

Canadian Standards and Certifications

Part of the challenge in the world of “tiny homes” is the lack of clarity on the standards to which these homes are to be built. In some instances, people DIY and make their “home” without following the proper standards for a permanent home, be it one on wheels or fixed. While this may seem a reasonable approach for people looking for a cost-effective way to have a place to live, it comes with likely safety hazards, no financing or insurance, and likely placed on land illegally as this would not comply with municipal bylaws. This, in turn, can make municipalities reluctant to support the proliferation of these units in their community.

Tiny homes on wheels (THOW) present their own challenges, with a combination of needing to comply with highway codes to make them safe to drive on public roadways (even moving them means driving), as well as home building standards. Most municipalities only allow homes on wheels in mobile home or trailer parks, regardless of the standards to which they are built. The logic of this is unclear as the focus of municipalities is better placed on compliance with building codes which is a municipal function.

Some THOW manufacturers will build to a “park model trailer” standards which is used for recreational vehicles which creates challenges as well. A home cannot be resided in year round built to these standards. A THOW built to building code standards is a dwelling available for all year use, though it may still be limited to placement in a mobile home park because it is on wheels. Again, there is a lack of logic to this position which in some cases exists simply due to being part of the historical bylaw landscape.

The same can be said about bylaws that set minimum home sizes. There is no current logic to maintain such rules which can be better addressed (i.e. size) through building codes where health and safety issues are best considered.

Below is the list of various standards which apply to any factory-built home intended for year-round use. If the tiny home is an accessory dwelling unit, these are the standards you should look for.

- ☐ CSA A277 Procedure for factory certification of prefabricated buildings, modules, and panels
- ☐ CSA Z240 MH Series Manufactured Homes
- ☐ National Building Code of Canada
- ☐ National Plumbing Code of Canada
- ☐ CSA C22.1 Canadian Electrical Code, Part 1
- ☐ CSA B149.1 Natural Gas and Propane Installation Code
- ☐ National Energy Code for Buildings
- ☐ Other Provincial Building Codes as applicable such as the Ontario Building Code
- ☐ CSA Z240.10.1 Site Preparation, Foundation and Anchorage of Manufactured Homes
- ☐ These codes apply to factory-built homes, regardless of where they are constructed.

- ❑ Certification of code compliance for factory built (modular/prefabricated) homes must be conducted by a certification body accredited by the Standards Council of Canada. The certification body provides:
 - certification of the factory's quality system and quality program, and
 - certification of the buildings, modules, or panels produced in the factory as complying with applicable local regulations
- ❑ The certification body oversees the in-plant quality process, including identification of qualified personnel and responsibilities, sign-offs and record-keeping, and conducts annual audits and random inspections.
- ❑ Every building produced in a certified factory has a unique serial number assigned to it, and the associated documentation includes a travel log with the factory checklist, all inspections and testing completed, shipping documentation, and all the design documents.
- ❑ Acceptable certification bodies: Canadian Standards Association, Intertek, and Quality Audit Institute
- ❑ The provincial code applies to the site (e.g. foundation etc.) and will be verified by local building officials