

Frequently Asked Questions Accessory Buildings

What can I build without a permit?

An accessory building is exempt from a permit if it is under 10m² and is the *only* accessory building on the property. A second accessory building will require a permit, regardless of size.

*** The building will require a permit if it creates a hazard. Hazards can be fabric buildings, plastic buildings, storing hazardous materials inside, building close to a property line, not anchoring the building, etc.

What is required when applying for a permit to construct an accessory building?

The following items must be submitted:

- PBI Specification Sheet (plus all information requested in the sheets)
- Site Plan (north direction, streets, size/shape of lot and project, distance to and what borders property lines, etc.)
- Building Plans (floor plans, elevations, structural details, window & door details, material lists, etc.)
- Geotechnical Report (if required by zoning bylaws or an engineer recommendation)

Additional requirements (such as stamped engineered designs) may be required depending on the project. See further statements below.

You can find more information and forms on the [Professional Building Inspections website](https://www.pbiinspect.com).

When is a professional designer (engineer/architect) required?

Professional designs are required for thickened edge slab foundations over 1200 ft², for all other types of foundations (ex. grade beam, PWF, etc.), for walls exceeding 12 feet in height, for prefabricated metal/plastic buildings and when roof or floor trusses are used.

*** As long as they are anchored, Thickened edge slab foundations up to 1200 ft² and wooden skid foundations up to 600 ft² do not require engineering.

Are premanufactured accessory buildings permitted?

Yes, a permit is required for premanufactured accessory buildings.

Frequently Asked Questions Accessory Buildings

Why do I need a professional designer to review plans for a metal or plastic prefabricated shed from a big box store?

Professional designs are required for prefabricated metal and plastic sheds because the construction of these types of buildings is not addressed prescriptively in the building code.

Can I put a wood floor in my accessory building?

Wood floors are acceptable when built in compliance with part 9 of the building code.

Are there additional requirements for a shipping container (sea can)?

If a shipping container is no longer used for its original purpose (shipping and storage of freight), then designs stamped by a professional designer for the proposed use are required.

Are there additional requirements for steel buildings?

Designs stamped by a professional designer are required for steel accessory buildings.

What is required for a fabric covered building?

Fabric structures must comply with section 3.1.18 of the National Building Code (they are not permitted for long term use otherwise). Designs reviewed and stamped by a professional designer are required for these structures.

How close can I be to a property line?

An accessory building can be placed as close to the property line as desired, however, the closer it is to the property line, the more construction requirements there are. To avoid additional construction restrictions, the building should be built 2 feet (or 4 feet depending on your local fire response time) away from the property line.

How close can I be to my house?

There are no limitations to how close an accessory building can be to your dwelling. If the building is connected to the dwelling, it would be considered an *addition* rather than an accessory building.

How tall can my building be?

There are no height restrictions for accessory buildings in the building code, however municipal bylaws may dictate a height restriction (check with your local municipality). Walls exceeding 12 feet in height require engineered designs.

Is anchoring required for my accessory building?

Unless the accessory building is under 55m² and supported by wood mud sills, anchoring is required.