



Building Permit Application Requirements for Agricultural Buildings and Structures

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Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform applicants of the Building Permit application requirements for agricultural buildings and structures on property zoned "Agriculture (AG1)".

Background

As per *Zoning Bylaw 8500*, agricultural buildings and structures are permitted in the "Agriculture (AG1)" zone if the buildings or structures are used for a farm business. Farm business, as defined in *Zoning Bylaw 8500*, means a business in which farm activities are conducted on the property (e.g. growing, producing or raising farm product). As per the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) Use Regulation, the use of agricultural land to construct, maintain or operate agricultural buildings and structures are permitted if necessary for a farm use. Refer to the City's [Zoning Bylaw 8500](#) and Provincial [ALC Act & ALR Use Regulation](#) for more information on permitted uses.

Requirements

In order to ensure consistency with the City's bylaws and Provincial regulations, the applicant of a Building Permit for agricultural buildings or structures is required to provide evidence of a farm business on the property and rationale demonstrating the need for the proposed agricultural building or structure, including the following:

- **Existing farm business:** Evidence the property is assessed as "farm" under the BC Assessment Act and a letter signed by the agricultural operator providing rationale for the proposed agricultural building or structure in relation to the existing farm business (including proposed use, location, and size) and a statement on the impacts of the development on the agricultural capability of the land.
- **New farm business:** Submission of a farm plan by a Professional Agrologist, demonstrating the property is capable of achieving farm status (including information on unimproved/improved agricultural capability/suitability, soils, drainage and irrigation, proposed farm product and operator, and agricultural improvement cost estimate) rationale for the proposed agricultural building or structure in relation to the proposed farm business (including proposed use, location and size), and discussion on the impacts of the development on the agricultural capability of the land.

As per *Zoning Bylaw 8500*, accessory buildings (including garages and storage sheds) for agricultural use (not residential use), defined separately from agricultural buildings and structures, are only permitted on a property that is assessed as "farm" under the *BC Assessment Act*.

Agricultural buildings and structures must comply with the regulations of the "Agriculture (AG1)" zone, including maximum cumulative lot coverage for impermeable floor surfaces at or below the natural grade. Refer to the [Agriculture \(AG1\) zone](#) and Bulletin [BUILDING-34 Agricultural Building and Greenhouse Regulations](#) for more information.

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Agricultural buildings and structures must be designed and used for agricultural purposes (no residential uses). Proposed uses of all areas within the agricultural building or structure must be identified on the plans. The following will be considered as part of the Building Permit application review process:

- Compliance with the *National Farm Building Code of Canada*, whenever possible.
- Exterior and interior layout and design of the building or structure to be consistent with a farm use, including:
 - Exterior design and materials consistent with the agrarian character (e.g. brick, timber or metal sheeting/cladding).
 - Functional interior layout for an agricultural operation (e.g. minimal rooms, windows and doors).
 - Single-storey only (mezzanine acceptable), unless a need is demonstrated.
 - Bathrooms limited to a maximum two plumbing fixtures.

See examples of typical agricultural buildings and structures below.

- As per the City's *Flood Plain Designation and Protection Bylaw 8204*, farm buildings are generally exempt from the Flood Construction Level (FCL) requirements. If exempt, the agricultural building or structure should be built at grade to avoid unnecessary fill.

Applicants are also required to submit a signed and witnessed Statutory Declaration confirming all proposed construction shall comply with the permitted uses specified in *Zoning Bylaw 8500*. Refer to Bulletin [BUILDING-32 Statutory Declaration Requirement for Building Permit Applications in the AG1 Zone](#) for more information.

Examples



Source: Google Earth

Notes

- If the proposal involves depositing on or removing soil from the subject property to facilitate construction, the property owner may be required to submit an application to obtain a Permit from the City. Refer to Bulletin [COMMBYLAWS-02 Soil Deposit & Removal Bylaw 10200 – Application Process](#) for more information.
- If the property contains Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), the proposal will be reviewed by the City's ESA Planner. Refer to Bulletin [DEVAPPS-08 Process and Requirements for Development Proposals within an ESA](#) for more information.
- All existing and proposed farm access roads must be identified on the plans. Secondary farm access roads are only permitted if solely for the purposes of farm access and completely separate from the residential access.
- Please note importing soil or other material to construct farm access roads may require submission of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Refer to the [ALC website](#) to ensure compliance with the [Provincial ALC Act & ALR Use Regulation](#).

Should you have any questions concerning this bulletin, please reference the Bulletin number and email building@richmond.ca or call the Building Approvals General Inquiries line at **604-276-4118**.