



Shenandoah County

Office of Community Development

Building Department Newsletter

Fall 2015

BUILDING AN INFORMED COALITION OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS

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Farm Structure and the Building Code



Questions are constantly asked in regards to farm structures and what is required by the building code. The answer is not always an easy answer. First and foremost, a zoning permit must be obtained from the zoning administrator in order to make exterior improvements to the property. The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code allows farm structures, located on the farm, to be constructed without a building permit. However, there are exceptions to this rule. The

structure must be used for farming operations, not residential uses. If the building is being used in conjunction with operations that are regulated as part of food preparation or sales a building permit is needed. Also if the structure is located in the floodplain or in a mud-slide area, a building permit must be obtained. Just because your property may be zoned agriculture doesn't exempt you from zoning and/or building permits. If you have questions regarding constructing a farm building feel free to contact the zoning administrator or building official of your locality.

Building Department Mission

The mission of the Building Department is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by assuring that all buildings, structures and related equipment are constructed, installed and maintained in compliance with the standards contained within the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.

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Flood Regulations

In 2012 legislation was passed to reduce the amount of money FEMA was losing in paying claims of natural disasters named the Biggert-Waters Act. This legislation reduced the amount of government subsidy needed for flood insurance coverage by placing the burden of the cost of the flood insurance back on the property owner. The only problem was the act called for the owner to begin paying for the entire cost of the insurance starting with an increase up to 25 percent yearly until actuary cost is achieved. Knowing that the public could not afford these increases, new legislation was introduced to amend that act in 2014 by the name of Grimm-Waters Act. People who must have flood insurance required by their mortgage will still see increases but now limited to 5-15 percent per year until actual cost is achieved. The bill is H.R. 3370 and the full law can be reviewed from the internet. Each jurisdiction throughout the state has some type of flood program with an administrator of that program to reduce the loss from flood damage. The zoning administrator is the flood plain manager in Shenandoah County and each town has their own. For questions on how to possibly reduce your flood insurance premium contact your local flood plain manager.

Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Alarms and Fire Extinguishers

Smoke alarms have been a requirement of the building code for some time now. They first arrived in the form of a battery operated smoke alarm and throughout the years and in the process of better codes, smoke alarms have evolved to be required on every level of a residence, in each bedroom, and outside the bedrooms in the common area. In addition to batteries they have to be hard wired and interconnected to each other so if one alarm is activated, all will sound. The code now requires carbon monoxide alarms to be installed in houses with attached garages and that have fuel fired appliances. These alarms have a life expectancy of 10 years then are required to be replaced and are stamped with manufacture dates for reference. The building code also requires that every kitchen be equipped with a portable fire extinguisher in every new dwelling. The extinguisher must have a rating of 2-A:10-B-C. The letter rating indicates the type of fires that the extinguisher is effective on extinguishing and the numeric rating is the area in size of the fire that the extinguisher has effectively extinguish.

Free Code Access

Have you ever wondered what exactly is written in the code books? Now you can view free of charge all of the building codes enforced by the Commonwealth of Virginia by going to the following website:

<http://codes.iccsafe.org/#virginia> or find the link on the Shenandoah County Building Inspections website.



SCCC Membership

Membership in the Shenandoah County Construction Coalition is free. By becoming a member you will be networking with other members of your community that work in the same field as you. Membership allows us a contact list to send information to regarding upcoming events. If you would like to be added to the membership send your information to mryman@shenandoahcountyva.us or call us at 540-459-6185.

Did you know...

That the building code is changed and reproduced every three years?

That almost every US community and the District of Columbia has adopted the International Code Council family of codes?

That the Commonwealth of Virginia has had the most amount of code professionals be in leadership positions with the International Code Council?