

# Homeowner's Guide

For buying a pole barn



# Top tips for buying a pole barn:

- #1. **Identifying your needs**
- #2. **Determining your building's style**
- #3. **Choose features and accessories**
- #4. **Building codes and permits**
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## About this guide

This guide will help you plan your post-frame building so that your investment will continue to pay you back over the long-term. Please feel free to contact any of us at NWA Metal Buildings for further assistance during this important early planning phase of your building project.

We know the ins-and-outs of higher quality post-frame construction and will be glad to share our insights.

Learn more: [www.nwametalbuildings.com](http://www.nwametalbuildings.com)



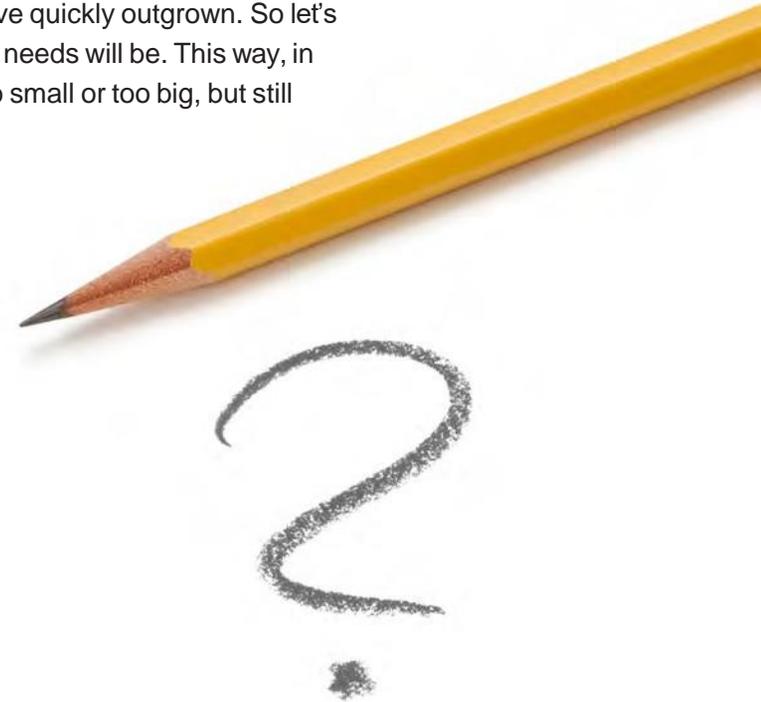
Top tips for buying a pole barn:

## # 1. Identifying your needs

As the saying somewhat goes, when you fail to plan... you plan to end up with a pole barn you are tired of looking at, or worse, a building you have quickly outgrown. So let's start the planning process by anticipating what your related needs will be. This way, in five years and ideally ten years, your building will not be too small or too big, but still highly functional — and attractive to boot.

### Early considerations:

- How tall is the tallest stored item, whether a vehicle or equipment, for work or play?
- How wide is the widest stored item, so you know the minimum open span width?
- Do you want a concrete floor, floor drains, or floor support for unusually heavy loads?
- If a concrete floor, will you pour the slab first or pour after the building is finished?
- Do you want your vehicles to always back in or can they drive in one way and out another?
- Would you like side doors, sidewalks, lean-to's, porch cover or exterior enclosures?
- Will you need space for opening vehicle doors, attachments to vehicles/equipment?
- Options for work or play such as a ventilated area for a paint booth?
- Think about activities requiring a shop sink, kitchen sink, bathroom, or other areas requiring plumbing or electrical, heating or cooling.



### **Bonus Tip:**

There are web-based software tools for doing this, but here's the idea: First make a list of the larger things that will go into your building. Then outline sketch each item from a top-down perspective on individual pieces of paper using a scale of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1ft. Cut around each shape and arrange them on quarter inch graph paper representing the floor of your new building. Next, identify your areas of activity, whether for work or for play, and identify the traffic patterns, entrances and exits around all of the items you have identified. This will guide your required square footage. Add 30% more square footage to allow for contingency growth.

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## #2. Determining your building's style

If your new building is on the “back 40” of your property, then you may not care so much about its style of architecture. But if the building is within sight of your home, style will matter. The goal is not just to create additional functional space, but to add space that will enhance the value of your property from the standpoints of both livability and curb appeal.

### Style has many interpretations:

- Style is personal and post-frame construction offers you a wide range of architectural freedom
- Style can relate to the silhouette of the building. Choose from a variety of roof shapes such as gable or gambrel. Enhancements such as a cupola can further enhance your building's style.
- Style can involve the use of complementary colors for roofing and siding.
- Style extends to the wide variety of window and door styles on the market.
- Style often follows function, such as for equestrian, agriculture, industrial, or religious.



### **Bonus Tip:**

The style of your new building should either match or complement the style of your existing home and property. Style extends to the use of color and trim, such that your new building and your entire property come together with visually pleasing impact.

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## #3. Choosing features and accessories

Even if all you need is a simple box design, the “style” of your building can be established and enhanced by a few functional or aesthetic touches. That said, adding accessories is a little like scratching your nose at an auction – each move may cost more money. Options can add up.

### A short list of possible accessories:

- q Cupola
- q Double walk in doors
- q Dutch doors
- q Eave trim
- q Fascia
- q Gable vents
- q 9-light walk-in door
- q Overhangs with soffit
- q Post protectors
- q Rat guards
- q Ridge vents
- q Shutters
- q Skylights
- q Stalls
- q Vented closures
- q Wainscoting
- q Windows



### **Bonus Tip:**

Form should follow function. Look for simple ways to accent or extend the structural elements of your building using complementary colors, trim, accessories, or unique ornamental touches. You do not have to spend a lot more to get an attractive appearance.

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## #4. Building codes and permits

Building codes can be problematic if not clearly understood.

Start with your local planning and zoning office or your local building inspector.

They will be able to tell you the standards for your community.

### Know the rules in your area:

- Some cities will not allow a steel clad final exterior building – you must have a brick veneer or traditional siding.
- Almost all residential areas will have a setback requirement, meaning the building must be so many feet from the property line.
- Many neighborhoods have a restriction on how tall you can make the building.
- Many areas want to inspect a building at each stage of construction, starting with the depth of the holes, then they will inspect the wooden framework, then the completed structure.
- Some communities insist on bolting the trusses in place, adding hurricane clips, beefing up the top plate, digging the holes deeper and providing longer poles or adding gravel or a concrete footer in the hole.

### Bonus Tip:

Some local code expectations may seem over-engineered when it comes to equating cost with necessity. In our view, codes generally foster a better quality building and we have found it is best to give the inspector what he or she wants. Life, and your project, will go easier that way.

Learn more: [www.nwametalbuildings.com](http://www.nwametalbuildings.com)  
See our section on permits





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## #5. Site selection and preparation

It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it. We're talking about getting the "dirt work" done correctly, before construction. We have too often witnessed site preparations where to the naked eye everything looked level, but varied by two feet or more.

### Basic guidelines for site preparation:

- The construction crew will need a five foot workspace around the perimeter.
- The pad needs to be level, yet taper off outside the building to direct water flow away.
- The pad should be well away from power lines and not over underground utilities.
- Know how the heavy delivery truck will get to the site without going over septic lines.



### **Bonus Tip:**

Heavy truck access needs to be planned in advance for several reasons. Consider potential impact on things buried, including gas, electrical, septic and the roots of existing trees. Some trees, such as large oaks, have shallow roots that are highly vulnerable; and the roots of new sapling trees can be damaged without revealing root trauma until years later.

**Learn more: [www.nwametalbuildings.com](http://www.nwametalbuildings.com)  
See our section on Site Work**



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## #6. Electrical, HVAC and plumbing

You began thinking about these requirements in step one, by identifying the kinds of activities you will undertake in your new space. Now let's think in more detail about these requirements.

### Things to consider beforehand:

- Know the location of the public utility – the farther the building is from the utility, the greater the cost for trenching or poles and for the wiring, both in length and diameter.
- Think through where you need electric service and any special amperage outlets.
- Consider where you want lights. Do you want lights down the center or over each horse stall? If you put the lights down the middle, will your big RV block the lights?
- You will probably want the outside meter placed out of sight and out of the flow of traffic. But inside the building, your electrical panel should be close to the meter.
- If your space is to be heated or cooled, will the system be in a closet or mounted up in the trusses? Placing equipment overhead will give you more floor space, but the trusses will need to be designed to fit and to carry the weight.
- For plumbing, are you tying into a city sewer or a septic tank?
- If you plan for a bathroom, your rough-in work for the toilet will need to be the right distance from the finished wall. Your plumbing may best be located to come up through interior walls. If a toilet or sink backs up to an outside wall, you may need up to 4" of insulation and a heat source in the bathroom to keep the water in the pipes from freezing.



### **Bonus Tip:**

Your supply decisions may relate to activities in the future or a new piece of equipment you have yet to purchase, such as putting in a laundry room later or buying that big RV in 5 years. Wherever you intend to put such things, whether in back or in front of the building, you may want to provide for it by way of a dedicated, higher amp line and electrical outlet.

Learn more: [www.nwametalbuildings.com](http://www.nwametalbuildings.com)



## #7. Structural / environmental considerations

It has often been said that when it comes to environmentally sustainable building methods, post-frame construction is about as green as it gets. Inside and out, the materials used in post-frame construction uplift both the architectural vision and the vision for a greener planet. Metal and wood recycling programs can help minimize material waste and help to protect the environment.

### Post-frame begins and ends green:

- Lumber is a renewable resource. In fact, there is more forested acreage today than there was 100 years ago, due to highly educated and expanded cultivation.
- Recycled steel is used in the manufacture of the metal siding and roofing that constitute a large percentage of post-frame construction.
- Treated lumber is used for a small percentage of a post frame building. Typically, the only treated products are posts and bottom plates.
- Wood is the building material that is not only recyclable, but in its cultivated natural state this material source removes carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere.



### ***Bonus Tip:***

As a professional post-frame builder we contribute importantly to efficient construction methods with minimal material waste and environmental impact. Choosing NWA Metal Buildings as your builder assures these pre-cut and sized materials will come together swiftly and with minimal waste on your project site.

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Top tips for buying a pole barn:

## #8. Choosing the right builder

One sure way to have a post-frame project go wrong is to hire the first handyman you come across who says he can get your building up fast and for a cheap price. Several things are wrong with this scenario, starting with the fact that in this still recovering economy, many handymen are building “pole barns” nowadays, loading their pickup trucks with basic building kits from their local home supply stores and hammering them together in their spare time.



### Ways to get the builder you want:

- First and foremost, get references. As professional builders will be glad to offer such references, precisely because at NWA Metal Buildings we are respected professionals.
- As a legitimate builder we have no trouble providing a certificate of insurance verifying coverage for workers compensation and general liability insurance. A copy of the certificate is issued by our insurance agent at no cost to you and will be available to you within one to three days.
- Call the Better Business Bureau to learn of any complaints lodged and then look at our reviews and rating.
- Google us. You can check our reviews, comments from customers and our ratings.
- At NWA Metal Buildings we give estimates in writing. You can then discuss with us anything that you have a question about. A hurried quote based on cursory discussion often results in a building that comes up short and leaves you cursing. At NWA Metal Buildings, we want satisfied customers.

### ***Bonus Tip:***

To help you close in on choosing NWA Metal Buildings as your builder, we can clearly explain the process we will undertake to smoothly and cost-efficiently deliver your new post frame building. As your builder, we will cover much of the information contained in this guide, and moreover, you will know what to expect - No surprises.

**Learn more: [www.nwametalbuildings.com](http://www.nwametalbuildings.com)**

Before you invest, please give us a no-obligation call:

479-899-6890

[www.nwametalbuildings.com](http://www.nwametalbuildings.com)

