



Snohomish County
*Planning and Development
 Services*

Visit us at :

2nd Floor Robert J. Drewel Bldg.
 3000 Rockefeller Avenue
 Everett, WA 98201

425-388-3311
 1-800-562-4367, ext. 3311



PERMIT SUBMITTAL
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 425.388.3311
 Ext. 2790



This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Stables and Equestrian Centers

Assistance Bulletin

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Keyword: Assistance Bulletins

Q: How do you define a “Stable?”

A: A “Stable” is a structure in which horses are kept for the purposes of boarding, breeding, personal use, or training, provided the training is limited to those horses being boarded on the property.

Q: What is a “Mini-equestrian Center?”

A: A “Mini-equestrian Center” is a facility where 24 or fewer horses are used for rentals, riding lessons, rodeos, shows, or training, where training may include horses not boarded on-site.

Q: What is an “Equestrian Center?”

A: An “Equestrian Center” is a facility where more than 24 horses are used for rentals, riding lessons, rodeos, shows, or training, where training may include horses not boarded on-site.

Q: Other than building permits for structures, do I need any special land use approval for these facilities?

A: It depends on the type and location of your facility. Equestrian Centers are allowed with a Conditional Use Permit on all lands zoned A-10 (except in that portion of the special flood hazard area as described in chapter 30.65.240(2)(b)). Mini-equestrian Centers are allowed on all lands zoned A-10, except in that portion of the special flood hazard area of the lower Snohomish and Stillaguamish rivers designated “density fringe” (as described in chapter 30.65.240(2)(b) SCC).

The following explains which zones require Conditional Use Permits (C).

Zoning Classification	Stable	Mini-Equestrian Ctr	Equestrian Ctr
A-10	P	P	C
F	P	P	C
F and R	P	P	P
RC	P	P	P
RD	P	P	P
R-5 & RRT-10	P	P	C

P = Permitted Use
 C = Conditional Use Permit

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

Zoning Classification	Stable	Mini-Equestrian Ctr	Equestrian Ctr
T, FS, MC, RFS, CRC, MHP	-	-	-
BP LDMR R-7200	P	-	-
CB LI R-8400			
GC MR R-9600			
HI NB R-12,500			
IP PCB R-20,000			
RU SA-1 WFB			

P = Permitted Use
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Q: Are there any additional requirements?

A: Yes. Equestrian Centers and Mini-equestrian Centers require the following:

- Minimum Acreage: A 5-acre minimum site size for a Mini-equestrian Center.
- Covered Arenas: Total area of covered riding arenas must be less than 15,000 square feet for a Mini-equestrian Center, provided that stabling areas, whether attached or detached, are not included in this calculation.
- Lighting: Any lighting of an outdoor or covered arena must be shielded so it does not glare on surrounding properties or rights-of-way.
- Landscaping: On sites located in RC and R-5 zones, a Type A landscaping as defined in Chapter 30.25.017 SCC is required to screen any outside storage (including animal waste storage) and parking areas from adjacent properties. Type A landscaping is a planted barrier consisting of at least 75% evergreen plant materials spaced to form a sight-obscuring screen.
- Hours of Operation: Riding lessons, rentals, or shows may occur only between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.
- Outside Storage: Outside storage (including animal waste storage) and parking areas must be set back at least 30 feet from any adjacent property line. Open or covered arenas must be at least 50 feet from any external property line.
- Parking: One parking space, capable of accommodating both a vehicle and horse trailer, must be provided for every two horses expected for Equestrian Center or Mini-equestrian Center events. One parking space must be provided for every four arena seats (or eight feet of bench).
- Code Compliance: The facility must comply with all applicable county building, health, and fire code requirements.
- Mini-equestrian Centers and Equestrian Centers are permitted as commercial structures and require annual inspection and issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy from the Fire Marshal's Office. Prior to submitting a commercial building permit application, a pre-submittal conference with the Department of Public Works (425) 388-6440 is required to discuss and confirm your obligations pursuant to the county road impact mitigation ordinance (Chapter 30.66B) and road design requirements if a private road is proposed.
- For Stables, Equestrian Centers and Mini-equestrian Centers, a written narrative is required at the time of application describing the intended use of the facility including the number of horses and proposed activities such as boarding, riding lessons, rodeos, shows, and training.

Q: What if I have other questions?

A: Call (425) 388-3311 or submit questions online at AskPermitTech@snoco.org. Remember, asking questions first can save lots of headaches, heartaches and money!