



# Building Your City Shed/Garage Construction Guide

Building permits regulate types of construction permitted in the community, and ensure the safety of the homeowner and community at large. Approved plans must comply with the current, amended version of the Ontario Building Code (OBC), local zoning by-laws, and other applicable laws and regulations.

If any of the following information is unclear or you have further questions, our Building Services Department is here to help. Whether it's about zoning, outside agency approvals, legal requirements, building design and materials, construction safety or anything that helps your project turn out successfully, we're here to lend a hand.

## Step 1

### Check the zoning on the property.

Zoning by-laws regulate where the shed, garage or other accessory building can be placed, including how close to the lot line you can place the building and, in some cases, how much of the property can be covered by a building. A Building Permit cannot be issued if the proposed construction does not comply with the Zoning By-law for your property. **Contact the City of Pickering Zoning Examiner** and find out what the zoning by-law for your property says, before you finalize the design of your building.

If the building does not comply with the property's zoning by-law, please contact Building Services staff before proceeding to Step 2. You may have the opportunity to apply for a variance to the Zoning By-Law.

## Step 2

### Find out if any area of your property is environmentally protected.

Within the City of Pickering, there are two Conservation Authorities that have the jurisdiction to regulate construction in the vicinity of natural features and environmentally sensitive lands, such as wooded areas, lakes, creeks, and natural heritage routes providing protection for wildlife.

If your property contains a natural feature, before you apply to the City for a Building Permit, find out if the local Conservation Authority has any concerns. For most of Pickering, you should contact the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) at 416.661.6600 ([trca.ca](http://trca.ca)). For areas of north/east Pickering, contact the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) at 905.579.0411 ([cloca.com](http://cloca.com)).

## Step 3

### Determine if you need a Building Permit before you build your shed or garage.

In most cases it is against the law to begin construction or demolition of a building, without having a valid permit. Building Services staff is available throughout the permit process to assist you with your application and answer any questions you may have.

If the size of the proposed shed or garage is greater than 10m<sup>2</sup> (108 ft<sup>2</sup>), then you need a Building Permit. This includes shed or garage kits purchased from a retail outlet. If you're not sure, please call our Building Services Department at 905.420.4631.

**Even if a Building Permit is not required, the zoning requirements for your property still apply. Refer to Step 1 before you proceed any further.**

## Step 4

### Prepare a Site Plan drawing

Prepare a site plan, showing the location and size of the proposed building and all other structures on the property. (Refer to sample Site Plan drawing SD01). Bear in mind the setback requirements and lot coverage restrictions required by the Zoning By-law for your property (Step 1). You can use a survey or previous site plan drawing of the property to sketch an outline of the proposed building. This can be drawn by hand (with a ruler and permanent ink) or by computer software. You must show:

- all dimensions of the building including length, width, height and area
- the distance from the edges of the building to the lot lines
- the location and size of any other existing buildings on the property

If a survey is required, contact the Building Services Department, to see if we have one on file.

**NOTE:** the City of Pickering is not required to retain copies of surveys. This is the job of the Ontario Land Registry Office. If the City is not able to provide a copy, it is your responsibility to get one from the Land Registry Office, or to hire a surveyor to have a survey prepared for you, at your cost.

## Step 5

### Prepare construction drawings

Prepare construction drawings for the building, bearing in mind the requirements of the OBC. Sample, code compliant drawings of typical construction are available from the Building Services Department and can be attached and form part of an approved Building Permit (See drawings SD01 through SD07). If used, these sample drawings will form part of the permit, therefore the building construction must meet the minimum requirements noted on these drawings. If you're not familiar with OBC requirements, consider hiring a qualified designer to help design your shed or garage.

If your shed or garage is constructed from a prefabricated kit, you must submit the manufacturer's floor plan and construction details.

As a minimum, construction drawings must include:

- Site Plan (SD01)
- Plan and Section drawings (SD02)
- Sizing Tables and Notes (SD03)
- Framing details (SD04)
- Brick veneer details, if applicable (SD05)
- Solid Masonry details, if applicable (SD06)
- Elevation drawings (SD07)

## Step 6

### Assemble drawings and apply for a permit

A Building Permit is issued to the owner of the property, or the authorized agent of the owner, i.e., the contractor. Your designer or contractor can also apply for the permit on your behalf. It is, however, the property the responsibility of the property owner to ensure compliance with all building requirements.

Building Permit applications are accepted at the Building Services Department at Pickering City Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, One The Esplanade, Pickering, Ont., Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30 am and 3:45 pm.

**Bring along two (2) copies of all the drawings**, including the site plan and all construction drawings (See Step 5). These must be submitted at the time of application along with the permit fee. The current fee for a Building Permit to construct a shed or garage is \$144.00 (taxes included).

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If our property records do not show you as the owner of the property, (perhaps you just recently moved to this property?) you, or your contractor, will be asked to provide a copy of the deed to the property, and some personal ID to confirm the ownership.

Prior to accepting the application for Building Permit, one of our plans examiners will do a quick review of the drawings to ensure we have enough information to conduct the formal plans examination.

Currently, plans review for a shed or garage will take approximately 10 business days. You will be called if we have any further questions, or, as soon as the Building Permit has been issued. You or your contractor must pick up the issued Building Permit together with a set of the approved construction drawings, before you begin construction.

The Building Permit must be displayed somewhere on the property, where it can easily be seen by the general public, like a window, front door, attached to a post in the yard. The approved drawings must be available on site at all times, during the construction of the building.

## Step 7

### Book your inspections.

Certain inspections are required on site, once construction has begun. Building Services staff will advise you of all required inspections and how to book them. The Building Permit process is not considered 'closed', until all inspections have been signed off by a City of Pickering Building Inspector. Typically, inspections for a shed or garage include:

- Inspecting the footings prior to pouring concrete
- Inspection of the building (all frame elements must be visible for inspection)
- Final inspection

## Step 8

### Enjoy your new shed or garage!

Sheds or garages can be a big investment of your time and money, and if built well, can add value to your home. Choosing to follow the requirements set out by the Zoning By-law and Ontario Building Code go a long way to ensure your new building is legal, your contractor builds according to your plans, and your shed or garage is designed to keep you and your guests safe.

## FAQs

### Who is allowed to design a residential shed or garage?

The homeowner or person who owns the property is allowed to design the shed or garage. If the home/property owner is not preparing the shed or garage design, consider having a qualified designer with a minimum qualification of “BCIN House” prepare the design. A form called ‘Schedule 1: Designer Information’ (available at the City Development Department), must be completed and submitted along with the permit application.

### Who is allowed to construct a residential shed or garage?

Anyone is allowed to construct the deck once a building permit has been issued to the home/property owner.

It is, however, the responsibility of the home/property owner to ensure that:

- a Building Permit has been obtained and posted in a visible location
- the work complies with the Ontario Building Code
- the required building inspections have been scheduled **and signed off**

The Building Permit process can only be ‘closed’, once the construction is deemed complete by the City Building Inspector.

### Do I need a building permit to reconstruct or repair the same size and style of shed or garage I already have?

**Yes.** Even if you are reconstructing or repairing the same size shed or garage, a building permit may be required. If the shed or garage you are repairing or replacing was constructed prior to the current, amended version of the OBC, there may be new requirements for the construction that must be met.

Constructing, repairing or reconstructing without the authority of a building permit may result in extra fees for Building Code Act Orders or extra fees for the Building Permit application. It may also result in extra costs for additional materials, or for a professional engineer’s design (P.Eng review) being required in order to bring the shed or garage in to compliance with the current OBC.

## What size of shed or garage can I construct on my property?

See **Step 1** of the City of Pickering, Shed/Garage Construction Guide. The City's Zoning Examiner will review the zoning by-law for your property and advise you on the required distances from lot lines, permitted height of shed or garage, and lot coverage maximums.

## What building materials and construction methods do I want to use to build my shed or garage?

It's important, early in the process, to consider the building materials and construction methods you intend to use when constructing your new building. The type of material you choose may have different requirements for construction under the OBC. Knowing how your materials work and perform may help in eliminating delays in getting your approved Building Permit and reduce frustrations during construction.

If you are considering any new or innovative building materials or construction practices, our Building Services staff will help you determine how to choose materials and methods that comply with the OBC.

## What should I consider before designing the shed or garage?

- What is the proposed location of the shed, garage or accessory building?
- What type of foundation system will be used? (slab on grade, mudsill, etc.)
- Will the shed or garage be connected to the house?
- Will there be plumbing?
- Is electrical (lights) required by code?

## Can I install plumbing in my shed or garage?

Yes, a water line is permitted in a shed or garage. Plumbing drawings must be submitted for review if you intend to do this. Other design requirements may be asked for as a result of plumbing.



## Why should I go to the trouble of getting a Building Permit for my shed or garage?

Sheds and garages share many of the same structural requirements as buildings like your house. They are also subjected to wind, rain and snow loads, and variations in temperature.

Sheds and garages can fail slowly over time, resulting in costly damage, and potential injury, loss of life, or personal liability if the shed or garage was constructed improperly or without a Building Permit.

## What drawings are required as part of the Building Permit application?

A minimum of two (2) copies of the following drawings are required when applying for a Building Permit for a shed or garage. See **Steps 5 and 6** of the City of Pickering Shed/Garage Construction Guide for a list of required drawings.

## What can I do to make sure my construction site is safe before I build my shed or garage?

- **Build Smart. Build Safe.** Remember, 15 minutes now saves you 2 hours later.
- **Before you dig...** Call Ontario One Call and make an appointment to locate underground utilities such as natural gas, hydro, water/sewer lines. If you're on septic, be sure you know where the septic tank is located. Visit [www.on1call.com](http://www.on1call.com) or call toll free at 1.800.400.2255.
- Be aware of any existing overhead wires or hydro lines.
- Check if any windows or doors will be obstructed by the new construction.
- Make sure all your construction equipment is in good order.
- Wear personal protective gear such as gloves, safety goggles, sturdy closed toe footwear (or safety boots). For more health and safety regulations, visit the Ministry of Labour website at [www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-labour](http://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-labour).
- Reduce confusion on the job site by developing a simple construction plan, then organize your construction materials accordingly. Be sure to store all materials and tools in a safe place when not in use.

## Do I have to let my neighbours know that I'm building a deck?

- There are no requirements to advise your neighbours of the construction, unless you have applied for a variance to your Zoning By-law.
- Remember that the City of Pickering Noise By-law 6834/08 restricts construction noise to the hours of 7 am to 9 pm.
- Be a good homeowner and let your adjoining neighbours know of the impending noise and construction activity on your property. You never know; they may ask if they can lend a hand!