

Horse Boarding Facilities & Riding Arenas

PURPOSE

To establish a consistent policy with respect to horse stables and riding arenas. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to staff in differentiating private use vs. public use of horse boarding facilities and horse riding arenas.

GENERAL

This policy supercedes Building Inspection Department Policy # 60.1.33 - *Horse Stables & Riding Arenas* dated 7/21/93. It is the intent of Policy 9-4-10 to define and provide guidelines for the consistent application of the Sonoma County Code and model building codes to both commercial horse boarding and private stables or riding arenas.

This policy shall establish a methodology for determining if a subject facility is operated as a private or public facility and establish requirements for minimum restroom facilities.

DEFINITIONS

Agricultural Building - is a structure 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. (California Building Code 2001, §202[A])

Boarding of horses - means the keeping and training of horses which are not owned by the occupant or owner of the property. Boarding of horses includes the giving of private lessons (one trainer/one student), but does not include group lessons, group clinics, shows or similar related activities. (Sonoma County Zoning Regulations Definitions §26-02-140)

Commercial Stable - means housing for horses owned and used by someone other than the occupant or owner of the residence and including related shows, lessons, clinics and similar activities. (Sonoma County Zoning Regulations Definitions §26-02-140) (Reference Policy Paragraph 8 below)

Cultural Event - means an event which occurs not more than one (1) calendar day in a thirty (30) day period. (Sonoma County Zoning Regulations Definitions §26-02-140)

Horse Boarding Facilities - means any structure(s) used for the sole purpose of “boarding of horses.”

Occasional Event - means an event which occurs not more than three days in any 90-day period. (California Health and Safety Code §113825)

Private Riding Arena - is an enclosed or unenclosed building or portion of a building used exclusively for the private equestrian activities by the building owner, guests, or employees, not to exceed a capacity of thirty (30) persons. The area within the Private Riding Arena shall not be used for storage areas, animal stalls, offices, viewing areas, shows, events, public riding lessons, or similar uses or occupancies. (Sonoma County Code, Section 7-13 [a][19]) (Capacity is determined by California Building Code for grandstand seating)

Private Stable - means the keeping and training of horses which are owned solely by the occupant or owner of the property and is not open for public use.

Public - includes but not limited to: customers, clients, and students, but does not include owners or operators of the facility.

AUTHORITY

The Building Official shall have the authority to render interpretations of the code and adopt and enforce rules and supplemental regulations to clarify the application of its provisions per Section 104.2.1 of the California Building Code.

Sonoma County Code Section 7-13 [e][2]: “Every dwelling or other building or place where persons congregate, reside or are employed shall be provided with an adequate number of water flush toilets connected to a sewage disposal system which shall consist of a public sewer connection or a septic tank and a system of underground drains for the disposal of the tank effluent, or other systems approved by the director of the Permit and Resource Management Department.

POLICY

A. Use classifications:

1. Private Riding Arenas shall be classified as Class U Division 3 occupancies. Covered Private Riding Arenas are not considered for Agricultural Exempt structures.
2. Public Riding Arenas (with occupant loads between 31 and 49) shall be classified Class B occupancies. Covered Public Riding Arenas regardless of occupant load are not considered for Agricultural Exempt structures.
3. Public Riding Arenas (those with an occupant load greater than 50) shall be classified Group A Division 3 occupancies.

4. Bleachers or grandstands shall be considered Group A Division 4 occupancies.
 5. Storage barns or shade structures may be considered Group U Division 3 or Agricultural Exempt structures.
 6. Private stables shall be considered Group U Division 3 occupancies. Private stables may be considered Agricultural Exempt structures.
 7. Public bathroom facilities associated with public uses shall be classified Group B occupancies.
 8. Horse boarding facilities that fall under the strict definition of “Boarding of Horses” shall be considered a Group U Division 3 occupancy. Commercial Stables shall be classified as Group B occupancies. Horse Boarding facilities are not considered Agricultural Exempt structures.
 9. Unless otherwise conditioned through the Planning process, restroom facilities are not required for horse boarding facilities existing prior to the effective date of this policy.
 10. All new construction of horse boarding facilities or renovations, structural repairs, alterations or additions to existing boarding facilities shall require the boarding facility to be upgraded to comply with all State accessibility requirements. Exemption to this requirement would be for maintenance and/or repair in kind to limited portions of a structure. When restrooms are provided, they shall meet State accessibility requirements including path of travel. Boarding facilities that cater to the disabled community shall comply with all State Accessibility requirements.
- B. Cultural and Occasional events may be conducted within a Private Riding Arena with a maximum occupant load of 30 people. If the proposed Cultural or Occasional event exceeds 30 occupants, the structure shall be constructed per the applicable occupancy.
- C. Restroom requirements for Commercial Stables (Group A and B occupancies).
1. Restrooms may be consolidated to one centralized location for all structures served within 600 feet.
 2. At minimum, one restroom shall be required for each sex.
 3. A restroom with one lavatory and one water closet for each sex shall be provided for every 5000 square feet of building area served. For facilities with multiple buildings, only the largest building shall be used for the square footage calculation.
 4. Restrooms shall meet state accessibility standards.

5. Commercial Stables with an on-site residence may use existing toilet facilities for incidental use by patrons if:
 - a. The existing restroom meets all applicable building and state accessibility code provisions.
 - b. The existing residential septic system meets current code and has sufficient design capacity to accommodate proposed use. Any increase in sewage flow above design capacity will require expansion of the septic system in accordance with current codes (Class I).
 - c. A separate outside door is provided.
 - d. The largest building in the facility is less than 5000 square feet.

D. Restroom requirements for other types of equestrian facilities

1. Owner/operator of privately pastured horses without an onsite residence:
 - a. No restroom facilities are required for owner/operators of private stables where there is no on site residence or structures (only pasture) and provided that any person is on site less than 2 hours each day and less than 30 horses are boarded. Where a restroom facility is required, it may be constructed to residential standards.
2. Owner/operator pastured Horse Boarding Facility without an onsite residence:
 - a. Restroom facilities connected to an acceptable septic system shall be provided on undeveloped properties if any person is on site more than 2 hours per day or if 30 or more horses are boarded. The restroom facility shall be constructed to commercial standards meeting State accessibility requirements.
3. Owner/operator pastured Horse Boarding Facility with an on-site residence served by an acceptable septic system and incidental use of the existing toilet facilities by patrons:
 - a. An existing residential restroom may be used by the public if a separate outside door is provided and all applicable current building codes and State accessibility requirements are met. Modification of existing residential restrooms will require applicable permits and be classified as Group R Division 3 occupancies. The plans for the restroom changes shall be considered exempt from professional design per Section 5537 of the Business and Professions Code. The existing residential septic system shall meet current code for Class II standards and have sufficient design capacity to accommodate the proposed use. The use of a class II

system is based upon very minimal additional sewage discharge from occasional water closet use.

4. Portable chemical toilets (holding tanks) may be approved for use with Cultural or Occasional events conducted at Private Horse Boarding Facilities or in Private Riding Arenas. One chemical toilet shall be provided for every 50 event participants and at least one portable chemical toilet shall meet state accessibility standards.
5. Conversion from “U-3” occupancy to a “B” occupancy
 - a. Requires the normal building permit process:
 - 1) must meet site setback requirements
 - 2) must meet increased occupancy requirements. (over that for an agricultural building)
 - 3) must meet increased structural requirements (over that for an agricultural building)
 - 4) sprinklers are required
 - b. Requires design, drawings and calculations by a licensed California Civil Engineer or Architect, based upon applicable ordinances, codes and laws.
 - c. Shall meet State accessibility requirements which includes accessibility of parking, path of travel from parking to bathrooms, drinking fountains and other public areas including but not limited to viewing areas grandstands, offices and classrooms.
 - d. Obtain all clearances from PRMD.
 - e. Requires Public Restrooms (See Part “C” of this Policy)

Approved by:

/s/ Pete Parkinson

Pete Parkinson, Director

Lead Authors: DeWayne Starnes, Building Official
John DeCourcy, Building Division Manager
Jon Tracy, EH Specialist III
Ben Neuman, Code Enforcement Manager

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