



MetalCarports.com Presents: Metal Carport Buyer's Guide

Why Choose a Metal Carport?

There are a lot of options on the market when it comes to the best ways to store your car or expand your storage space—so how do you know that a carport is right for you? Here are some of the most commonly cited reasons for choosing a metal carport.

Top 5 Reasons to Consider a Metal Carport:

1) Protection from the Elements

A carport is one of the most reliable ways to protect your car from the elements like harsh UV rays from the sun, especially strong winds, snow, and hail.

2) Budget

Prefabricated and even custom-made metal carports are more affordable than wood or concrete versions, and much more affordable than adding a garage to your home.

3) Added Value

Something as simple as adding a carport to your home can increase its value by thousands of dollars.

4) Low Maintenance

While wooden and even concrete structures can be difficult to clean and expensive to maintain, a metal carport is a low maintenance investment that won't be subject to termites, rot, or mold.

5) Easy

Our online [3D Build & Price tool](#) makes it easier than ever to decide what you need. Select building size, roof type, windows, doors and colors. Then leave the work to us!



Other Advantages of Metal Carports

Here are some of the most commonly cited reasons homeowners give for installing a metal carport.

Versatility

Though its name might suggest otherwise, a carport can—and should—be used for more than just storing cars. The height and width of these structures can be adapted to fit larger recreational vehicles, like RVs and boats, or they can be enclosed to create a shed-like building

for outdoor storage. Some homeowners even use carports to create shaded areas for entertaining outside all-year round.

Portability

In some cases, a metal carport can be assembled at your home quickly using premade pieces. In these cases, that same structure can be easily disassembled and moved to your next home if you decide to take it with you when you go.

Durability

Metal carports are immune to many of the issues commonly seen in other structures. Steel structures will not warp, buckle, or break in most severe winds and rains, and can even survive harsh winters when properly installed. Because of this advantage, an investment in a metal carport is one that will last for decades with minimal upkeep required.

Affordability

When it comes to bang for your buck, metal carports stand far and above many other home additions. While many do start at the cost of a couple thousand dollars, they are much cheaper than adding a garage to your home, cost little in the long term for maintenance and repairs, and increase the value of your home overall—making a carport a pretty solid investment.

When Not to Choose a Metal Carport

Of course, a metal carport isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. In some cases, it may be best to go with a different option.

Budgets

While carports are affordable, they typically cost at least \$2,000, and can go up in price depending on the size and features added.

To keep the cost low, you may want to opt for a canvas carport, or even a car cover to protect your vehicle.

Scheduling

Metal carports take less time to install than it does to build a garage, but they do take *some* time to complete. The process may include getting any required permits, customizing the structure, preparing the site for building, adding gravel or concrete, and the actual installation. The result is one that looks amazing and fits your needs perfectly, but it will take at least a few weeks to complete the process.

If you want a quicker alternative, consider ordering a carport kit from a department or home improvement store. These may be slightly more expensive—and they can't be customized—but they can usually be delivered and installed in around a week.

Theft Protection

A carport can protect your belongings from the elements, but it can't provide that same protection from theft or vandalism. If you're most concerned about security, you may want a [metal garage](#) or [custom metal building](#) instead.

If you're looking for a more affordable option that still provides a bit of protection for some of your possessions, our customizable carports can be designed to include a small enclosed storage shed at the back.



Planning for Your Carport

Before taking the plunge on purchasing a metal carport and having it installed, you'll first want to plan. This means establishing what you will use the carport for, how large you would like it to be, any extra features you would like to add, and how much to budget for it.

Carport Pricing

The chart below will help give you an estimate for some of the most popular types and sizes of carports. Keep in mind that these estimates are based on prices without any additional features, and don't include all of our models.

One-car carport	12x20	\$2,000+
RV carport	20x50	\$8,000+
Small two-car carport	20x20	\$3,000+
Large two-car carport	24x25	\$3,500+
Triple wide carport	30x35	\$5,000+
Commercial carport	40x50	\$12,000+
Combo carport (with shed)	20x30	\$5,000+

Determining the Size of Your Carport

When planning for your carport, you'll first want to get an idea of the size you'll need. If you are planning on using your structure just to store your cars, this can be estimated using the size of the vehicles you plan to keep there. Simply measure the width and length of your cars, then add two or more feet on all sides for extra space, and add these numbers together to get an estimate for the dimensions of your carport.

Get a tape measure and start measuring the width, length and height of your vehicle. Some example sizes are listed below, but it is important you measure your vehicle.

Example Vehicle:	Width:	Length:	Height:
Small Car	6 feet	14-15 feet	5 feet
Mid-size Car	6 feet	15-16 feet	5 feet
Full-size Car	6 feet	16-17 feet	5 feet
SUV	6.5 feet	16-17 feet	5.5-6.5 feet
Truck	6.5 feet	17-22 feet	6.5 feet
Class A RV	8.5 feet	29-45 feet	12-14.5 feet
Class B Camper Van	8 feet	17-23 feet	9-11 feet
Class C RV	8-8.5 feet	21-41 feet	10-12 feet

To calculate the size of your carport, use the following guidelines:

Width

1. Measure each vehicle and document the widths. Add the widths.

2. Add 2 feet of space between the sides of the carport and your vehicle—3 if you are planning to enclose the sides of the carport with panels.
3. Add 3 feet of space between each vehicle to allow room to open doors.
4. Add 2.5 inches to each side for the width of the frame.

For example, if you needed a carport for a just one 6 foot wide car, you would use the following formula:

- 2.5" frame + 3' space + 6' car + 3' space + 2.5" frame = 12'5" wide

Length/Depth

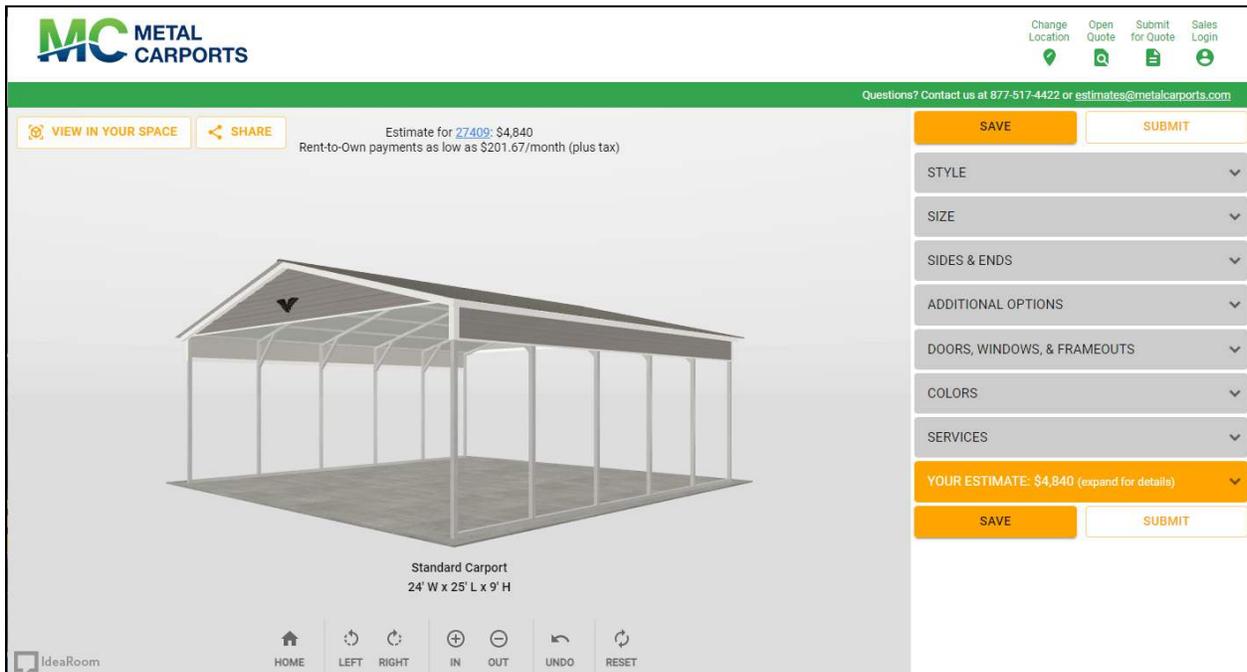
Find the length of your longest vehicle(s). The length of your carport should be a few feet longer than this measurement in both the front and the back.

For example, if you need a carport for a car that is 15-feet long, you would use the formula:

- 3' space in front of the car + 15' long car + 3' space behind car = 21' long
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Designing Your Carport

Once you have your dimensions calculated, you can get started designing the carport of your dreams—and MetalCarports has an online tool for the job. [This online tool to build and price](#) your custom carport has everything you need to plan your project.



Choose Your Style

While you can add to any existing style to bring your vision to life, these give you a great place to start planning.

Decide on the building style you need:

- Standard
- Triple wide
- Commercial
- RV Carport
- Garage
- Combo carport
- [Horse barn](#)
- Eagle barn
- Single slope carport
- Loafing shed
- Mini storage

Choose Your Roof Style

Once you've selected your style of carport, you can pick out the roof style that best suits you.



Vertical Style

This top-of-the-line option is perfect for those looking for the most durable carports to stand up to the elements. Vertical roof panels create a stronger cover to protect against high winds and heavy snow. For any building longer than 36 feet, the vertical style is always recommended.



A-Frame or Boxed Eave Style

Also known as eaves-box style, this durable and attractive roof option swaps out the vertical roof panels of the vertical style for horizontal panels. This style has an A-frame design like that of the vertical style, but can be more wallet-friendly if you live in an area where you don't have to worry about extreme wind and snowfall.



Regular Style

Our most affordable option, the regular roof style is a popular choice among homeowners. This style is characterized by horizontal panels and rounded edges, which helps it stand apart from other structures nearby.

You can also choose your installation surface, and opt to add additional closed storage to your carport.

Plan Your Dimensions

The next step is to determine the dimensions of your carport.

For the width and depth, refer to the calculations made when first planning your carport, accounting for the size of the vehicles you plan on storing there and the space needed around them.

Finding the height

For the height of your carport, you'll need to determine what you want your leg height to be. This leg height is the distance from the ground to the start of the roof. This is not the highest point of the carport—that would be the center clearance height. You need to be sure all of the vehicles that will be stored in the carport will be able to clear the lowest point of the carport's roof: the leg height.

In general, it is best for your carport to be at least one foot taller than the vehicle that will be stored there. That includes any top racks or accessories that may be added to the top of the car.

Many metal carports are offered at a standard 6-foot height. Any structure wider than 32 feet, though, will need to be at least 8 feet tall. The right height for your carport will depend on how tall your tallest vehicle is. Keep in mind your clearance will also depend on whether or not you

close your carports gables. If you do, the clearance will be about three inches less than the leg height. If you leave them open, the tallest point will be at the peak of the roof, about two feet higher than the leg height. That means that if you park a vehicle a bit taller than the leg height in a carport with open gables, it will fit as long as you keep it in the center.

Choose Side and Ends Options

For further protection from the weather, you can add side panels and closed gables to your carport.

In this step, you can customize each gable to feature:

- No gable
- Standard gable
- 3-foot gable
- 6-foot gable

You can then customize the other two sides, opting for one of the following:

- Fully enclosed
- Half panel with trim
- 3-foot panel
- 6-foot panel

In this step you can even opt to fully enclose your carport for added safety.

Choose Additional Options

Now, you'll get to select the materials and options for your frame and siding panels.

That includes choosing between 14- and 12-gauge steel framing. 14-gauge framing is the industry standard, but if you are looking for more protection against heavy snow and high winds consider the stronger 12-gauge steel.

Add Doors and Windows

While carports that are completely obviously don't require this step, those with an enclosed storage space or side panels can benefit from the addition of doors, windows, and roll-up doors where you see fit.

Choose Your Colors

Bring your carport to life by selecting your roof, trim, and wall color—and add wainscotting if you want an even more elevated look.

Other Options

Our [3D builder](#) also allows you to completely customizable lean-tos, additional storage, purchase your drawings, and more.



Carport Regulations and Permits

While building permits and regulations vary from county to county, it's important to know just what is required by law in your particular locale.

In many cases, you will need a building permit to construct a carport on your property. The exact kinds of permits you need can most easily be determined by getting in touch with your local permitting agency.

Check CC&Rs and HOAs

The first thing you'll want to do is check to see if there are any Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) in your community that limit where these structures can be constructed, or prohibit carports from being built altogether.

Similarly, if you live in a community with a Homeowners Association (HOA), do some research into their regulations surrounding carports.

Check with Your Local Permitting Agency

Beyond community regulations and requirements, you'll need to be sure you're abiding by government regulations regarding building. The quickest way to do this is by giving your local planning department a call to inquire about zoning rules.

To find that number, you can do a quick internet search for your town's planning department. If you cannot find that, try searching for the county's planning department. They should be able to answer your questions, and get the process of applying for and obtaining the proper permits going.

Should a Carport Be Certified?

In some cases, those permits and permissions may include a certification. These certifications are meant to ensure that your carport is equipped to safely withstand severe weather without potential damage to your property or safety. If a certification is required, you will need to have a local inspector review and sign off on both the site for the build and the plans for the structure.

Your custom carport builder can provide you with the blueprints upon request to help you through the process.

How to Prepare

When you call your planning department, you'll need to have a few pieces of information ready to give: Your address, the estimated size of your carport, and the location on your property where you are hoping to build it.

Along with giving them that information, you'll want to ask a few important questions:

- How much clearance do you need for the front, back, and sides of other buildings?
- How far should the carport be from the house? From the property lines?
- Are there any places on the property where a carport cannot be placed (i.e. front, side, etc)?
- Is there a height limit or requirement for the carport?
- Are there any aesthetic limits or requirements for paint color or style?
- What permits will you need to build a carport? Who should you contact to apply for them?

Once you get in touch with the department who issues permits, you'll get an idea of the timeline for acquiring them, any certifications that are required, cost of the permit, and where and how you can apply.



Laying the Foundation for Your Carport

Once you have a design for your custom carport, and your permits either sorted or on their way, you'll want to prepare your property for the new structure. Every solid structure starts with a solid foundation, and a carport is no different.

Clearing the Air

Consider the height of your carport when picking a location. Make sure there are no utility lines overhead, or trees and branches that may interfere with the highest part of the roof.

Leveling the Ground

The most important aspect of a sturdy foundation is level ground. No matter what material you choose for the base of your carport, it needs to start with a level base.

Ground is level not just when it appears flat, but when it does not slope. You will need an area the size of your carport, as well as around three feet of level ground on all sides of the structure, to be level.

If you don't have an area that size on your property already, you can have the land graded to make it level. You may even want to grade the area around your carport to slope a bit away from the building, to be sure water will flow away from it.

Before doing any excavation or grading, you need to be sure there are no underground utilities or easements you are building over, as this may prohibit you from building over them.

This is also the time to make sure you are building in accordance with the proper distance from property lines and from other surrounding structures.

Planning a Foundation: Existing Driveway

If you're planning on building a carport over an existing driveway, you have two options.

- If the carport is wider than your driveway, it can be installed on the ground surrounding the driveway using anchors.
- If your driveway is wider than your carport by at least a foot on all sides, the carport can be attached to the existing driveway with anchors. Just be sure the driveway is level!

Planning a Foundation: Ground

If you would like to install your carport on the ground, this can be done using mobile home anchors—as long as the land is level and your permits allow it.

This is the most affordable option, though it is recommended mainly if you are using your carport for storage.

Planning a Foundation: Gravel

A gravel foundation is among the most popular, and the most affordable, for homeowners looking to install a carport.

To plan your gravel foundation, here's what you should keep in mind:

- It's best to make the gravel pad about two feet larger than your carport on all sides. This gives you plenty of room to walk around your carport, and ensures that any rainwater or snow that fall off the roof of your carport will fall on the foundation, rather than the ground.
- It's best to make the gravel bed between four and six inches in depth.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " stones mixed with smaller stones are recommended for a gravel foundation. This creates the most sturdy base for your vehicles. You might see this called "crusher run", "crushed stone", or "crusher and run".

To prepare the ground for a gravel carport foundation, first remove the topsoil and level or grade the site. Then, lay a woven geotextile fabric to help with stability and drainage. Finally, lay down the gravel and tamp it down to compact and level the surface.

The average cost of a gravel carport pad will depend on the size, but you can expect to pay between \$200 and \$500 for most average-sized structures.

Planning a Foundation: Concrete

For the most stable and long-lasting carport foundation, concrete is the best bet. You can have a concrete slab installed by a professional, or you can pour it yourself to save on the overall cost of the project.

Planning a Foundation: Asphalt

An asphalt foundation is more affordable than a concrete foundation, though that lower cost does come with a few drawbacks.

While asphalt is cheaper than concrete, and should work better in colder climates with a lot of snowfall, it isn't the recommended base for most. That is because it is higher maintenance, soft and prone to deforming under heavy weight, and won't last as long as its concrete counterpart.



Carport Financing

Even with careful planning and budgeting, financing for a carport may make the purchase a bit less stressful overall.

Here are three of the most common carport-purchasing options.

- **Out of Pocket**

If you have the total cost of the carport ready to go, you can pay for the project up-front in one lump sum. Typically, you will only need to pay a portion of the total cost—the deposit—when placing your order. The rest can be paid upon installation.

- **Rent-to-Own**

Many carport builders, including MetalCarports.com, offer rent-to-own options. These payment plans allow buyers to put down little money upfront, and pay off the remaining balance of the total in affordable monthly payments.

Because this option does not require a credit check, it's a popular choice among those with lower credit scores who want to install their carport ASAP.

Online tools like the MetalCarports.com [estimated monthly payments calculator](#) can help estimate the amount owed each month even before the carport is drafted.

- **Other Financing**

Many homeowners choose to finance their carport purchase with the help of third-party credit programs. We are happy to work with you to find the best alternative for financing.

How to Order a Metal Carport

The process for placing your carport order may vary from builder to builder, but at [MetalCarports.com](https://www.metalcarports.com) our process is simple and easy!

1. [Design your carport](#) & submit a request
2. We'll contact you!

Or, don't want to mess around online? Simply call us at 877-517-4422 or [contact us](#) right now to talk to a sales representative and get your new metal carport built.

It's that simple. Get started now!

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