

## Information Bulletin

# Requirements for Portable Classrooms

To help improve the permit approval process for portable classrooms 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 or relocating previously established portable classrooms.



Portable classrooms are considered to be “long-term temporary” structures which are structures that are permitted for one year but are typically extended by request. Other than relaxations to foundation requirements, these types of buildings are generally not granted Code exceptions and must comply with current Code requirements.

## Permits

The permits required for the placement of portable classrooms are:

- Building permit
- Related trade permits
  - Mechanical
  - Electrical
  - Plumbing
- Occupancy permit

## Requirements for New Portable Classrooms

### Building By-law Implications

- a) The Winnipeg Building By-law 4555/87, Article 14.3.5 states:

*“A temporary building shall be permitted for a period not exceeding **one year**, on the condition that the temporary building shall be removed before the expiration of the specified period of time, except that this period may be extended and another temporary building permit issued when warranted in the opinion of the designated employee.”*

After the one year period noted in the By-law Article above, the owner is invoiced for another one year period. The “except that...” clause in the Article above implies a two year limit, but is applied with more tolerance with respect to portable classrooms, depending on the situation. Portable classrooms effectively become permanent due to the length of time for

which they are typically placed.

b) The Winnipeg Building By-law 4555/87, Article 14.3.7 states, “*The temporary building shall be subject to any other conditions that may be specified by the designated employee.*” As “designated employee,” the Planning, Property and Development Department deems this clause to be applicable to Portable Classrooms as they do not fit the typical temporary building model in the following ways:

- They can be configured as additions to existing buildings or are occasionally grouped and/or joined together;
- The length of placement typically exceeds the one year plus one-year renewal period;
- They are assembly occupancies with relatively high occupant loads (classrooms: 20-30 persons comprised of children) and therefore, are subject to more stringent requirements than those enforced for other temporary structures such as display suites, temporary construction site offices or other temporary offices;



### **Building Code Considerations**

Portable classroom 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.

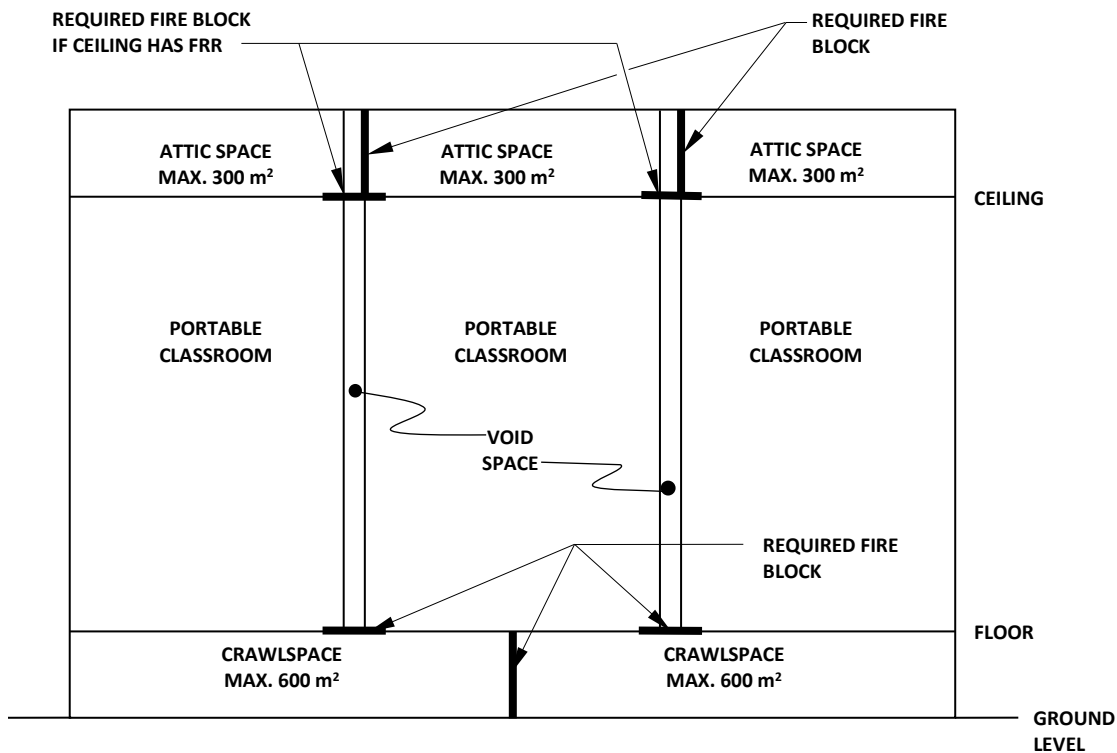
- The City has only applied this selective MBC compliance to lesser requirements for the foundation, which would otherwise be required as a permanent construction. Even in these situations where a permanent foundation is not required by the City, the City requires geotechnical data, upon which the temporary foundation design is based, to be prepared and submitted as it would for a permanent structure.
- As assembly occupancies, portable classrooms are governed by the more comprehensive requirements of MBC Part 3 instead of the lesser requirements of MBC Part 9 (Small Buildings).
- Barrier-free access requirements are applicable.
- Portable classrooms are intended for ongoing use therefore the Manitoba Energy Code for Buildings (MECB) must be applied to the construction of new units.

### Barrier-free Requirements

Barrier-free access and exits must be provided to portable classrooms. Access may be provided directly to the portable classroom or may be through the existing school where a linkway is being provided.

### Fire Blocking Requirements

In multiple portable classrooms that are connected (ie: 2 or more), 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. (See Figure 1)



SECTION OF THREE ADJACENT PORTABLE CLASSROOMS –  
FIRE BLOCKING REQUIREMENTS NTS

### Requirements for Relocation of Portable Classrooms

Previously established portable classrooms that are being relocated to another site must also meet the MBC requirements. A relocated building is viewed as similar to new construction according to the amendments to the MBC. Therefore, it is important to note that the relevant Building Code Article

(MBC Division C, Article 1.3.5.4.) requires a building, including portable classrooms, to meet current Code requirements at the time of relocation.

### **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 Permit application with sealed and signed architectural, structural, mechanical, and electrical sections and relevant drawings are required to relocate an existing 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 Required Professional Designers Certificates (RPDC's) for each discipline.
- Certification letters for each discipline.

## **Possible Scenarios for Placement of Portable Classrooms**

### **Located as an Addition**

If the portable classrooms are an addition to an existing school and they, together with the existing school, have a combined building area that is allowed within one of the MBC Group A, Division 2 construction articles, they must be treated as one building for Code review purposes. Both the existing school and the portable classrooms must comply with the current MBC (See Figure 2). If the area is not allowed, another scenario as shown below should be considered.

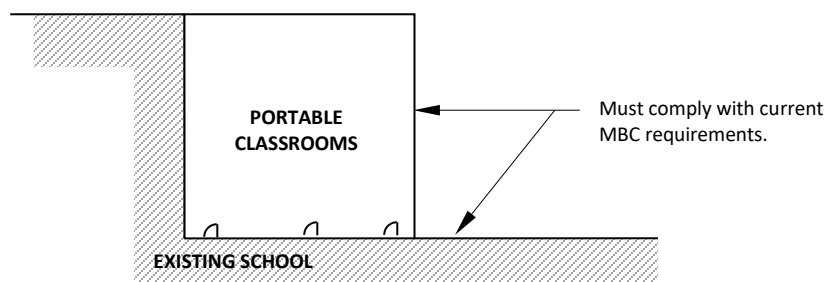


Figure 2

### Separated by a 2-Hour Firewall

If the portable classrooms are separated from the existing school by a 2-hr firewall, only the portable classrooms must comply with the current MBC. (See Figure 3)

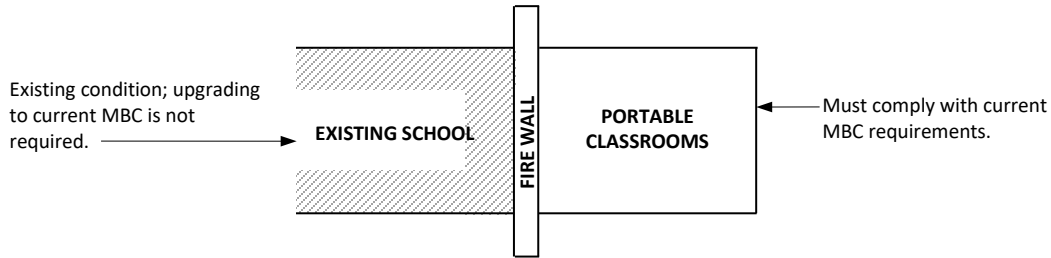


Figure 3

### Located as a Separate Building

If the portable classrooms form a separate building with no connection to the existing school, only the portable classrooms must comply with the current MBC. For spatial separation purposes, the exposing building face for both the existing school and the portable classrooms shall be only those areas that overlap. (See Figure 4)

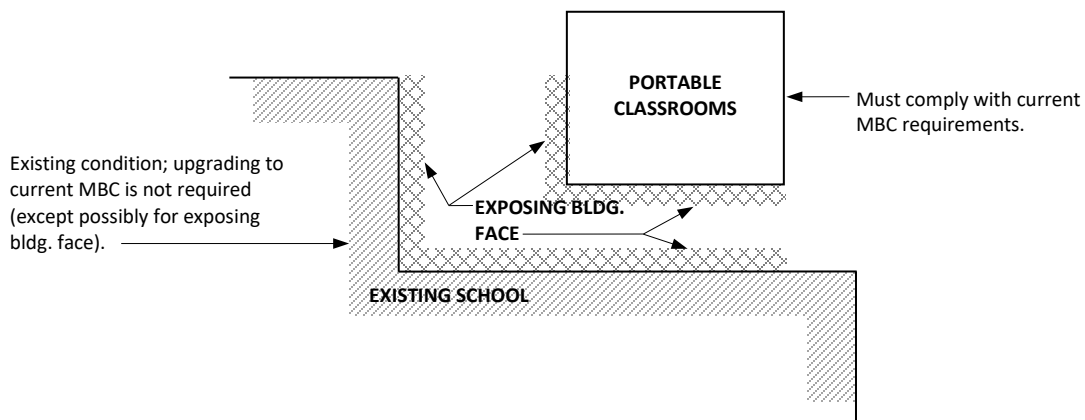


Figure 4

### Located as a Separate Building Connected by a Link

If the portable classrooms form a separate building that is connected to the existing school via a link, both the link and the portable classrooms must comply with the current MBC. (See Figure 5)

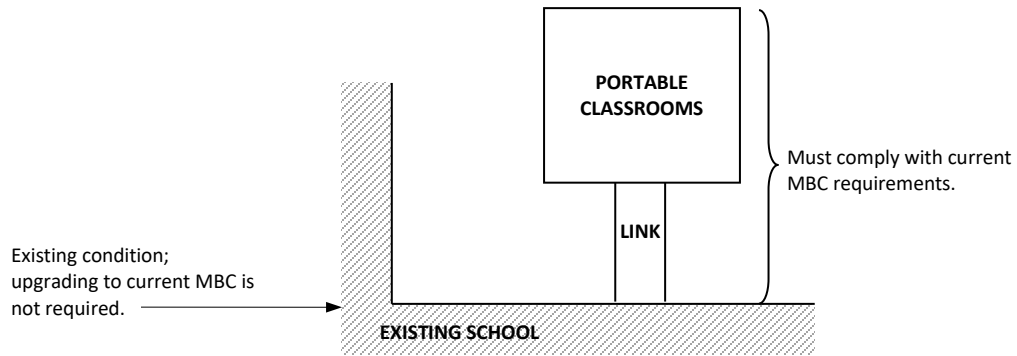


Figure 5