

8 Things to Ask When Designing a Steel Building

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You've done your research and chosen a steel building contractor, but the bid needs refinement once your building is designed. Be sure you've got your bases covered by considering these key design questions.

1. Is the building all steel?

Steel is maintenance free, no wood rot, no termites, no nails backing out, no cracking or splitting and no fire hazard. For those reasons, most insurance rates are less for an all steel building vs. wood frame.

2. Is the building designed with wooden truss or I-beam construction?

I-beam construction means solid steel painted iron frame with solid steel columns, beams, roof purlins and wall girts. This means columns are generally spaced 25' - 30' apart, so you get more usable space and more flexibility to add windows and doors. Many truss buildings, on the other hand, come with wood purlins and wall girts. They may be a little cheaper, but don't offer the design flexibility and structural soundness of steel.

3. What gauge is the wall and roof system?

Buildings should have standard 24 gauge mechanically seamed roof systems with no exposed fasteners to elongate and leak. The best wall panels for most applications are 26 gauge Kynar 500 with fasteners and self-sealing washers.

4. Is the foundation design included?

It may seem obvious, but this detail is often overlooked and becomes an added cost.

5. Is the building certified?

Buildings should be AISC (American Institute of Steel Construction) or MBMA (Metal Building Manufacturing Association) Certified. It is often a requirement on many commercial and industrial projects.

6. Does the building come with stamped engineered drawings?

Buildings should come with a complete set of stamped engineered drawings and an anchor bolt layout plan. Anything less may be rejected by the building inspector and/or local zoning boards.

7. Do the roof and wall panels have a warranty, too?

In addition to the basic structure, be sure roof and wall panels also come with a minimum 25 year finish warranty backed by the building manufacturer.

8. Does it meet the local building code?

Live loads, snow loads, wind loads, and wind exposure ratings typically fall under local jurisdiction. Be sure your contractor has checked with your local city or town Building Inspector to verify that the code and loads will be acceptable to

obtain a building permit and in some cases pass a building inspection.

These extra questions should give you peace of mind, but if you have any other questions about your design, please feel free to [email us](#) or give us a call at 603.926.4966.