placed on licensed campsites such as sheds, decks, porches, or three-season rooms in addition to the recreational unit as defined in Part 125, Campgrounds, Swimming Areas, and Swimmers' Itch, of the Public Health Code, 1978 PA 368, as amended (Act 368), and the administrative rules adopted pursuant to Act 368. Stakeholders have expressed concerns about some accessory structures being used as sleeping quarters or dwelling spaces. This policy is intended to clarify the types of structures allowed on licensed campsites and outline the process to address structures that are not in compliance with the rules.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) created a stakeholder group comprised of local health departments (LHD), campground owners and managers, local building code professionals, the Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles and Campgrounds (MARVAC), and the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Bureau of Construction Codes and Bureau of Fire Services. Two virtual stakeholder meetings were held in June 2025. During the first meeting stakeholders discussed the issue, authority, definition section, and policy section of this Structures on Licensed Campsites Policy. The second meeting focused on the implementation of the rules with clarity provided by this policy document. Edits were incorporated into this policy document based on feedback and discussions from both meetings. Major areas of discussion included the four-foot rule, unobstructed paths, the intended use of accessory structures, the attached definition, easily removeable language, campground structures documentation, and the process to address non-compliant structures. The second draft was submitted to the stakeholder group for additional comments and edits. All comments and edits were discussed, and changes were incorporated accordingly into the final version of this policy document.

AUTHORITY

- Michigan Public Health Code, Act 368
- Administrative Rules adopted pursuant to Act 368, specifically R 325.1556. Rule 6. “(4) A campground owner shall locate recreational units or other structures, such as sheds and awnings, to provide an **unobstructed path which is not less than four feet wide and which extends completely around the recreational unit**. A campground owner shall ensure that **a permanent structure requiring footings is not located on a campsite.**”

DEFINITIONS

Accessory Structure: A constructed feature, such as a deck, shed, porch, sunroom, or three-season room that is an accessory to and incidental to that of the recreational unit and located on the same licensed campsite. (Accessory structures are not evaluated to meet all the criteria of a residential dwelling and therefore are not approved to be used as a dwelling or for sleeping quarters.

Footing: Structural element that safely transfers the load of a structure to the ground to prevent sinking, settling, and shifting of the structure.

Sunroom: A one-story structure attached to a dwelling with a glazing area in excess of 40 percent of the gross area of the structure’s exterior walls and roof. (Michigan Residential Code [MRC])

Three-season Room: A one-story structure with a glazing area in excess of 40 percent of the gross area of the structure’s exterior walls and roof but does not meet the thermal energy requirements for a sunroom.

POLICY

Accessory structure(s) may be placed on a campsite if it meets the specific requirements outlined below. No accessory structure shall be used as a dwelling or for sleeping quarters.

1. Accessory structures on licensed campsites cannot have footings that are below grade. The MRC defines when a footing is required for various types and sizes of structures. The local building authority or building inspector has the authority,

under the MRC, to make a determination on footing requirements for specific applications in accordance with the MRC. Prior to the construction of any structure, local building officials should be consulted.

2. Accessory structures must meet the square footage requirements outlined in Table 1, below. There is no designated square footage limit on decks from the EGLE Campground Program; however, decks still need to meet the other requirements outlined and local building officials will need to be consulted for building code requirements and permits.

Table 1: Structure Type and Size Allowed on Campsites

(Structure must also meet the other requirements outlined above and any other applicable regulations or ordinances from state or local entities.)

Structure Type	Size	Building Permit Required
Detached- 1 story- Shed- MRC R 105.2	200 square feet or less	Not Required
Detached- 1 story- Shed- MRC 403.1.4.1	201-400 square feet	Required
Porch, Three-season Room, Sunroom MRC 403.1.4.1	400 square feet or less	Required
Deck MRC 403.1.4.1 and MRC R 507	Square footage limit dependent upon footing determination and size of campsite - consult local building officials	To be determined by local building officials
Pergolas, gazebos	200 square feet or less and must not exceed 10 feet in height.	To be determined by local building officials

3. Additionally, the accessory structure must be free-standing and cannot bear any structural load onto the recreational unit. The accessory structure can abut the recreational unit, and flashing can be used to prevent water intrusion. Enclosed or roofed accessory structures cannot be attached to other enclosed or roofed accessory structures.

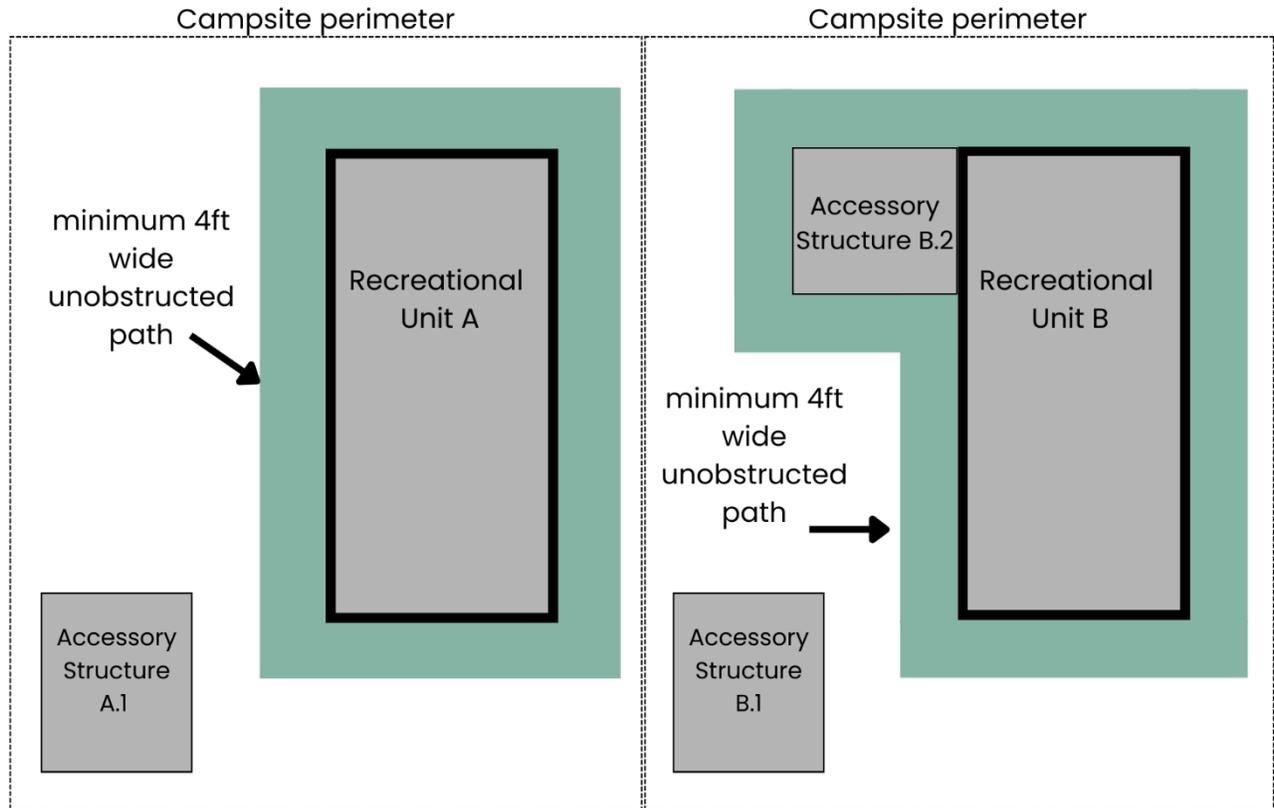
The thermal envelope of the recreational unit must remain as originally designed. For example, doors and windows on a park model recreational unit cannot be removed

between the recreational unit and a three-season room. These types of modifications nullify the manufacturer's ANSI A119.5 certification that is required under Administrative Rule 325.1551 for park model recreational units. Electricity can be provided to structures but cannot be hardwired to the electrical riser. Electrical work shall be completed by a licensed electrician.

4. Placement of the accessory structure must allow for an unobstructed path, not less than four feet wide, and which extends completely around the recreational unit on the licensed campsite. If the accessory structure abuts the recreational unit, then the four foot wide, unobstructed path extends beyond the accessory structure (See Diagram A). Accessory structures cannot be placed in a manner that prevents the use of doors and windows designed for emergency egress.

Diagram A:

The green border represents the required four foot wide unobstructed path completely around the recreational unit. Recreational Unit A has one accessory structure away from the unit. Recreational Unit B has accessory structure B.2 that abuts the recreational unit and the four foot path now encompasses the recreational unit and the accessory structure.



Implementation

For structures proposed on campsites after January 29, 2026, the campground owner/operator is responsible for ensuring the local building authority is consulted and the appropriate permits are obtained. If footings are required or the structure does not meet the other requirements described above, the structure cannot be placed on a campsite. For acceptable and approved structures, it is considered best practice for the campground owner to maintain a written log listing the date, size, and type of accessory structure, and the site number.

Campsites that contain a noncompliant structure placed before January 29, 2026, are to be considered a nonconforming use. EGLE will continue to work with LHDs, campground

owner/operators, and local building officials to establish a distinct timeline and remediation plan for noncompliant structures. EGLE DWEHD Campground Program will require these structures to be modified and brought into compliance or removed when:

1. The structure is considered a safety hazard or nuisance;
2. The structure creates a violation of the required four foot wide unobstructed path rule (discussed above);
3. There is a change or transfer in ownership of the campsite; or
4. The recreational unit is removed from the campsite.

The plan and timeline will be provided on the campground license and verification of remediation progress, typically photographs and inspections, will be required for license renewal. Any existing determinations and remediation plans made under the previous version of this policy remain in effect.

LHD inspectors can note potential structure issues on annual inspection reports. LHDs can contact the EGLE engineer assigned to their county with questions, concerns, or if a joint inspection is needed.

Campground owners/operators may establish rules that prohibit all or certain types of structures on campground sites, as long as the owner/operator rules are more stringent than Part 125 of Act 368, its administrative rules, and this policy.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Michigan Public Health Code, 1978 PA 368, as amended \(statute\)](#)

[Michigan Public Health Code, 1978 PA 368, as amended, Campground Administrative Rules \(rules\)](#)

[Michigan Residential Code \(MRC\)](#)

- [MRC R 105.2: Detached- 1 story- Shed-](#)
- [MRC R 403.1.4.1: Detached- 1 story- Shed-; Porch, Three-season Room, Sunroom; Deck](#)
- [MRC R 507: Deck](#)

[National Sunroom Association – Specifications for Sunrooms \(AAMA/NSA 2100-22\)](#)

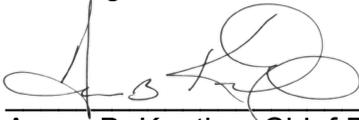
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Structure Decision Trees

APPROVING AUTHORITY



Eric J. Oswald, Division Director
Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division



Aaron B. Keatley, Chief Deputy Director

HISTORY

Table 2. Historical Changes

Policy No.	Action	Date	Title
ODWMA-368-125-002	Original	February 26, 2010	Structures on Licensed Campsites
ODWMA-368-125-002	Reviewed	January 9, 2013	Same as above
DWEHD-368-125-002	Revised	January 29, 2026	Same as above

Next scheduled review: 10-2030

CONTACT / UPDATE RESPONSIBILITY

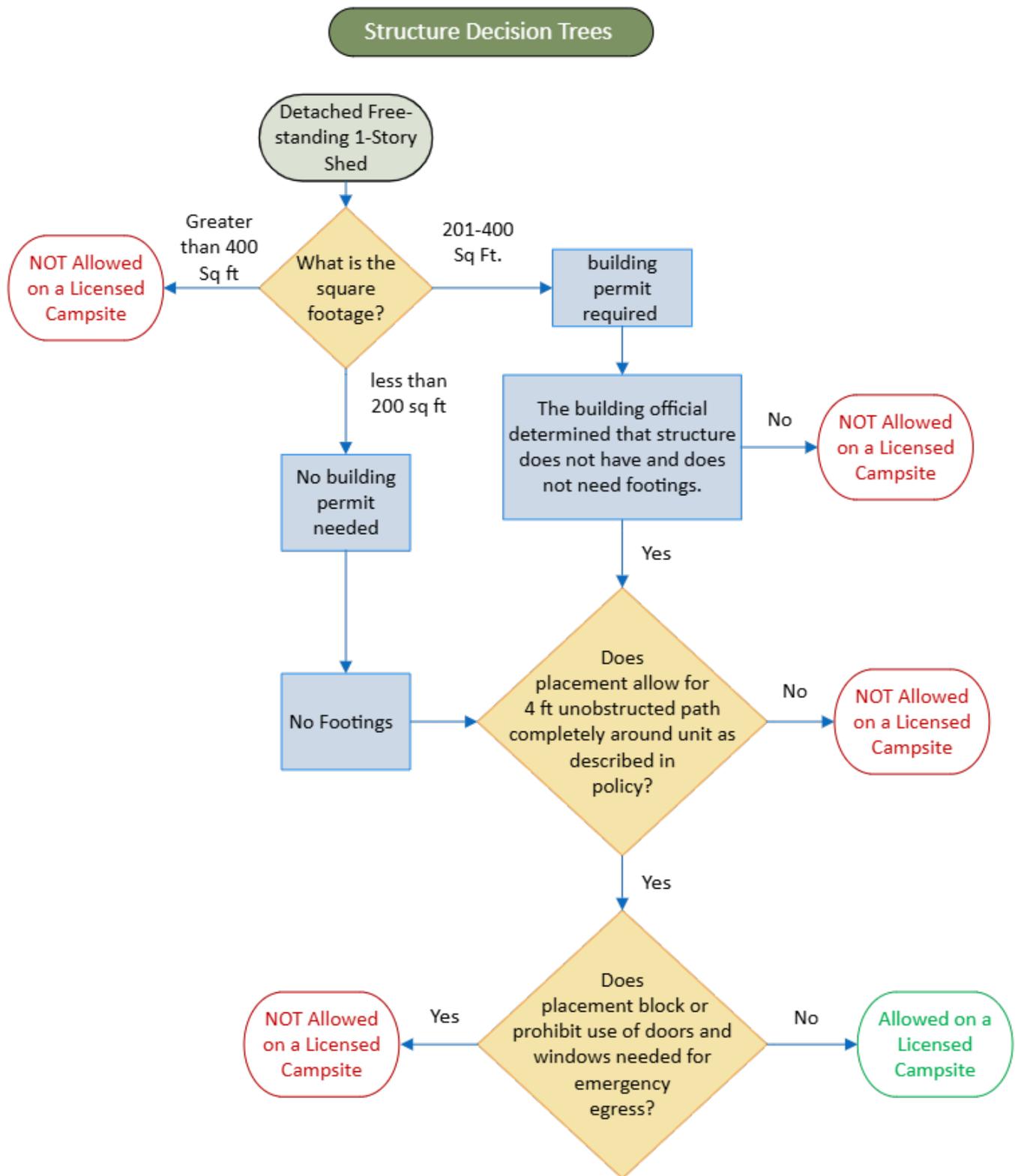
Any questions or concerns regarding this policy and procedure should be directed to EGLE-DWEHD-CampgroundProgram@Michigan.gov.

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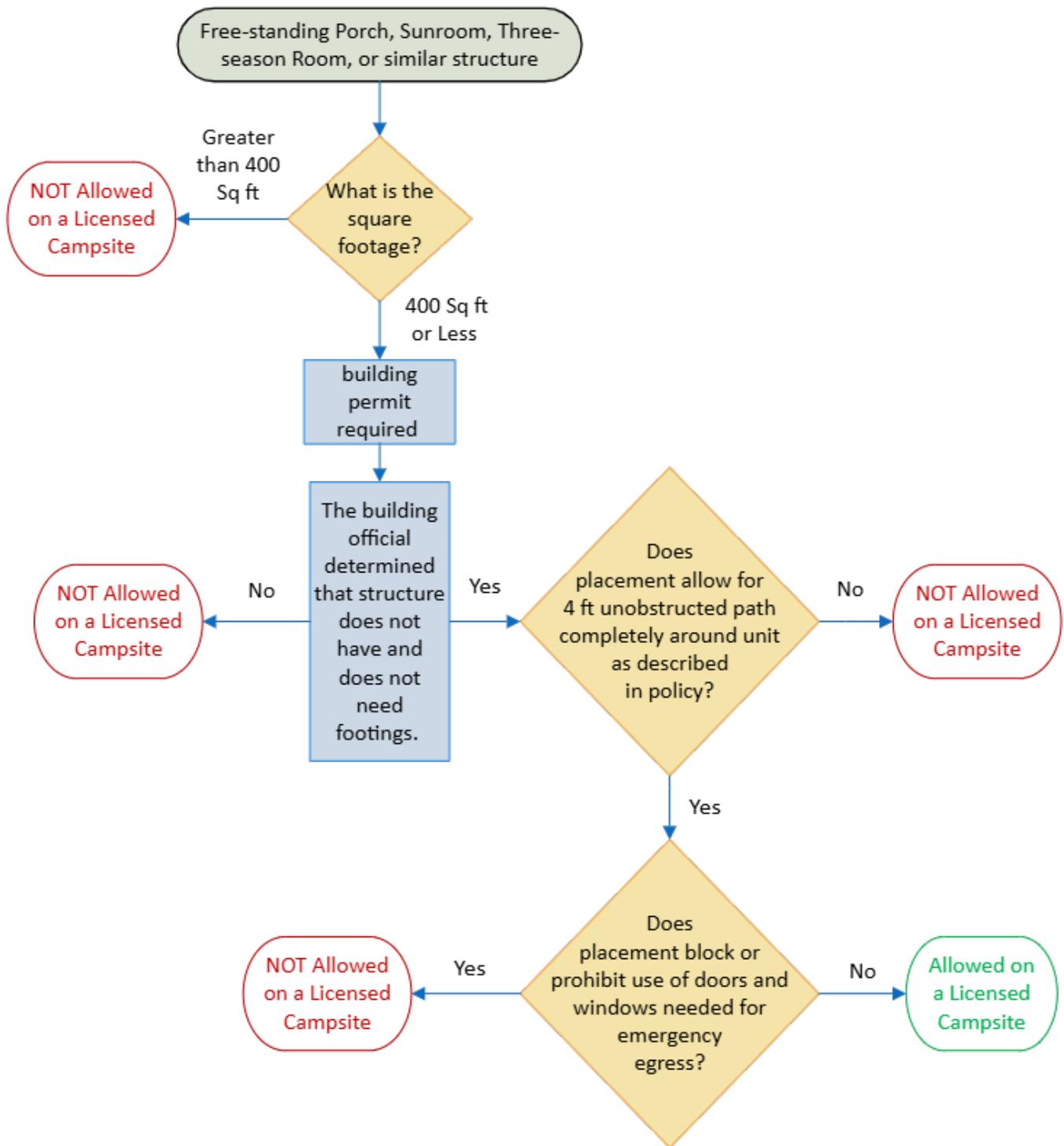
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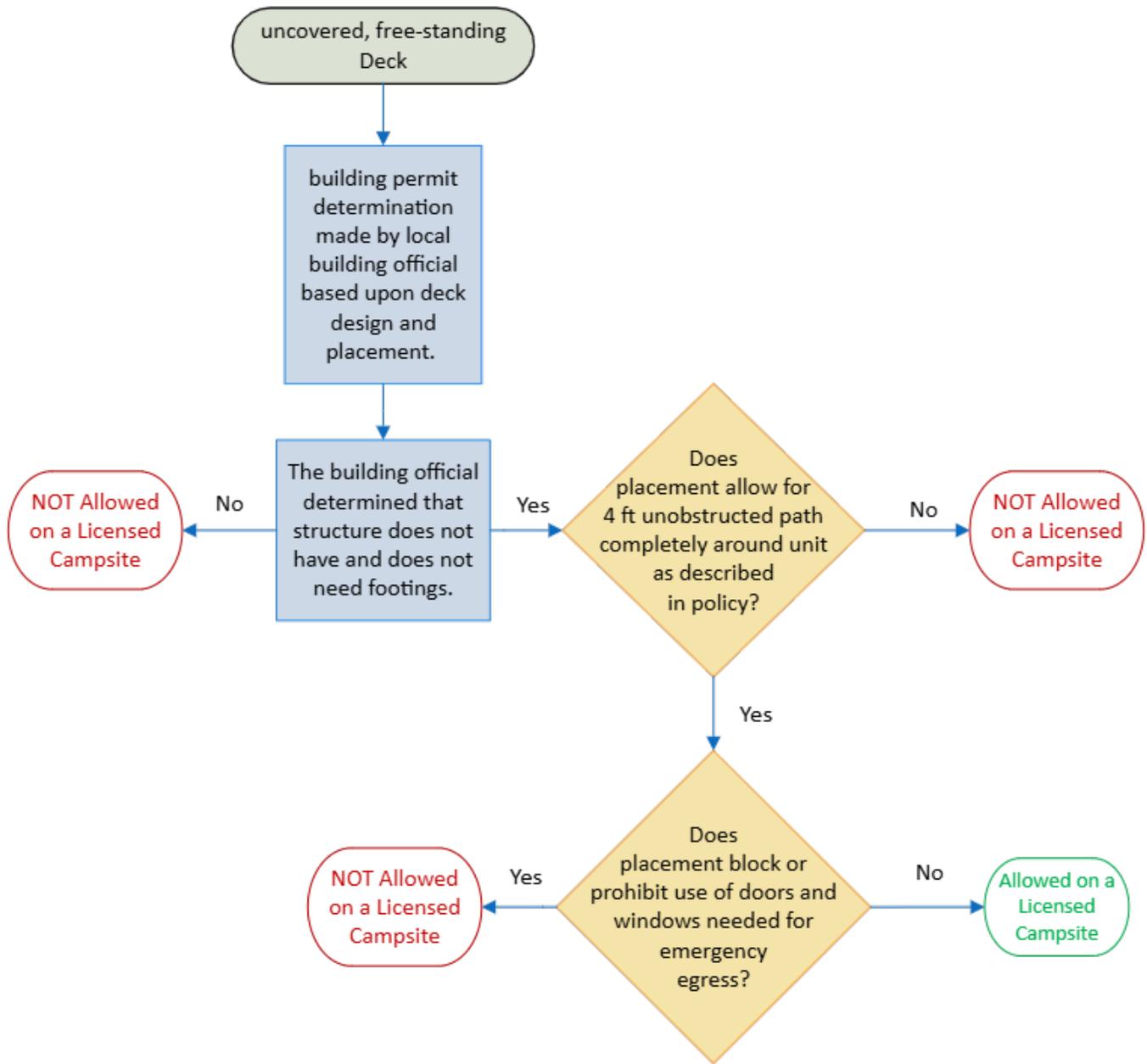
APPENDIX A – Structure Decision Trees



APPENDIX A – Structure Decision Trees (continued)



APPENDIX A – Structure Decision Trees (continued)



APPENDIX A – Structure Decision Trees (continued)

