PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY
Department of Development Services – Building Development Division

Residential Plan Review Requirements

Guidelines for Building a Shed

Residential Accessory Buildings

Version 2019-06-12

All detached accessory structures (including pre-fabricated buildings) used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar residential accessory uses which are more than one story above grade and/or exceed 256 square feet of building area require zoning approval, building plan review and a building permit. Additional trade permits (electrical, plumbing, etc.) are required when trade work is performed. Structures up to 256 square feet may not require a permanent concrete foundation if all of the below conditions for an exception are present.

Building Code – All jurisdictions in Virginia are required to use the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC). The state adopts other national model codes, with amendments, for use statewide so that everyone in the Commonwealth is subject to the same regulations. The code that is used for home improvements in Prince William County is the "International Residential Code".

FOOTING REQUIREMENTS:
All exterior walls shall be supported on a continuous solid or fully grouted masonry or concrete footings, crushed stone footings, wood foundations, or other approved structural systems which shall be of sufficient design to accommodate all loads according to Section R301 and to transmit the resulting loads to the soil within the limitations as determined from the character of the soil. Footings shall be supported on undisturbed natural soils or engineered fill. Concrete footing shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the provisions of Section R403 or in accordance with ACI 332. *(Minimum Depth for Frost Protection in Prince William County is 24")*

Exceptions to Footing Requirements: One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, not exceeding 256 square feet of building area provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. The building eave height is 10 feet or less.
2. The maximum height from the finished floor level to grade does not exceed 18 inches.
3. The supporting structural elements in direct contact with the ground shall be placed level on firm soil, and when such elements are wood they shall be approved pressure preservative treated suitable for ground contact use.
4. The structure is anchored to withstand the wind loads prescribed by the VUSBC.
5. The structure shall be of light frame construction whose vertical and horizontal structural elements are primarily formed by a system of repetitive wood or light gauge steel framing members, with walls and roof of light weight material, not slate, tile brick or masonry.

Steps to Building a Shed

1. Zoning Approval is the first step. Take 3 copies of the "House Location Survey" or "Plat" to have the size and location of the building approved. For information regarding set-back requirements and property line location questions contact the Zoning Division at 703-792-6830.

2. Building Plan Review - Bring two copies of the Zoning Approval Certificate to Building Plan Review with the building plans.

   - Obtain and complete a Building Permit Application form and the Contact Information Form. Submit these along with two copies of the building plans, two copies of the zoning approval, and the filing fee.
   - When the building plans are approved, one set of the building plans and one zoning approval will be returned to you and one will remain with the county records.
   - For additional detailed requirements see "Residential Plan Review Requirements" or the "Building Plan Review Requirements for Construction Drawings" below.

3. Pick-up Permits & Pay fees.

   - If you are a Contractor, or a homeowner who has hired a Contractor, a copy of the Contractors' VA State License and PWC Business License are required.
   - If you are the homeowner, and will be performing the work yourself, a completed Statement Of Exemption is required.

Please call Building Permitting Services if you have any questions at 703-792-6924.

4. Begin Construction and Schedule Inspections.
(see the Scheduling an Inspection webpage for more information)

Building Plan Review Requirements for Construction Drawings

- Applicant must provide two identical sets of plans. Minimum size drawing is 11"x 17"
- Each plan shall consist of:
  - Foundation (Footing) Plan with size and spacing of all footings.
  - Floor Framing Plan for showing posts, beams & joists.
  - Roof Framing Plan showing trusses or rafters, beams & collar ties.
  - Elevation (side view) for sides showing framing information.
  - Section ("Cut Thru" View) showing all detail from roof to footing bottom.
- **Preparing your own plans?**
  - Hand drawn plans are acceptable provided they are ***legible.***
  - Pencil drawings will not be accepted. (If original is in pencil please make two copies).
  - Please use a straight edge.
  - No "white" out or "taped on" details.
  - Label all components (footings, posts, beams, joists, headers, rafters, trusses, etc.).
  - Provide overall dimensions.
  - Provide lumber sizes and spacing.
- Remember to label components and fully dimension all drawings.

For Further information you may call 703-792-6930 or visit the Building Plan Review Section at the Development Services Building at 5 County Complex Court #120, Prince William, VA, 22192.

Pre-Fabricated or Pre-Engineered or Pre-Manufactured Structures are **NOT** exempt from code compliance.

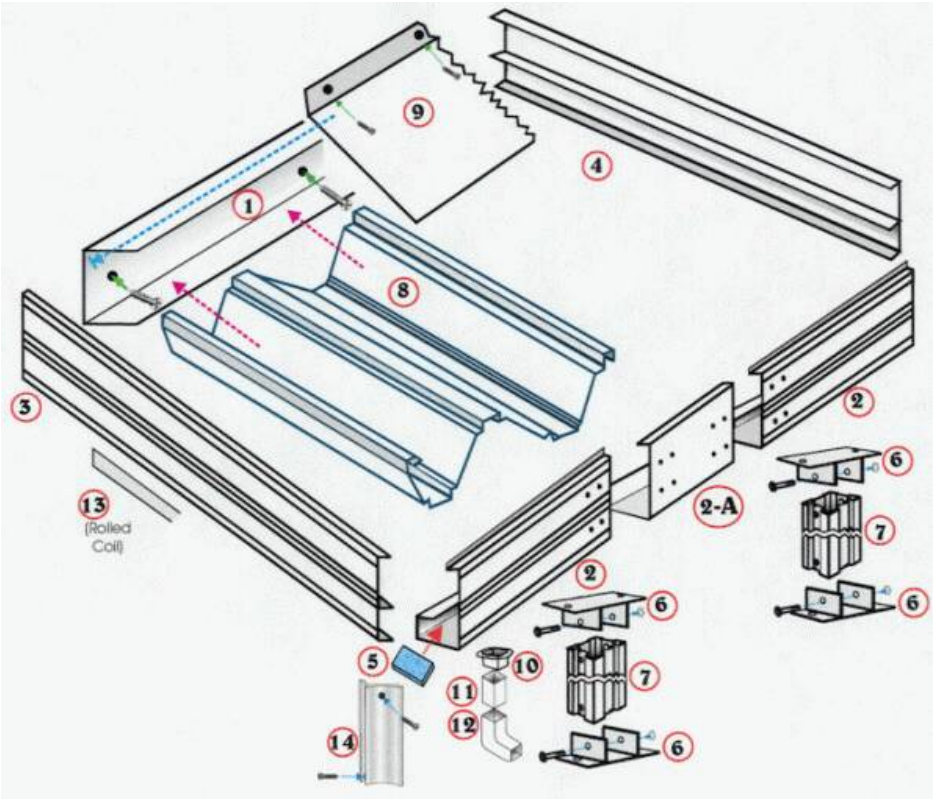
If a particular product has been tested and approved by a recognized evaluation agency, the evaluation report from that agency may be submitted in lieu of construction drawings. Otherwise construction drawings must be submitted for approval by Prince William County Building Plan Review. Please refer to http://www.iccsafe.com/

Minimum Submission Requirements for Pre-Fabricated or Pre-Engineered or Pre-Manufactured Structures:

In addition to all the Building Plan Review Requirements on the previous page, provide the following if the product has not been tested and approved by a recognized evaluation agency:

- Two (2) sets of professionally prepared construction drawings:
  - Drawings are to be prepared by a Virginia Licensed Professional Engineer.
  - Each set of drawings (minimum two sets) shall be sealed with each seal bearing the engineer's original signature and date signed.

- Two (2) sets of structural calculations:
  - The calculations are to be prepared by a Virginia Licensed Professional Engineer.
  - Each set of drawings (minimum two sets) shall be sealed with each seal bearing the engineer's original signature and date signed.



Custom manufactured components can not be reviewed in the same manner as conventional wood frame structures.