



SPECIAL BULLETIN

Canadian Sheet Steel Building Institute

Steel Clad Building versus Fabric Covered Structures

Buildings are a large investment. This bulletin may help you make an informed decision when comparing a fabric-covered building with a steel clad building.

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Why buy a steel building?



- Sheet steel is a material that is exceptionally durable, yet has the versatility to fulfill the most demanding and innovative designs.
- Steel is non-combustible, weatherproof, and strong.
- Sheet steel is available in a variety of prepainted colours.
- Steel buildings are often the more economical alternative when compared on a life-cycle cost basis.
- When setting premiums insurance companies look at the quality of the structure and any risks involved due to fire, snow, and wind. Steel buildings are viewed favourably in this light.

Things to consider with a fabric-covered building



- Fibre-reinforced polyester fabric is combustible and subject to damage by solar radiation, wind and snow.
- Fabric-covered buildings need to be tensioned on a regular basis to ensure the material does not flap in the wind, causing damage to itself and affecting the integrity of the structure.
- There can be significant added cost to comply with the requirements of the Canadian buildings codes for structural sufficiency and fire protection.
- Fabric does not provide the security of steel.

A steel clad building will ensure many years of uninterrupted service and weather tightness. Today's steel cladding and building systems are designed to meet the requirements of all Canadian building codes, for local environmental conditions and intended occupancy.

For some agricultural applications a fabric-covered building may be an acceptable choice. However, if you are buying a building to cover product, people or machinery, a steel clad

building provides the necessary secure, long term, economical protection, and lasting value.

Canadian manufacturers of steel cladding and building systems have been selling products across Canada for over 70 years. Steel building technology and products are being constantly improved, providing better value for the building buyer than ever before. Before making the decision to purchase a fabric-covered building, consider the merits of a steel alternative.

Relative merits of steel versus fabric-covered buildings	Steel	Fabric
Comes down easily	No	Yes
Natural light and heat transmission	No	Yes
Class 1 roof covering (non-combustible)	Yes	No
Can be altered or designed to support point loads	Yes	No
Accommodates large sidewall overhead doors	Yes	No
Easy to insulate to the latest high efficiency standards	Yes	No
Gutters available for storm water management	Yes	No
Easy to design for large masonry or glass wall areas	Yes	No
Accommodates second floor mezzanines	Yes	No
Can be designed for future expansion in each direction	Yes	No
Non-combustible	Yes	No
Design capability for low roof slopes to keep overall height down	Yes	No
Can be designed for large drift loads from higher buildings	Yes	No
Reduced property line setbacks required for fire protection	Yes	No
Security against intruders	Yes	No

For additional information on sheet steel building products and applications, please contact the **Canadian Sheet Steel Building Institute** or one of its Member Companies. Visit the CSSBI web site at www.cssbi.ca

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