

# UFC Farm Inspections

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Uniformed Fire Code Agricultural Use Inspections



# Objectives

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- Understand how the NJ Uniform Fire Code Applies to Agricultural uses
- Types of use groups found on farms
- Code enforcement process
- Referrals

# Scope of UFC

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- N.J.A.C.5:70-2.1(b) – The local enforcing agency shall periodically inspect all premises, except owner-occupied one- and two-family or attached single family structures used exclusively for dwelling purposes. These inspections shall be made in accordance with the scheduled contained in this code...
- Commercial Farm Buildings are to be inspected annually.
- All buildings on the farm, except for an owner occupied one and two family dwelling must be inspected.



# Use Groups

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- **Group A, Assembly:** Structures used or designed for the gathering together of persons for purposes, such as structures intended for the production or viewing of events and usually provided with fixed seats, and also spaces without permanent seats where people assemble for entertainment, lectures or other similar purposes.
- **Group M, Mercantile:** Structures used for display or sales purposes and accessible to the public including, among others, retail stores, shops and salesrooms and markets. Retail farm stands and markets are considered mercantile and must be constructed according to Group M.
- **Group S-1, Moderate Hazard Storage:** Those buildings that are not classified as Group S-2 shall be classified as Group S-1. The combustibility of the building and the materials stored in the structure will be the decisive factor.
- **Group S-2, Low Hazard Storage:** Commercial farm buildings are a designated group. They shall comply with the construction code provisions applicable to Group S-2 in the building subcode, except as otherwise provided in the Farm Building Code subsection of the UCC (N.J.A.C. 5:23-3.2(d)).

# Referrals

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- LEA is required to refer any suspected change of use to the Local Construction and Zoning Officials.
- Also must refer to the Division of Fire Safety and they have to refer it to the Department of Community Affairs – State Construction Office.
- Possible Local Health Department referral



# Code Application

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- Buildings constructed prior to 1977 or not possessing a valid Certificate of Occupancy by the Uniform Construction Office, shall be inspected under the UFC Retro Code - N.J.A.C.5:70-4 et-al.
  - Designed to bring buildings constructed without the benefit of UCC permits and inspections up to a basic level of fire safety and protection.
- Buildings constructed post 1977 and possessing a valid Certificate of Occupancy by the Uniform Construction Office, shall be inspected under the 2015 International Fire Code – NJ Edition.
  - Designed to keep buildings constructed with the benefits of UCC permits and inspections properly maintained and all fire protection systems functional.

# Code Enforcement Process

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- Registration with Hopewell Valley Bureau of Fire Safety
- Initial inspection is made for all buildings on the farm
- If violations are found, we allow for 30 days to correct the violation at which time there is a reinspection to verify the violations have been corrected.
  - Depending on the scope and severity of the violation this could be reduced to 15 days.
  - If the violation is deemed an Imminent Hazard 24 hours is given to correct the violation. – They generally are rare but very serious when they occur.



# Code Enforcement Process

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- If more time is needed for correcting violations, the owner shall complete a time of extension request.
  - Generally we will grant one extension without questioning it. However, after the initial extension any requests for further extensions will be based on the scope of the work and contributing factors.
- Once the all violations are corrected a certificate of code compliance is issued. This certificate shall be displayed in a conspicuous area in the building.



# Fire Safety Permits

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- N.J.A.C.5:70-2.7
- Type 1 Permits - \$54.00 each
  - Welding and Cutting (Annual)
  - Above Ground Storage of flammable and combustible liquids under 660 gallons (Annual)
  - Storage of class II or IIIA combustible Liquids aggregate of more than 25 gallons but not more than 660 gallons inside a building and or more than 60 but less than 660 outside a building. (Annual)
  - The Use as a place of public assembly, for a total of not more than 15 days in a calendar year, of a building classified as a commercial farm building under the Uniform Construction Code. (separate permit for each day, can not be more than 15 times a year)
  - The use of a tent or tension membrane 900 square feet but less than 16,800 square feet. (Possible UCC Permit also)

## Guide for self checking of barns and other buildings



Mrs. O'Leary's Cow may have gotten a bad rap but the folktale reminds us fire safety is an important part of farm life. People, animals, and property are in danger when fire breaks out on the farm. Inspect your barn and outbuildings for fire hazards to reduce the risk of tragic loss.

- ✓ Heat lamps and space heaters are kept a safe distance from anything that can burn.
- ✓ Heaters are on a sturdy surface and cannot fall over.
- ✓ Electrical equipment is labeled for agricultural or commercial use.
- ✓ All wiring is free from damage.
- ✓ Extension cords are not used in the barn.
- ✓ Lightbulbs have covers to protect them from dust, moisture, and breakage.
- ✓ Damage is identified quickly and repairs are completed with safety in mind.
- ✓ Dust and cobwebs around electrical outlets and lights are removed.
- ✓ Oily rags are stored in a closed, metal container away from heat.
- ✓ Feed, hay, straw, and flammable liquids are stored away from the main barn.
- ✓ The barn is a smoke-free zone.
- ✓ Exits are clearly marked and pathways are clear.
- ✓ Fire drills are held frequently with everyone who uses the barn.
- ✓ Workers are trained to use fire extinguishers.
- ✓ Everyone in the barn knows personal safety is the first priority if a fire breaks out.
- ✓ Hazard checks take place on a set schedule.

### Required Equipment

The following safety equipment may be required by local building codes and will help protect your barn. Install and maintain:

- ABC-type fire extinguishers near every exit and within 50 feet from any point in the barn.
- Fire alarm system
- Sprinkler system
- Carbon monoxide detection system



Talk with your local fire department to address safety concerns unique to your farm.

Go to [www.nfpa.org/farms](http://www.nfpa.org/farms) to learn more about fire safety on the farm.



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# Questions

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