PRINTABLE CHECKLIST · SHEDS

Shed inspection checklist (BC)

First check whether your city needs a permit for your shed, then work through the foundation, framing and final checks, tied to BC Building Code 2024 Part 9.

By **Mark Dupuis** · Last reviewed: September 25, 2026

Built from the BC Building Code 2024, the Vancouver Building By-law 2025 and the shed rules published by 14 BC cities and regional districts · Independent site — not a municipality or the Province

This checklist is a preparation aid, not a guarantee of passing inspection. Your inspector's decision and the current code and bylaw govern.

A garden shed is the project most people assume needs no paperwork. Often that's true: many BC cities exempt small accessory buildings, commonly under 10 m² (about 107 sq ft), from the building permit. But the cut-off varies (Duncan's is 8 m²), some cities publish no exemption at all, and **zoning setbacks and height limits apply whatever the size**. This checklist works in two parts. First, confirm whether you need a permit. Then either prepare for each inspection stage (permitted sheds) or self-check the same items (exempt sheds). The construction items point to **BC Building Code 2024 Part 9** articles, checked against the official PDF (Province of BC, BC Building Code 2024). Vancouver uses the VBBL, as noted below.

Address: _____ Permit no.: _____ Inspector / phone: _____

Inspection booked for: _____

Step 0: Do you need a building permit for your shed?

The BC Building Code itself says it does not apply to **accessory buildings less than 10 m² in building area that do not create a hazard** (Division A, 1.1.1.1.(2)(e)). Your local building bylaw decides the permit question, though, and some set a different line. Here's what each city's own pages say:

Place	Building permit?	Shed rule in the city's own words (summarized)
Duncan	Depends	No permit for an accessory building or structure of 8 m² or less that is within the required setbacks. Bigger than 8 m² needs a building permit. Source: duncan.ca
Cowichan Valley Regional District (rural areas)	Depends	No permit for an accessory building under 10 m² sited to zoning, unless it has plumbing, sleeping space, a home occupation or a hazard. Larger buildings need a permit. Source: cvrd.ca, cvrd.ca

Place	Building permit?	Shed rule in the city’s own words (summarized)
Victoria	Depends	Accessory buildings under 10 m² are exempt from the building bylaw. Zoning still applies (Schedule F: rear yard only, 0.6 m side/rear setback, 3.5 m max height). Source: victoria.ca, victoria.ca
Saanich	Depends	Accessory buildings under 10 m² that meet zoning and create no hazard are exempt. All new buildings over 10 m² need a permit. Source: saanich.ca, saanich.ca
Langford	Verify with the city	Bylaw 1160 has no shed-size exemption, so ask the city before building any accessory building. Zoning: 1 m from side/rear lines and from the house. Source: langford.ca, langford.ca, langford.ca
Nanaimo	Depends	New accessory buildings, including sheds over 10 m² (107.64 sq ft), need a permit. Source: nanaimo.ca
Vancouver	Permit needed	The City's list says building or altering a garage or shed needs a permit. No size exemption is published, so verify for a very small shed. Source: vancouver.ca
Surrey	Depends	A storage shed is exempt if it is 10 m² or less, 1.5 m from neighbouring property lines and 3.0 m from other buildings. It must still meet zoning. Source: surrey.ca
Burnaby	Permit needed	Accessory buildings need a permit. Burnaby publishes no small-shed exemption. Source: burnaby.ca
Richmond	Depends	One accessory building under 10 m² with no operating mechanical equipment needs no permit. Location must meet zoning. Source: richmond.ca, infocentre.richmond.ca
Kelowna	Depends	Each detached structure over 10 m² in footprint needs a permit. Under 10 m² needs no building permit, but zoning setbacks and height apply. Source: kelowna.ca, apps.kelowna.ca
Kamloops	Depends	Accessory buildings under 10 m² with no electrical or plumbing are exempt. Zoning Bylaw 55 sets siting. Source: kamloops.civicweb.net, kamloops.ca
Coquitlam	Depends	Sheds under 10 m² need no permit (zoning setbacks apply). Over 10 m² needs one. Source: coquitlam.ca
Abbotsford	Depends	A detached building or structure under 10 m² in plan needs no building permit, but other bylaws apply. Source: laws.abbotsford.ca, abbotsford.ca

“Verify with the city” means the official pages we could read don’t settle it. Exempt or not, a shed still has to meet zoning. Victoria’s Schedule F, for example, keeps accessory buildings in the rear yard, 0.6 m from side and rear lines, 2.4 m from the house and no taller than 3.5 m (Victoria Schedule F, PDF). In the CVRD, a shed under 10 m² loses its exemption if it has plumbing, sleeping space, a home occupation or creates a hazard (CVRD Bylaw 4433, PDF).

The printable shed checklist

Before you build (or book your first inspection)

Most shed problems are location problems. Settle these before you buy materials.

- [ ] You’ve confirmed with your city whether the shed’s size and use need a building permit (see the table above).
- [ ] Setbacks from every lot line and from the house meet your zone. Measure from the lot line, not the fence; the fence may not be on the line. (zoning bylaw: verify with the city)
- [ ] Maximum height and site coverage for accessory buildings in your zone are met.
- [ ] No registered right-of-way, easement or covenant sits under the shed. Check your title.
- [ ] If the shed wall will be close to a lot line, window area may be limited. For a detached accessory building serving one dwelling, glazed openings follow the unprotected-opening limits (except on the face toward the house on the same lot). (9.10.14.4.(10) and (11))
- [ ] No plumbing, sleeping space or business use unless your permit covers it. These change the rules in several places.
- [ ] Electrical: power to the shed needs an electrical permit. Some cities issue their own (for example Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby); elsewhere it’s Technical Safety BC. (TSBC jurisdiction list)
- [ ] For permitted sheds: permit posted, approved drawings on site, and inspection booked with the notice your city requires (Duncan, for example, requires 48 hours). (Duncan Bylaw 3254 s.14.3)

Stage 1: Foundation and anchorage (before concrete, or before the floor goes on)

For permitted sheds, this is typically a footing or forms inspection before concrete. Duncan’s bylaw lists forms before pouring. For exempt sheds, it’s your own check.

- [ ] Footings or piers bear on undisturbed soil, rock or compacted granular fill. (9.15.3.2.)
- [ ] Footing depth follows Table 9.12.2.2., unless the building qualifies for the accessory-building relief in 9.12.2.2.(6)(b): not masonry or masonry veneer, not more than 1 storey, not more than 55 m², and 600 mm or less from finished ground to the underside of the floor joists. (9.12.2.2.)

- [ ] The frame is anchored to the foundation, typically with 12.7 mm anchor bolts at no more than 2.4 m on centre, or with floor joists embedded in concrete, unless structural analysis shows anchorage isn't needed. (9.23.6.1.)
- [ ] A small building (not more than 4.3 m wide and 1 storey) that isn't anchored that way is anchored to CSA Z240.10.1 instead. (9.23.6.3.)
- [ ] Sill plates that carry the floor are at least 38 × 89 mm. (9.23.7.1.)
- [ ] Wood within 150 mm of the ground (skids, sills, floor framing) is preservative-treated. (9.3.2.9.(3))
- [ ] The site drains away from the shed, and the floor won't sit in a puddle.

Stage 2: Framing and roof (before sheathing or cladding hides it)

Most small sheds are simple, but a heavy snow year exposes weak roofs. Check these before the walls are closed in.

- [ ] Stud size and spacing conform to Table 9.23.10.1. and match the drawings. (9.23.10.1.)
- [ ] Wall bracing: walls in detached accessory buildings serving a single dwelling unit that don't support a floor are relieved from Sentence 9.23.13.5.(1). Build to your drawings anyway. (9.23.13.10.(3))
- [ ] Roof rafters and joists are continuous, or spliced over vertical supports that extend to suitable bearing. (9.23.14.1.)
- [ ] Continuous lumber or panel roof sheathing supports the roofing. It is required except in low-wind, low-seismic locations. (9.23.16.1.)
- [ ] Nailing follows Table 9.23.3.4. (Table 9.23.3.4.)
- [ ] The door header is sized for its span, per the drawings or the span tables.
- [ ] Rough electrical is inspected under its own permit before it's covered.

Stage 3: Final

For permitted sheds, book when the building is complete. For exempt sheds, this is your hand-over check.

- [ ] Roofing and its underlay meet the material standards in Section 9.26. (9.26.2.1.)
- [ ] Cladding and flashing minimize rain getting into the wall and prevent it reaching the inside. (9.27.2.1.)

- [ ] Built setbacks and height match the approved site plan. Re-measure after landscaping.
- [ ] Grading slopes away. Gutters, if any, don't dump onto a neighbour's lot.
- [ ] Electrical final is passed if the shed has power.
- [ ] Permit card and any conditions are signed off. Keep the final inspection record with your house papers.

This checklist is a preparation aid, not a guarantee of passing inspection. Your inspector's decision and the current code and bylaw govern.

Vancouver (VBBL) note

The City of Vancouver lists building or altering a garage or shed as needing a permit and publishes no small-shed size exemption, so verify with the city even for a very small shed (City of Vancouver, when you need a permit). Construction there follows the **Vancouver Building By-law 2025**. The Part 9 articles used above, such as 9.12.2.2. and its accessory-building relief and 9.23.6.3., appear under the same numbers in VBBL Book II (VBBL 2025 Volume 2, PDF). Cite the VBBL on Vancouver drawings. Vancouver's inspection stages guide (footings and forms, framing, final) is written for houses; ask which stages your shed permit needs (stages guide, PDF).

Garages and bigger outbuildings

A detached garage or a large workshop is still an accessory building, but it brings in Section 9.35 (garages and carports), bigger foundations and often spatial separation limits. Use this checklist as a starting point only. Your city's drawing checklist and the permit conditions govern. See your city's deck and shed rules or take the 30-second permit quiz.

Related checklists: deck inspection checklist · fence checklist.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need a permit for a shed in BC?

It depends on your city. The BC Building Code does not apply to accessory buildings under 10 m² that don't create a hazard (Division A 1.1.1.1.(2)(e)), and many cities exempt sheds under 10 m² from the building permit. But Duncan's line is 8 m², and Vancouver and Burnaby publish no small-shed exemption. Zoning setbacks and height limits apply at any size.

How deep do shed footings need to be in BC?

BC Building Code 2024 Table 9.12.2.2. sets minimum foundation depths, but Sentence 9.12.2.2.(6)(b) relieves accessory buildings that are not masonry, not more than one storey, not more than 55 m², and no more than

600 mm from finished ground to the underside of the floor joists. Your drawings and the building official decide the final detail.

Does a shed have to be anchored?

BC Building Code 2024 Article 9.23.6.1. requires building frames to be anchored to the foundation unless a structural analysis shows otherwise. Smaller buildings (up to 4.3 m wide and one storey) not anchored that way must be anchored to CSA Z240.10.1 (9.23.6.3.).

Does an exempt shed still have to meet setbacks?

Yes. A building permit exemption does not exempt you from zoning. Setbacks from lot lines and the house, maximum height and site coverage still apply. Victoria's Schedule F, for example, keeps accessory buildings in the rear yard, 0.6 m from side and rear lines and 2.4 m from the house.

Does this checklist guarantee my shed will pass?

No. This checklist is a preparation aid, not a guarantee of passing inspection. Your inspector's decision and the current code and bylaw govern.

Independent information only. This guide is a planning aid, not legal, engineering or building-code advice. Codes and bylaws change, and the building official for your address has the final say. Confirm every requirement before you design, apply or dig.

Sources and official links

This guide relies on the official pages below. Rules, fees and processes change, so check the authority before you apply or spend money.

- Province of BC: BC Building Code 2024
- Province of BC: BC Building Code 2024, web version revision 2 (PDF)
- Duncan: duncan.ca shed rule
- Cowichan Valley Regional District: cvrd.ca shed rule
- Cowichan Valley Regional District: cvrd.ca shed rule
- Victoria: victoria.ca shed rule
- Victoria: victoria.ca shed rule
- Saanich: saanich.ca shed rule
- Saanich: saanich.ca shed rule
- Langford: langford.ca shed rule
- Langford: langford.ca shed rule
- Langford: langford.ca shed rule
- Nanaimo: nanaimo.ca shed rule
- Vancouver: vancouver.ca shed rule
- Surrey: surrey.ca shed rule

- Burnaby: burnaby.ca shed rule
- Richmond: richmond.ca shed rule
- Richmond: infocentre.richmond.ca shed rule
- Kelowna: kelowna.ca shed rule
- Kelowna: apps.kelowna.ca shed rule
- Kamloops: kamloops.civicweb.net shed rule
- Kamloops: kamloops.ca shed rule
- Coquitlam: coquitlam.ca shed rule
- Abbotsford: laws.abbotsford.ca shed rule
- Abbotsford: abbotsford.ca shed rule
- City of Duncan: Building Bylaw No. 3254 (council agenda PDF)
- City of Vancouver: VBBL 2025 Volume 2 (PDF)
- City of Vancouver: inspection stages guide (PDF)
- Technical Safety BC: jurisdiction

Links checked September 25, 2026. Found an error or a broken link? Report it.