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

# Wedding Facilities

Assistance Bulletin

# # 102

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[WWW.SNOCO.ORG](http://WWW.SNOCO.ORG)

**Keyword: Assistance Bulletins**

**The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information concerning existing and proposed Wedding Facilities in Snohomish County so that applicants who wish to fully comply with Snohomish County Code understand the requirements for zoning, uses, development regulations, building codes, noise, sewage disposal, water availability and performance standards.**

## **Q: How do you define a wedding facility?**

**A:** As defined in the Snohomish County Code (SCC), Title 30, a wedding facility is “a privately-owned facility or site in certain rural and resource zones where weddings and associated events are conducted in exchange for compensation.”

## **Q: Where are wedding facilities allowed and where can weddings be held?**

**A:** Wedding facilities are permitted on property that are zoned R-5, RRT-10 and A-10. Wedding facilities are not allowed on property that is zoned R-5 which has a Mineral Resources Overlay. SCC 30.22.130(87) states that weddings can be held:

1. On vacant and undeveloped land.
2. On developed land, outside of any permanent structure.
3. Partially outside of any permanent structures and partially inside of one or more permanent structures which were legally existing no less than eight years prior to the date of submittal of a permit application for a wedding facility.
4. Entirely inside one or more permanent structures which were legally existing no less than eight years prior to the date of submittal of a permit application for a wedding facility.

## **Q: What if I want to use a tent?**

**A:** Permits are issued by the Snohomish County Fire Marshal’s Office for tents that are over 400 square feet if it has sides and for open sided tents over 700 square feet. If you are renting a tent, each time the tent is rented, a permit must be issued. If you own a tent, a permit must be issued that is valid for up to 180 days. Tents that are up for more than 180 days are considered buildings and are not allowed. All tents must be labeled as treated per NFPA 701 to make them less prone to flame propagation and must meet requirements for exiting, exit signs and fire extinguisher requirements will need to be met. Snohomish County Fire Marshal’s Office can be contacted at 425-388-3557.

## **Q: Are there any special conditions I should know about?**

**A:** Yes. These special conditions apply to all wedding facilities to ensure health and safety:

1. Show compliance with the noise control provisions of Chapter 10.01 SCC.

**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.**

2. Provide adequate vehicular site distance, safe turning movements, and access to the site consistent with the Engineering Design & Development Standards (EDDS) as defined in Title 13 SCC.
3. Ensure adequate sanitation facilities are provided pursuant to Chapter 30.50 SCC and other applicable Snohomish Health District provisions.
4. Provide adequate on-site parking for the use pursuant to SCC 30.26.035.
5. A certificate of occupancy shall be obtained pursuant to Chapter 30.50 SCC for the use of any existing structure. The certificate of occupancy shall be subject to an annual inspection and renewal to ensure building and fire code compliance.
6. Comply with all other applicable regulations in Title 30 including but not limited to flood hazard regulations in Chapter 30.65 SCC.

**Q: Are there any special conditions if a wedding facility is on land zoned A-10?**

**A:** Yes, there are special conditions that apply to property zoned A-10. Please contact Planning and Development Services to see how they may apply to your property:

- Demonstrate that the use is accessory to the primary use of the site for agricultural purposes and supports, promotes or sustains agricultural operations and production.
- The use must be located, designed, and operated so as to not interfere with, and to support the continuation of, the overall agricultural use of the property and neighboring properties.
- The use and all activities and structures related to the use must be consistent with the size, scale, and intensity of the existing agricultural use of the property and the existing buildings on the site;
- The use and all activities and structures related to the use must be located within the general area of the property that is already developed for buildings and residential uses.
- The use and all activities and structures related to the use shall not convert more than one acre of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.
- Any land disturbing activity required to support the use shall be limited to preserve prime farmland.

## Requirements for Occupancy of a Wedding Facility

**Q: Is a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) required?**

**A:** Yes, a C of O is required for changing the use of the building to a wedding facility. A C of O is not necessary for tents, separate permits are issued by the Fire Marshal's Office.

Wedding Facilities must comply with all building code requirements for A-3 classification (Assembly). A Commercial Building Permit (CBP) is required which shows how the wedding facility will comply with the following:

- A Structural Engineer Analysis of the building(s) for use as an assembly building.
- Buildings are required to meet Accessibility requirements per Chapter 11 of the International Building Code (IBC).
- The building must meet all IBC requirements including, but not limited to allowable area, type of construction, exiting requirements and setbacks to property lines and other buildings.
- If the building is heated, compliance with the WA State Non-Residential code is required.
- Commercial permits are required for any Mechanical and/or Plumbing work.
- A 20 foot wide all weather surface access road to the building is required for Fire Trucks. A turnaround is required for access roads that exceed 150 feet. "Turnaround" means a cul-de-sac having a driving surface with a minimum of 40' outside radii.
- If fire hydrants are not available onsite or there is low fire flow, an alternative method to provide fire protection may be accomplished by providing a commercial monitored fire alarm system. Commercial alarm systems include two phone lines, full smoke and heat detectors, pull stations at exit doors, full audible and visual devices and an acceptance test. Some structures may be required to provide a compliant fire sprinkler system based on, but not limited to size, the number of stories or fire access.

- 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 requirement if a private road is proposed.
- Snohomish Health District clearance is required.

**Q: What if I am not using a building or if the facility is on vacant land?**

**A:** Many of the requirements listed above still apply, including but not limited to noise control, sanitation facilities, access and parking.

**Q: Are there any other requirements I should know about?**

**A:** Yes, depending on your unique facility and location, there may be additional requirements including, but not limited to:

- Land Disturbing Activities review (example: clearing, new driveway, or parking concrete slabs)
- Drainage Review (example: grading or paving)
- Critical Area Review (example: wetlands or clearing)
- Washington State Labor & Industry (425-290-1400); Department of Revenue (360-705-6744); or the Liquor Board (800-647-7796) may have requirements.

**Q: What should I do if I want to open a wedding facility?**

**A:** As a first step, we strongly encourage you to arrange a meeting with PDS and also with the Health District. Applying for a pre-application conference will help you in your decision making. Please contact Planning and Development Services at 425-388-3311 and the Health District at 425-339-5250.

**Q: What does the Snohomish Health District require?**

**A:** It depends on the facility and how many guests you will have. There must be an adequate water supply and sewage disposal such as sanitary sewers or septic facilities. There are different requirements depending if you will have a commercial kitchen or on site catering. All caterers need to have a permit. Contact the Health District at 425-339-5250.

**Q: What if I have other questions?**

**A:** Call (425) 388-3311 or submit questions online at [AskPermitTech@snoco.org](mailto:AskPermitTech@snoco.org). Other helpful web sites:

State of Washington— Starting a Business: <http://bls.dor.wa.gov/startbusiness.aspx>  
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau: <http://www.snohomish.org/>

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