



## What are farm structures?

Farm structures are common agricultural structures associated with an agricultural use such as growing and harvesting crops, and raising livestock.

These structures may include:

- Barns
- Cold storages for crops grown and raised on site
- Riding arenas (riding academies)
- Slaughterhouses
- Hay or feed storage
- Livestock shelter or shade structures
- Feed or hay shelter structures
- Loafing sheds
- Poultry coop
- Farm equipment storage

## Which zone classifications allow farm structures?

Your Community Plan area and Zone Classification determine whether a farm structure is allowed. Different Community Plan areas and zone classifications allow for different uses. Uses are organized into use categories, **use types**, and levels (intensities or characteristics of the use). **Below**, find the type of structure you want to build, and find its corresponding Use Type. Refer to this Use Type in your Community Plan Area Use Table.

### Barns and Coops

- If agricultural activities are the main activity on the property, then barns and coops fall under the Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering Use Type<sup>1</sup>
- If agricultural activities are accessory to a residential use, then barns and coops fall under Accessory Uses<sup>2</sup>

**Cold Storages** fall under the Crop Production Use Type<sup>3</sup>

**Riding Arenas** (riding academies) fall under the Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering Use Type<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Section 18A.33.260 D - Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>2</sup> Section 18A.36.070 - Residential Accessory Use List; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>3</sup> Section 18A.33.260 E - Crop Production; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>4</sup> Section 18A.33.260 D - Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)



**Slaughterhouses** fall under the Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering Use Type<sup>5</sup>

**Storage Buildings** may be considered an accessory use. Most zone classifications allow accessory uses. Review Pierce County Code [Title 18A](#), Accessory Uses and Structures.<sup>6</sup>

### To find out your Community Plan area and zoning, you can:

1. Open Pierce County's [About My Property](#)<sup>7</sup>
  - Enter a parcel number or site address
  - Find your Community Plan area and zoning in the Results Box
2. Use [this form](#) to have Planning and Land Services staff help you
3. Call the Development Center at (253) 798-3739

### Is a building permit required for farm structures?

**Most likely.** The Development Center issues building permits and enforces standards for farm structures. An [Affidavit](#) is required for agricultural structures that are exempt from a building permit.

Agricultural structures may be exempt from a building permit when ALL of the following requirements are met:

- Be 600 square feet in size or less.
- Be built to the latest version of the International Residential Code and International Building and Fire Code.
- Adhere to all applicable Pierce County, State and Federal regulations or ordinances.
- Be located on land where agriculture activities are allowed.
- Be located on a parcel equal to or greater than 5 acres. A maximum of two exempt structures per parcel is allowed.
- Be a one-story detached accessory agriculture building. An agriculture building is defined as follows: AGRICULTURAL BUILDING (Barn) (International Building code Section 202) designed and constructed to house farm implements, hay, grain, poultry, livestock or other horticultural products. This structure shall not be a place of human habitation or a place of employment where agricultural products are processed, treated or packaged, nor shall it be a place used by the public.<sup>8</sup>
- Comply with setback requirements (PCC Title 18A).

<sup>5</sup> Section 18A.33.260 D - Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>6</sup> Section 18A.36.070 - Residential Accessory Use List; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>7</sup> <http://yakima.co.pierce.wa.us/aboutmyproperty/>

<sup>8</sup> Farm implements may include farm vehicles as identified under RCW 46.16A.080(A) and be registered per RCW 46.16A.420



- Maintain a minimum distance of 10 feet between other detached structures in order to meet County Fire Code.

NOTE: The property owner must certify through an [Affidavit](#) recorded on title that the exempt structure meets the listed criteria and that the building meets the requirements of an agricultural building as defined in the International Building Code. A scaled site plan must be included and recorded with the affidavit. For more information, please review the [Agriculture Structure Exemption from Building Permits Bulletin](#) and the [Ordinance](#).

Depending on the size and location of your structure, it may also need **a site development permit, a critical area review, or both**. For help with building permits, please contact the [Development Center](#).

## What are the required setbacks for farm structures?

As a principal use, barns, stables, riding arenas, cages, coops, or similar animal enclosures shall be set back 45 feet from any adjacent property line.<sup>9</sup> As an accessory use, the setback depends on the animal type (e.g. poultry); please refer to Pierce County Code [Title 18A](#), Residential Accessory Use List for more information. Sites containing [critical areas](#) may require larger setbacks.

Cold storages, slaughterhouses, and storage buildings must be set back according to your underlying Zone Classification. To find the required setbacks either:

- Find your Zone Classification, then refer to Table 18A.15.040 in Pierce County Code [Title 18A](#), Setback and Height;<sup>10</sup> or
- Contact or visit the [Development Center](#) for assistance.

## For help or more information:

- Submit an online question at [Ask the Development Center](#)
- Ask a question using [Live Chat](#)
- Call the Development Center at (253) 798-3739
- Visit the Development Center, Monday – Friday between 9 am and 2 pm, at 2401 South 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma, WA 98409

*Please have the parcel number or site address on hand. You can find your parcel number and additional site information by visiting [About My Property](#).*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Section 18A.45.020 – Agricultural Uses and Animals; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>10</sup> Section 18A.15.040 – Setback and Height; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)

<sup>11</sup> <http://yakima.co.pierce.wa.us/aboutmyproperty/>





**This is a reference tool only, and is not a substitute for codes and zoning regulations. You must ensure that your project meets the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations.**

