



CITY OF SWIFT CURRENT

GARAGES, SHEDS (ACCESSORY BUILDINGS)

Accessory buildings (sheds and garages) in residential areas require building permits when they exceed 100 SF (9.3 m²) in building area regardless of material. This includes fabric tent type structures, polyurethane sheds, or traditional wood structures. Buildings under that size do not require a permit but must be located correctly to building codes and zoning bylaw requirements.

Placement of an Accessory Building:

1. Accessory buildings may be placed only in the rear yard. The rear yard is determined to the area from the plane of the principal building (the house) closest to the rear lot line. However, the only time an accessory building can be placed in the side yard is conditional that the space is large enough to ensure there is no less than 5' from the plane of the accessory building closest to the side lot line.
2. Regardless of size, no accessory building may be closer than 2' (600 mm) to any property line.
3. The edge of any eave on an accessory building may be no closer than 18" (450 mm) to any property line. Depending on the width of the overhang, a building face may need to be more than the 2' minimum to accommodate the minimum distance for the edge of the eaves.
4. There may be no windows or passage doors on building face unless it is at least 4' (1200 mm) from a property line.
5. An overhead door large enough to be used for vehicle access must be at least 5' (1500 mm) from a property line.
6. Garages require concrete floors.
7. Garden sheds may be placed on crushed rock or other free draining material and the floor constructed of preserved wood or other material that will not rot at the approval of building official in lieu of concrete. The floor assembly must be closed off in a manner that will not allow small animals to nest under the shed or allow garbage and other material to collect under it.
8. Accessory buildings are limited to 20' (6 m) measured from the peak of the roof to finished grade. Depending on topography, taller structures may be allowed but these are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and the accessory building should not be taller than the principal building.
9. It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that no accessory building is placed on a registered easement. Information concerning registered easements can be obtained from ISC (Information Services Corporation).

In most residential areas, site coverage of buildings to land cannot exceed 40% and accessory buildings may not exceed the area of the principal building.

How do I know if I can build a Garage, Car Shelter, or a Shed on my property?

When a property is already developed, there will eventually come a time when the desire to build an addition or add accessory buildings will come. The [Zoning Bylaw](#), being a bylaw that regulates the use of land by designated zones, is the first step in determining if the

project may proceed. Criteria such as distance from lot lines and overall site coverage are to be considered.

Draw a [site plan](#) (to scale) that shows the property lines and all the existing structures on the property. Dimension is everything because these numbers are used to determine whether the plan meets the criteria of the zone in which the property is located. A [check sheet](#) is available from the Building Department as a reference and is also part of the building permit application package. It is important to note that if a non-conformity does exist on the property, it may not be increased per The Planning and Development Act. An example is a building that is too close to the property line may not have an addition built onto it that is also too close to the property line.

Determine and draw onto the site plan all underground and overhead utilities. Consider the potential costs of having to relocate utilities into your project. Existing landscape features may also be an issue to consider. Large trees also have large root systems. Undermining a root system may require the removal of a tree and result in additional costs.

Building additional storeys onto an existing structure is possible, however, an engineer will be required to consult as to the suitability of the existing foundation and its ability to support the additional loads that the construction of another story(s) will impose.

The City of Swift Current does not do inspections to determine if property owners can apply for permits. The process is to apply for a building permit with supporting documents being a site plan, floor plan(s), sections, material lists, contractor quotes, etc. and upon review, the permit is approved if it meets zoning and building code requirements or rejected if it does not meet zoning and building code. When a permit is rejected, the applicant can resubmit under the same permit application.

Car shelters are fabric buildings, and the National Building Code speaks to design criteria for them. If a fabric building is being used as an accessory building for a single-family dwelling, the sides must be at least 2 feet from the property line and the zippered door side must be at least 5 feet from the alley property line. If you want to set one up and you are on a corner lot, the door must be 10 feet from the flanking street property line. Accessory buildings are allowed only in the rear yard.

Any structure that is 100 sf in building area or greater requires a building permit. If the structure is smaller than 100 sf, no permit is required by the property owner is obligated to follow building and zoning regulations.

GAZEBOS

Gazebos follow the same rules for zoning as accessory buildings regarding placement in rear yards and distance from property lines. There are two basic types of gazebos, manufactured metal frames with fabric covering and site fabricated, typically of wood. As with any accessory building, a gazebo with an area of 100 sf or greater requires a building permit.