



What are livestock?

Livestock may include cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, pigs, swine, ostriches, rhea, and emu. Small livestock means types of goats and horses commonly referred to as pygmy, dwarf, or miniature, typically weighing less than 150 pounds.¹

Can I keep livestock on my property?

You may keep livestock as the **main activity** on your property or **accessory to a residential use** depending on the size, intensity, and location of your activity.

When livestock are the main activity on the property²

Your Community Plan area and Zone Classification (zoning) determine whether livestock is allowed. Different zone classifications allow for different uses. Uses are organized into use categories, **use types**, and levels (intensities or characteristics of the use). Livestock falls under the Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering Use Type.³

To find out your Community Plan area and zoning, you can:

1. Open Pierce County's [About My Property](#)⁴
 - Enter a parcel number or site address
 - Find your Community Plan area and zoning in the Results Box
2. Use [this form](#) to have Planning and Land Services staff help you
3. Call the [Development Center](#) at (253) 798-3739

Livestock are subject to the following rules:

Permitted agricultural uses and animals in the Use Tables or pursuant to Pierce County Code Title 18A, are subject to the following requirements:

- A fence to enclose pasturelands may be constructed on the property line.
- A fence that permanently keeps livestock out of buffers abutting streams, wetlands, and other critical areas as appropriate is required. You must construct the fence before livestock are introduced to the site.
- Any barn, stable, riding arena, paddock, or similar enclosure shall be set back 45 feet from any adjacent property line.⁵

¹ [Section 18.25.030 – Definitions](#); Pierce County Code Title 18

² **Commercial / Main Activity:** [Section 18A.33.260](#) D - Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering and [Section 18A.15.040](#) i - Animal Enclosures where Animals are Raised for Commercial Use Not Associated with Primary Residence;
Accessory to Residential: [Section 18A.37.060](#) - Animals

³ [Section 18A.33.260](#) D - Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering; Pierce County Code Title 18A

⁴ <https://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/#/AboutMyProperty>

⁵ [Section 18A.15.040](#) i - Animal Enclosures where Animals are Raised for Commercial Use Not Associated with Primary Residence



When livestock are accessory to a residential use⁶

You may keep livestock accessory to your residence. Generally, all zone classifications allow accessory uses. Cages, barns, stables, and coops must be set back 45 feet from any adjacent property line. Your *rural or urban zone classification* and your *lot size* determine the number of livestock you may keep. Refer to the information below to find out the number of livestock you may keep on a site:

Urban Areas

- Lots less than 1 acre: 2 small livestock are allowed.
- Lots from 1 acre to less than 5 acres: 2 small livestock and 2 additional livestock that aren't more than 12 months or more of age are allowed.
- Lots 5 acres or greater: there is no restriction on the number of livestock that are allowed.

Setback requirements on urban lots

Cages, barns, stables, and coops are not allowed in a front yard, and must be set back from adjacent residential property lines (that are not held in common ownership) as follows:

- 10 feet for small livestock
- 45 feet for livestock

Rural Areas

- Lots less than half acre: 2 small livestock are allowed.
- Lots one-half acre or greater: there is no restriction on the number of small livestock and livestock.

Setback requirements on rural lots

Cages, barns, stables, and coops are not allowed in a front yard, and must be set back from adjacent residential property lines (that are not held in common ownership) as follows:

- 10 feet for small livestock
- 45 feet for livestock

⁶ [Section 18A.36.060](#) – Animals, Accessory Development -- Residential; [Pierce County Code Title 18A](#)



How do critical areas affect my livestock?

Keeping livestock is an agricultural activity. New agricultural activities conducted in a critical area may need approval from Pierce County. You are encouraged to contact a Pierce County Biologist at (253) 798-7005.

New agricultural activities are defined as any of the following:

- Any agricultural activity that began after February 2, 1992.
- Use of land for agricultural activities after a previously used wetland, critical fish or wildlife habitat area, or its associated buffer, has remained idle for more than five years, unless the idle land is registered in a federal or state soils conservation program.
- Any actions that will expand the existing agricultural activity beyond the original geographic limits or cause greater impacts to the functions or values of a wetlands, critical fish or wildlife habitat area, or its associated buffer.⁷

For help or more information:

- Submit an online question at [Ask the Development Center](#)
- Ask a question using [Live Chat](#)
- Call the Development Center at (253) 798-3739
- Visit the Development Center, Monday – Friday between 9 am and 2 pm, at 2401 South 35th Street, Tacoma, WA 98409

Please have the parcel number or site address on hand. You can find your parcel number and additional site information by visiting [About My Property](#).⁸

This is a reference tool only, and is not a substitute for codes and zoning regulations. You must ensure that your project meets the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations.

⁷ [Section 18.25.030 – Definitions](#); Pierce County Code Title 18

⁸ <https://palsonline.co.pierce.wa.us/palsonline/#/AboutMyProperty>