

Allowed Improvements within an Agricultural Exempt Structure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a guideline for approving the installation of electrical, mechanical and water systems within or supporting an agricultural exempt structure.

This policy also establishes a criterion for referrals to the Code Enforcement Division for abatement purposes.

GENERAL

Section 7-7 Sonoma County Code establishes the construction and use of agricultural exempt structures. Section 7-7 (a) 2 specifically prohibits waste plumbing but allows the installation of electrical, mechanical and water systems provided that permits and inspections are obtained for these systems. County code does not delineate the extent or type of electrical, mechanical or water system(s) that may be installed.

This policy shall clarify Section 7-7 (a) Sonoma County Code in order to maintain a consistent application of allowed improvements or appliances supporting or within the agricultural exempt structure.

AUTHORITY

Section 104 California Building Code.

FORMS

Permit application form CIS-007

PROCEDURE

A. Electrification

1. Electrification may be allowed to support the authorized use of an agricultural exempt structure. Services shall not be limited in size or amperage. Services shall be grounded in accordance with California Electrical Code (CEC).
2. Panelboards may be allowed and located as specified in the CEC.
3. Branch circuits shall only be allowed to serve specified authorized uses or appliances. Only one general lighting circuit may be allowed.

4. Outlet boxes shall only be allowed to serve a specific authorized use, such as a work bench or dedicated piece of equipment. Placement of outlet boxes per article 210-52 CEC (residential spacing) shall not be allowed.
5. Specific electrical appliances may be approved to support the agricultural use of the structure if justification can be given. For example, fixed electrical space heating may be allowed if justification is provided by the permit applicant that the appliance supports the agricultural use of the structure. Staff may verify that the appliance meets current energy efficiency requirements. However, agricultural exempt structures are exempt from minimum insulation requirements.

B. Mechanical Systems

1. Solid fuel burning heaters shall not be allowed in agricultural exempt structures.
2. Residential type wall furnaces, forced air systems, residential heat exchangers and associated ducting shall not be allowed in agricultural exempt structures.
3. Water heaters shall not be allowed in agricultural exempt structures.
4. Commercial or industrial fans, coolers, heaters, or space heaters may be allowed as required to support the approved use of the structure. Any equipment installed must comply with all California Energy Code requirements for energy efficiency. Thermal or acoustical insulation is not required but may be approved under permit and inspection if installed to support the agricultural use of the structure. Installation of insulation to support a proposed future change of occupancy shall not be allowed.

C. Water Systems

1. Waste water piping is specifically prohibited within agricultural exempt structures. For the purposes of this policy, “within” shall mean within the footing of the structure, under the roof canopy, any roof structure attached to the structure or within 2 feet of the roof canopy.
2. Installation of plumbing fixtures consisting of sinks, tubs, showers or any other fixture requiring connection to waste piping or a sanitary sewer system are prohibited. Floor drains may be installed for the collection of rain water.
3. Hot water piping shall not be allowed within agricultural exempt structures.

D. Abatement

1. Any agricultural exempt structure that could be determined as a dangerous building as defined by the Uniform Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings shall be referred to

the Code Enforcement Division for abatement per policy 7-0-1

2. Inspection staff shall assume that the installation of any electrical, mechanical, insulation, or plumbing fixtures was installed under permit and inspection unless permit history research indicates the absence of permits. If hazardous conditions are observed or the absence of permits is verified, the hazardous condition shall be referred to the Code Enforcement Division for abatement per policy 7-0-1.

Approved by:

/s/ Pete Parkinson

Pete Parkinson, Director

Lead Author: Ben Neuman

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