

A Guide to Accessory Buildings for Homeowners



When planning to construct an accessory building such as a detached garage or storage shed, this guide will: assist you the homeowner in determining when a building permit is required, what is required in your permit application and highlight any zoning regulations governing the construction of these structures.

When and Why a Permit Is Required

In general, a building permit is required for all buildings and structures greater than 108 ft² (10 m²) in area. Buildings and structures under 108 ft² do not require a permit unless they contain plumbing but must still comply with the City of St. Catharines Zoning By-law (including setbacks and maximum height).

Building permits are necessary to ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code for structural sufficiency, safety and other standards, conformance with zoning requirements and compliance with all other applicable Provincial and Municipal regulations.

It is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure a permit is obtained prior to any construction of these structures.

Constructing or altering a structure without a permit can result in numerous problems including:

- **Complaints from neighbours**
- **Not conforming with the Building Code**
- **Difficulty selling the property**

- **Incurring liability should an injury occur to someone (visiting your property) as a result of a structure not conforming to the Building Code**
- **Additional expenses incurred to reconstruct the structure to comply with the Zoning By-law and/or the Building Code**
- **Possible demolition of structure.**

City of St. Catharines Zoning By-Law

The City of St. Catharines Zoning By-law contains regulations governing the size, height, location and use of the building. Based on the zoning of the property the proposed building must not exceed the requirements with respect to lot coverage, minimum setbacks from property lines and maximum building height.

Building By-Law 2011-334

A copy of Building By-Law 2011-334 is available at the City of St. Catharines, Clerks and Legal Services, or downloaded at the City of St. Catharines website under By-laws. www.stcatharines.ca (<https://stcatharines.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/784/>)

Applying For A Permit

Applications for building permits are available at the City of St. Catharines, Planning and Building Services (PBS) Department or downloaded at the City of St. Catharines website. www.stcatharines.ca (<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/building-and-renovating/applying-for-a-building-permit.aspx>).

Building permit applications must be accompanied with two (2) copies of detailed construction drawings, a site plan, the required building permit fees, and damage deposits, (if applicable). If you require assistance to develop these drawings, sample and standard drawings are available for your use along with the current fee schedules at the City of St. Catharines, PBS Department.

Building permits may be applied for by a property owner, or by an agent on behalf of the owner, such as the contractor or designer. The Schedule 1 portion of the application must be filled out with every submission not involving an architect or engineer. The owner of a single or two-unit dwelling may produce the drawings, otherwise a qualified designer must prepare and take responsibility for the designs.

Required Drawings

As mentioned above, two (2) complete copies of detailed drawings are required with the submission of an application.

A complete detailed site plan showing the following:

- **North arrow**
- **Scale**
- **Legal description, (lot and plan numbers)**
- **Lot dimensions**
- **Setbacks to all property lines for the existing dwelling and the proposed building or structure**
- **Easement location(s)**
- **Street name(s)**
- **Information for all existing buildings and structure such as size and location.**

Detailed Construction Drawings showing:

- **Size and height dimensions**
- **Location and size of all door and window openings**
- **Materials used**
- **Size and spacing of studs, beams and posts**
- **Concrete pier sizes, (depth and spacing)**
- **Roof framing details, (trusses or rafter size and spacing)**
- **Anchoring and fastening details**
- **Concrete slab information, (size, thickness and reinforcement details)**
- **Normally construction drawings for accessory buildings will include, as a minimum, four elevations and at least one cross section.**

Buildings of less than 55 m² (592 ft²) in floor area and not more than one storey in height may be supported on wood mud sills or concrete floating slab rather than a 4'-0" deep foundation, provided that the building is not of masonry or masonry veneer construction.

Concrete floating slabs greater than 55 m² (592 ft²) are allowed but must be designed by a Professional Engineer.

Pre-Engineered truss drawings must be provided with an application for permit, or prior to framing inspections.

No glazed openings such as in windows and doors are permitted in any exterior wall less than 1.2 m (3'-11") from a property line.

New Materials/Systems: Additional information such as manufacturer's drawings, specifications or engineering details may be required for materials/systems which are not specifically prescribed in the Ontario Building Code.

The original drawings must be submitted to scale and fully dimensioned in either metric or imperial units with the appropriate information shown as noted above.

What to Do When Waiting For the Permit to Be Issued

Once you have submitted your application, we will review your submission as quickly as we can. We are aware of the importance to you in obtaining the permit quickly. Please make yourself available at the telephone number you provided at the time of application to ensure we can contact you should we require any clarification of your submission.

What to do When the Permit Has Been Issued

Once you receive your permit, please read the approved permit plans and documents thoroughly before commencing construction. The construction must be in accordance with the approved plans and documents issued with your permit. Any changes made before or during construction must be submitted to the building section and additional fees may be applicable.

Inspections by the Building Section are also required during construction to ensure that all work is done in accordance with the approved plans. Some key inspections include:

- **Prior to pouring any concrete for piers or footings**
- **Framing inspection**
- **Final inspection**

The Building Permit must be posted on the property in a conspicuous location and the approved permit documents must be kept on site and available during all inspections.

Note: It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that either you or the contractor contact the City of St. Catharines, PBS Department to request an inspection before proceeding to the next phase of construction. All required inspections are listed on the permit.

Failure to schedule inspections will result in not being allowed to occupy or use the accessory building and may also result in uncovering the work.

To schedule your inspections, call 905-688-5601, ext. 1660. Please have your permit number ready when scheduling an inspection.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the City of St. Catharines, PBS Department between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 905-688-5601 ext. 1660.