

July, 2016
BUILDING DIVISION

PORTABLE BUILDINGS

General Information

Portable buildings (also known as modular buildings) include both temporary and permanent enclosed buildings and structures used for classrooms, construction site trailers, sales offices, show suites, special event shelters, etc. For the purposes of this bulletin, portable buildings do not include fixed buildings that were not designed to be moved. All proposed construction shall comply with the British Columbia Building Code, the City of Surrey Zoning By-law and any other City by-laws or regulations that may be applicable. Applicants are advised to consult with the Planning Division before applying for a building permit for a temporary or permanent portable building. A portable building shall be addressed by the same civic address as the principal building on the property.

In general, a building permit is required for every portable building proposed to be located on a property. A building permit may not be required for a temporary portable building (such as a construction site office trailer) if it will not be assembled or constructed on-site, and it will be located on-site for a few months only. Applicants must also obtain permission from By-law Enforcement & Licensing Department for all temporary portable buildings. A temporary portable building that is assembled or constructed on-site will require a building permit.

Fire Department Requirements

All portable buildings must be located within 147 ft (45 m) of a fire department access route. Access routes shall conform to the requirements of the BC Building Code, except that an access route constructed on a school property may be surfaced with gravel provided that the access route is designed to support the expected loads imposed by firefighting vehicles and equipment. If a portable exceeds 2000 ft² (186 m²) in area, or if a cluster contains 3 or more portables, there must be a fire hydrant within 295 ft (90 m) of the principal entrance to each portable building. Clusters of 2 portables are not required to be within 295 ft (90 m) of a fire hydrant. Each cluster can contain a maximum of 6 portable buildings. In all cases, clusters of portables shall be separated from each other, as well as set back from other buildings, by at least 40 ft (12 m), and the combined area of each cluster shall not exceed 6000 ft² (557 m²).

The fire alarm system for the portable buildings shall be connected to the principal building's fire alarm system, and be provided with manual pull stations and heat detectors. Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided in accordance with the BC Fire Code. A Fire Safety Plan and fire alarm verification report shall be submitted and approved by the Surrey Fire Department prior to final inspection and occupancy.

Required Drawings (4 sets)

- Site plan (1/8" = 1'-0" scale or equivalent 1:100 metric scale) showing the proposed location of the portable buildings and other buildings on the property. The site plan should also show property lines, streets, fire department access routes, fire hydrants, and available parking stalls.
- Floor plans showing the number and locations of exits of each portable building.
- Elevation plans of the portable buildings.
- Details of stairs, handrails, guards, and accessible ramps.
- Structural drawings showing details of the foundation and/or anchorage, if the portable building will be assembled or constructed on-site. The portable building structure shall be set on a permanent foundation or piers capable of carrying and distributing all imposed loads, and provided with a means to prevent wind uplift.
- Plumbing drawings, if there will be plumbing work inside the portable buildings (e.g. washrooms).
- Electrical drawings, if there will be electrical work inside the portable buildings (e.g. lighting displays). Electrical drawings must show a single line diagram with distribution details, feeder cable, overcurrent devices, and trenching with cross section characteristics to each portable building. Each portable building must indicate by signage where it receives its electrical supply. Each factory-built portable building must be approved as per the mandatory requirements of BC Safety Authority Directive D-E3 080606 1.
- Civil drawings, if any plumbing inside the portable buildings will be connected to City services.
- Mechanical drawings, if any heating, ventilating, or air conditioning systems will be installed.

Depending on the scope of work, some of these drawings are not required to be submitted or to be sealed. All submitted drawings shall include the civic address of the principal building on the property, and shall be signed and sealed by the applicable Registered Professional of Record where required.

Required Documents and Fees

- Building Permit Application form
- Owner's Authorization form, if the applicant is not the property owner
- Schedule A from the Coordinating Registered Professional
- Schedule B from each Registered Professional of Record who submits signed and sealed drawings
- Building permit fee, based on the value of construction.
- Security bond of \$10,000 to ensure removal of temporary portable buildings within 12 months from the date of building permit issuance.
- Letter from the property owner stating that the temporary portable buildings will be removed within 12 months from the date of building permit issuance.

- Certification documents from the manufacturer of each portable building that is not assembled or constructed on-site
- Parking calculations considering the added floor area of the proposed portable buildings.
- Calculations for the required number of washrooms based on the proposed occupant load, with an indication that the required washrooms are located in adjacent buildings if no washrooms are proposed within the portable buildings.

Shipping Containers

Shipping containers, also known as “sea-cans”, are not permitted in agricultural zoned properties. In accordance with the General Provisions of the Zoning Bylaw, shipping containers are only permitted in industrial zoned properties after receiving the required permits, and must comply with the requirements of the zone as if it were a building or structure.

Additional Information

Separate permits may be required for any new plumbing, electrical, signs, and sprinkler installations, even if a building permit is not required. Flame spread rating of the interior wall and ceiling finishes shall not exceed 150. Emergency lighting shall be provided in accordance with the BC Building Code. The Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems must conform to Part 6 of the BC Building Code. Factory-built components must be Canadian Standards Association (CSA) certified prior to placement on-site.