



Four Car Garage Plans

One Car Garage Plans, Two Car Garage Plans and Three car Garage Plans have already been discussed in previous articles.

You'll find that four car garage plans come in a wide variety of designs, styles, living arrangements and sizes. The 2008 Experian Automotive study that has been quoted in the previous articles stated that the average family owns 2.28 vehicles, so you might wonder why anyone would need to build a 4 car garage. In fact the Experian study claims that households that have cars own this number of vehicles:

- 1 car households - 34%
- 2 car households - 31%
- 3 car households - 35%

If you do the math you'll see that this adds up to 100%, indicating that no one owns more than 3 vehicles. Well, we know better from personal experience that's not the case. The Experian numbers probably have some rounding error that would explain part of the discrepancy, but we have also observed families, including our own, that have owned four or even more vehicles all at the same time. Some of this might be transient, but we also know from personal experience it can last for quite some time. In addition to that, cars, trucks, vans and SUV's aren't always the only things that we keep in our garages. Garages are good for protecting boats, motorcycles, trailers, lawn equipment, pool equipment, etc. So there are plenty of good reasons that people might need to buy 4 car garage plans. What should you be looking for in your 4 car garage plan? That depends mostly on your unique situation:

- Are you replacing an existing garage or starting new?
- Are you storing more than just your car, truck, van or SUV?
- How many vehicles do you own?
- What is your budget for building a garage?

Answering the following questions can help to narrow down your search for a Four Car garage plan.

1. How much land do you have for your 4 car garage?
2. What types of vehicles are you going to park in the garage (think length, width, height)?
3. Are you going to build the garage yourself or hire a General Contractor?
4. Do you need living space, an apartment or a loft, in the garage?
5. Do you need a workshop or some extra storage space?
6. How much do you want to spend to build your garage?
7. Do you have any unique requirements such as boat or RV storage in the garage?

Many people just start off with a random search for a four car garage plan until they find one that fits their need; there are many types of four car garage plans available. Answering the garage plan buying questions listed above can help you reduce your search time and find the perfect 4 car garage for your

situation. Does it make sense to search for 4 car garage plans just to find out the one you like is a two story garage plan when you really want a one story garage plan? Here are some general guidelines to help you with your search.

4 Car Garage Plan Sizes

4 car garage plans come in a wide array of sizes, with the upper end seeming almost limitless. On the narrower side, you probably won't find many four car garage plans that measure less than about 40' (12.2m) wide by 20' (6.1m) deep. A fairly typical 4 car garage plan will be 45 ft (13.7m) to 60 ft (18.3m) wide by 24' (7.3m) deep. If you refer to our previous article on garage sizes, you'll find that typical vehicles range from about 15 feet (4.6 meters) long for a compact car to more than 20 feet (6.1m) long for a full size pickup truck with extended cab. Even if you don't own an extremely long vehicle, you should consider the re-sale value of your property, so you might want to round to the high side if you have the land to spare on your building site.

Just as with two car garage plans and three car garage plans, you will have to deal with the garage door configuration issue for a four car garage plan. Four car plans are pretty flexible when it comes to the overhead door configuration. Some four car garage plan designs will use 2 two car entry overhead doors, and some will use 4 single entry overhead doors. It's even possible that a plan could have 2 single entry overhead doors and 1 two car entry overhead door. The standard single wide entry garage overhead door measures 9' (2.7m) wide by 7' (2.1m) high and the standard double wide entry overhead door measures 16' (4.9m) wide by 7' in height. Pay attention to the width of your vehicles if you have some big ones, particularly if they have extended width mirrors. Wider and taller garage doors are available off the shelf in some places and you could even have one custom built if you really wanted it, but you will have to modify your garage plans to accommodate the bigger doors.

The widest vehicles measure about 6.5' (2m) in width (not counting the mirrors), so you'll only have about 2.5 feet (0.8 meters) total or 1.2 feet (0.4m) on either side of your vehicle if you go with the standard 9' (2.7m) wide single overhead door. That doesn't leave a lot of extra room, and don't forget to add what you'll need for those oversized side view mirrors!

Larger 4 car garage plans can measure upwards of 80' (24.4m) wide. Garage plans made to handle an RV can be even longer and wider than that. You might think the extra length and width seem to be excessive, but it could really be a blessing when you decide to finally make that workshop you've always been wanting. A garage is a great place to have your woodworking shop to keep the dust out of your house. If you ever have plans to buy a boat or a trailer for hauling, you might just wish you had that extra room.

Four Car Garage Plan Architectural Styles

To find a specific architectural style for your four car garage plan you will probably have to use the process of elimination. Many websites carrying garage plans do not give you a search capability by architectural style, so you will just have to use your other buying criteria to narrow the search then look at every 4 car garage plan they have to offer that fits your needs.

Most common architectural styles are available in a 4 car garage plan:

- Colonial
- Modern
- Cape Cod
- Tudor
- Gambrel Roof
- Victorian
- Gothic

You'll just have to do your research to find the one that suits you best. In most cases you will be better off selecting something that matches the architectural style of other buildings on your property, especially if the structures are in close proximity to each other.

It's a good idea before you start your garage plans search to know in your mind what your major selling points are because you'll find:

- One Story 4 car Garage Plans
 - Two Story 4 car Garage Plans
 - 4 car Garage Plans with No Living Quarters
 - 4 car Garage Plans with One Bedroom Apartments
 - 4 car Garage Plans with Two Bedroom Apartments
 - 4 car Garage Plans with Loft Apartments
 - 4 car Garage Plans with Studio Apartments
 - 4 car Garage Plans with Extra Storage Space
 - 4 car Garage Plans with Workshops
 - 4 car Garage Plans with RV Garages
 - 4 car Garage Plans with Storm Shelters
- and the list goes on!

Available Garage Plan, Garage Floor Plan and Garage Blueprint Drawing Formats

Generally, you will be able to get your 4 car garage plan drawings in one of four formats:

- Paper prints
- CAD files
- Reproducible prints
- Downloadable files you can print yourself

Most garage plan/blueprint/floor plan websites will offer all of these methods for getting your drawings. It just depends on what your building plans are as to which type is best suited for you. If you were wondering about the difference between a print and a blueprint, well there really isn't any difference any more. Blueprints were an older method of photocopying drawings and they are not used much anymore with the advent of modern printing techniques and equipment. The word blueprint was derived from the process that actually delivered the drawings with dark blue lines on a lighter blue background. Most modern prints these days are black ink on white paper and are made by a plotter

capable of printing large drawings or a printer with oversized paper printing capability. The term 'blueprint' has held on through the years in the building trade and is used interchangeably with building plans. A 'floor plan' and a 'building plan' also generally refer to the same thing. The 'floor plan' is a subset of a garage plan drawing set, but typically is used interchangeably with the terms 'building plan' or simply 'plan'. So in a conversation discussing your 4 car garage building plans you may hear them called 'plans', 'building plans', 'floor plans', 'prints' or 'blueprints' all in the same sentence.

Before ordering any garage plans, make sure you know what the publisher's return/exchange policy is. Some will let you return or exchange plans after you bought them and some will not. Due to the nature of electronic products, it is unlikely that any publisher will let you return or exchange CAD files or downloadable files but it's always better to know up front.

Here are some additional details about the drawing formats you have to choose from.

Paper prints - just what it sounds like. It is a set of drawings consisting of several sheets of paper, anywhere from 3 sheets to 7+ sheets, depending on the complexity of your 4 car garage plan drawings. In most cases, you will get the drawings on either 18" x 24" paper, or 24" x 36" paper. You don't want anything smaller than the 18" x 24" size since it would become too difficult to read and the smaller details would begin to run together. Paper prints are usually the cheapest method of getting your plans from the publisher. If you are not planning on making major changes to the plans then this is probably the best method for you to choose. Just order the number of sets you will need to build your garage and the plan publisher will take care of printing them for you. If you plan on making significant changes to your 4 car garage plan prior to building, this is not the drawing package you should choose since you won't be able to modify the drawings (with the exception of minor changes).

Computer Aided Drawings (CAD) - these are drawings that will be delivered to you either as a downloadable file, or on a disk the publisher will send to you. Either way, you will end up with the same thing, a software file that can be viewed and even modified using a CAD application program. This drawing delivery method is the way to go if you want to make extensive changes to your garage plans before you start your building project. CAD files are usually one of the more expensive options, but well worth it if you plan on any significant changes. You will need a CAD application program such as AutoCAD to be able to open and change the file. Check with your plan publisher to see what file format they provide prior to purchasing CAD files. You will also need some way to print the files on large plotter paper when you are ready to print. Again, check the license rights the publisher is giving you when you buy CAD files. Generally they will only allow you to build one garage per drawing set you buy, even if you buy CAD files.

Reproducible prints - these are drawings delivered on special paper that can be changed by someone trained in working with architectural drawings. You will get one complete set of the drawings on either 18" x 24" paper or 24" x 36" paper, check with the publisher to find out what they supply. This type of drawing set is good if you have a moderate number of changes you wish to make to your 4 car garage plans prior to building. Using appropriate drawing tools, your architect (or other qualified individual) can change the reproducible drawing plans right on the special paper they are printed on. You then must take the reproducible drawing to a print shop that is capable of making the paper copies you will need for your project.

Downloadable files - these are files you can download from the plan publisher and save to your computer. Generally, the file type is pdf, a very widely accepted and available standard type printable file. Adobe Acrobat Reader is available free and can be used to view and print the plan files. Since they are usually downloadable, this type of drawing format is generally available immediately. When you get the file downloaded, you will have to have a printer or plotter capable of printing on large paper, recommended to be at least 18" wide by 24" long. Anything smaller than that will start to become unreadable. You may have to take the file to an office supply store or copying center to get it printed out.

Summary

Drawing Type:	Paper Prints		
Pros:	Least expensive, good quality from publisher	Cons:	You can only make minor modifications

Drawing Type:	CAD		
Pros:	Can make extensive changes, stores on computer hard drive	Cons:	Special software needed to view and modify, special printer needed

Drawing Type:	Reproducible		
Pros:	Easy to make changes to drawing, can make as many copies as needed for project	Cons:	You can only make modest number of modifications, Needs special equipment to make copies

Drawing Type:	Downloadable File		
Pros:	Simple, Most Convenient, Can make as many copies as needed for project	Cons:	You can't make any modifications, Special printer needed

Building Tips for your 4 car garage

Hire a good General Contractor (GC) - If building a garage is outside of your personal skill set or desire, then you will probably need a GC. This is going to be your go-to person for any of the questions you may have before, during, and after construction. A good GC will see to it that your 4 car garage project runs smoothly and gets completed as promised. For more tips, read our article on How to Hire a General Contractor.

Location, Location, Location - Choosing the right location to build your 4 car garage is very important. There are several factors to consider, both practical and aesthetic: 1. How far from the road or your home do you want to build your garage? If it is too far from the road, you could spend hours shoveling the driveway on a snowy winter day. If it is too far from the house, consider having to trudge through the snow after you have safely parked your car for the night. Also consider the style of the 4 car garage plan you choose - you may want to try to match or complement your 4 car garage to the surrounding buildings on your property. And don't forget about running plumbing and electricity to your new garage!

Consider adding a skylight - While windows let wonderful amounts of natural light into your 4 car garage, they also take up valuable wall space that could be better used for storage. Windows also

provide easier access for strangers to view your possessions, and even gain access to your garage. A great way to achieve more natural light with even more security than windows is with a skylight. Consult with a local builder or architect to see if a skylight is right for your 4 car garage plan.

Garage Trivia

The longest car ever made (or at least the longest one we could find) is a 100' long limousine designed by Jay Ohrberg of Burbank California. It features a swimming pool with a diving board and a king size water bed. If you want to see what it looks like you can go to this website:

<http://thelongestlistofthelongeststuffatthelongestdomainnameatlonglast.com/long11.html>