

Requirements for Portable Buildings

(Occupancy Groups A2, D, E)

Although often intended for temporary use, portable buildings are considered permanent structures under the Manitoba Building Code (MBC). Aside from potential relaxations regarding foundation requirements, these buildings, typically in use for over a year, must fully comply with MBC regulations.

Permit requirements

Permits required for the placement of portable buildings:

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



New portable buildings: code considerations

Selective MBC compliance

For temporary buildings, limited relaxations are allowed under the City of Winnipeg Building Bylaw (Article 14.3.1.1), but only for foundation requirements. Even then, a Geotechnical Report is mandatory for designing the temporary foundation.

Key Requirements

- Barrier-free access must be provided.
- Portable classrooms (Assembly Occupancy) must comply with MBC Part 3.
- Portable offices fall under MBC Part 9 (small buildings).
- Buildings used for longer than a year must meet Energy Code requirements:
 - Manitoba Energy Code for Buildings (MECB), or
 - MBC Section 9.36.

Fire blocking in connected units

When multiple portable buildings are joined together:

- All void spaces between them (attic, crawlspace) must be vertically and horizontally fire blocked.
- Fire blocking requirements are governed by MBC 3.1.11.5 or 9.10.16

Relocating a portable building: code considerations

Code compliance

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 By-Law 4555/87](#) Article 5.8.2, would be subject to the Code at the time of initial construction. The design professionals must address fire and life safety aspects for the relocated building.

Professional certification

As portable **classrooms** are assembly buildings, both an Architect and Engineer are required to assess the building being located onsite for current code compliance in all aspects:

- life safety
- health, barrier-free design
- structural integrity
- mechanical and electrical systems

Documents required to relocate a factory assembled portable building:

- Building Design Summary (BDS) application form
- BDS sealed and signed for Architectural, Structural, Mechanical, and Electrical)
- relevant drawings

The required professionals 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 (RPDCs) for each discipline.
- Certification letters for each discipline.

Modular buildings without city inspection

For modular buildings built off-site (without City of Winnipeg inspection), the following certifications are required:

- CSA A277: Certification of Prefabricated Buildings, Modules, and Panels
- Canadian Electrical Code, Part 1: Electrical system installation

Placement scenarios for portable buildings

1. Addition to an existing building

- If combined building area fits within occupancy classification limits, the portable and existing structures can be reviewed as a single building.

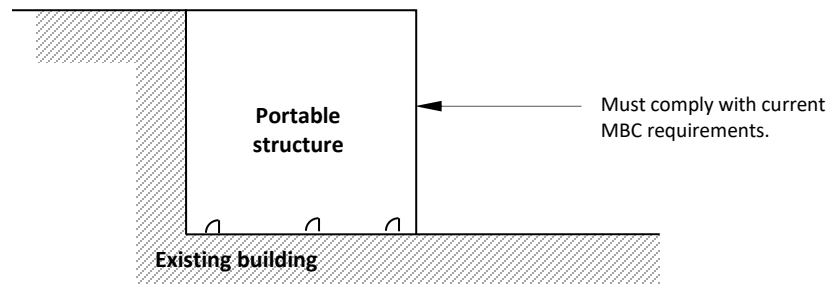


Figure 1

2. Separated by 2-hour firewall

- Portable structures must independently comply with current MBC.

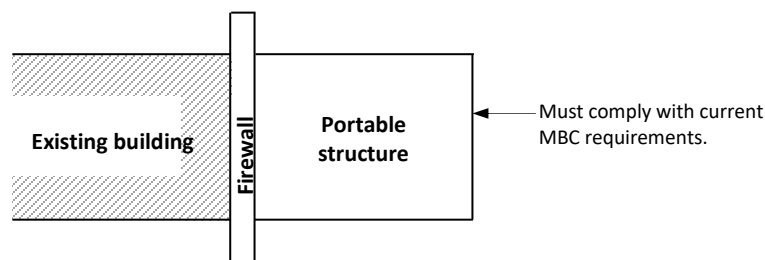
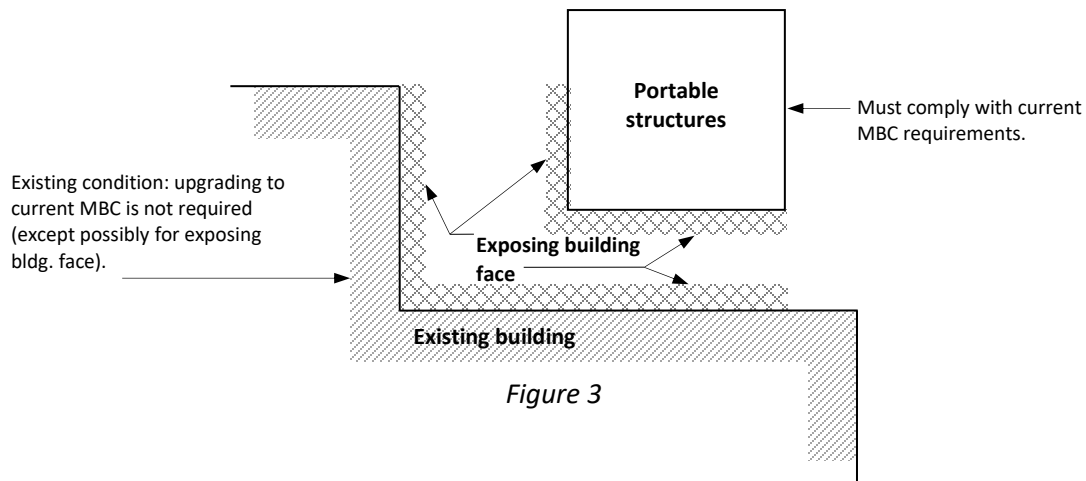


Figure 2

3. Separate building

- If not connected, spatial separation rules apply only to overlapping exposing building faces.



4. Linked separate building

- If connected by a link, both the portable and the link must comply with current MBC requirements.

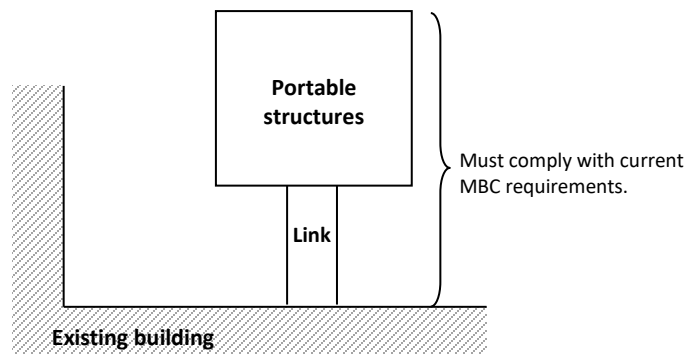


Figure 4