Information Bulletin

Requirements for Portable Small Buildings

(Occupancy Groups A2, D, E)

To help improve the permit approval process for portable classrooms and offices, and avoid unnecessary delays due to insufficient document submissions or misunderstanding of requirements, applicants should be aware of the Manitoba Building Code (MBC) requirements and the City of Winnipeg permit requirements when locating new portable buildings.

Portable buildings, although often intended for temporary use, are considered as a permanent structure under the Building Code. Other than relaxations to foundation requirements, these types of buildings, which are usually in place for longer than a year, are generally not granted exemptions and must comply with Code requirements.

Permits

The permits required for the placement of portable buildings are:

- Development permit
- Building permit
- Related trade permits
    - Mechanical
    - Electrical
    - Plumbing (if any)
- Occupancy permit

Requirements for New Portable Buildings

Building Code Considerations

Portable pre-fab units are intended to be temporary and there is some allowance under the City's Building By-law (Article 14.3.1.1) to consider "selective compliance" with the Building Code.

- The City has only applied this selective MBC compliance to lesser requirements for the foundation, which would otherwise be required as a permanent construction. Even in these situations where a permanent foundation is not required by the City, the City requires a geotechnical report, upon which the temporary foundation design is based, to be prepared and submitted as it would for a permanent structure.
- Barrier-free access requirements are applicable.

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- As assembly occupancies, portable classrooms are governed by the more comprehensive requirements of MBC Part 3. Offices would be reviewed under the lesser requirements of MBC Part 9 (Small Buildings).

Manitoba Energy Code for Buildings (MECB) or MBC 9.36 requirements are to be met for portable buildings whose intended use will exceed one year.

Fire Blocking Requirements

In multiple portable buildings that are connected, any void space between the portables must be fire-blocked vertically and horizontally so that there is no connection between the attic spaces, between the crawlspaces and between the attic and crawl spaces as per MBC 3.1.11.5. or 9.10.16.1.

Requirements for Relocation of Portable Buildings

The Manitoba Building Code amendments, Subsection 1.3.5. 'Limited Application to Existing Buildings' Article 1.3.5.1. 'Alterations and Repairs', require that all new work comply with the current Code. In the case of a relocated existing building, this would apply to the new foundation and all proposed alterations. The relocated building, if previously maintained consistently with Winnipeg Building Bylaw article 5.8.2, would be subject to the code at the time of initial construction. The design professionals shall satisfactorily address fire and life safety aspects for the relocated building.

Certification by Professionals

As portable **classrooms** are Assembly buildings, both an Architect and Engineer(s) are required to assess the building being relocated for current Code compliance in all aspects: life safety, health, barrier-free design, structural safety, mechanical performance, and electrical compliance. A Building Design Summary Application Form with sealed and signed architectural, structural, mechanical, and electrical design summaries and relevant drawings are required to relocate an existing portable building.

The required professionals noted above will assume responsibility for the condition of the moved building, even if they were not the original designers of the systems they have assessed. This is required so they can provide the certification of the building and systems prior to the granting of an occupancy permit.

The following elements require certification under a single seal or submitted separately under the seal of multiple design professionals registered in the province of Manitoba:

- All aspects of the original as-built construction.
- The superstructure plans and specifications at the proposed location (post move).
- A site specific geotechnical report specifying the limit states design requirements.
- Completed Professional Designers Certificates (RPDC's) for each discipline.
- Certification letters for each discipline.

Possible Scenarios for Placement of Portable Classrooms or other Portable Buildings

Located as an Addition

If the portable structures are an addition to an existing building and they, together with the existing building, have a combined building area that is allowed within one of the applicable occupancy classification construction articles, they must be treated as one building for Code review purposes. Both the existing building and the portable structures must comply with the current MBC (See Figure 1). If the area is not allowed, another scenario as shown below should be considered.

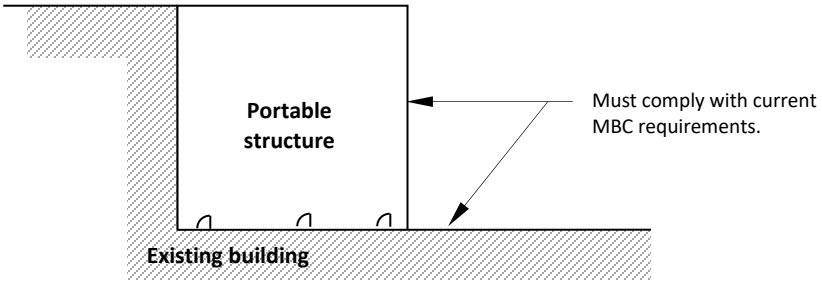

Figure 1

Separated by a 2-Hour Firewall

If the portable structures are separated from the existing building by a 2-hr firewall, only the portable structures must comply with the current MBC. (See Figure 2)

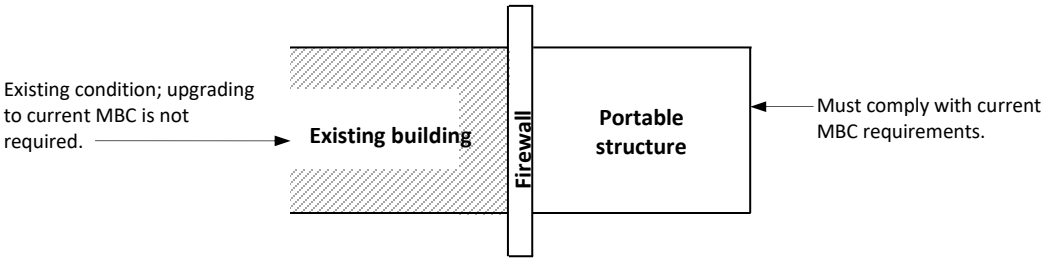

Figure 2

Located as a Separate Building

If the portable structure form a separate building with no connection to the existing building, only the portable structure must comply with the current MBC. For spatial separation purposes, the exposing building face for both the existing building and the portable structures shall be only those areas that overlap. (See Figure 3)

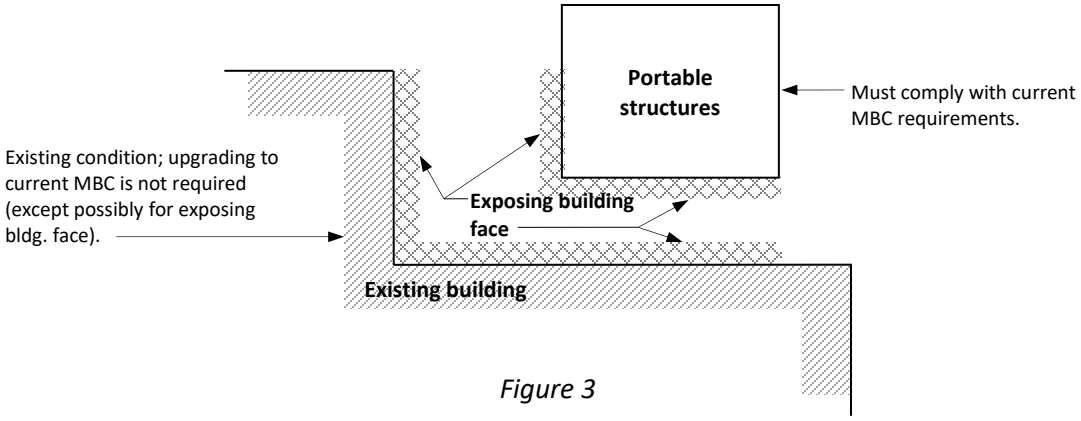

Figure 3

Located as a Separate Building Connected by a Link

If the portable structures form a separate building that is connected to the existing building via a link, both the link and the portable structures must comply with the current MBC. (See Figure 4)

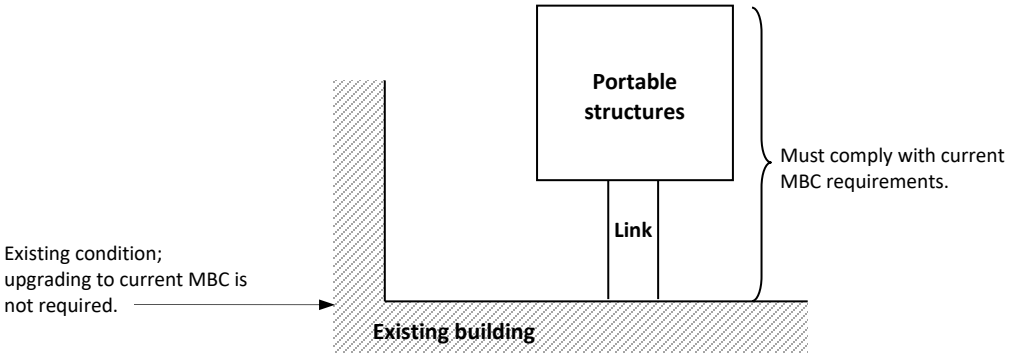

Figure 4

Modular structure Located as a Separate Building

Certification of a modular building fabricated off-site without City of Winnipeg Inspections during construction must bear a seal confirming compliance as per Standard CSA A277, Procedure for Certification of Prefabricated Buildings, Modules and Panels and the Canadian Electrical Code, Part 1, for the installation of electrical systems.