

**From:** [Rebecca Messinger](#)  
**To:** [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Sonja Wiser](#)  
**Subject:** FW: International Building Code (IBC), the Washington State Building Code, and the Clark County Code.  
**Date:** Monday, April 1, 2024 11:49:54 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image005.emz](#)  
[image007.png](#)

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Please see the below comments from CCCU. Thanks!



**Rebecca Messinger**  
Clerk to the Council  
COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

564-397-4305



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**From:** Kathleen Otto <[Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2024 11:37 AM  
**To:** Rebecca Messinger <[Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: International Building Code (IBC), the Washington State Building Code, and the Clark County Code.



**Kathleen Otto**  
County Manager

564.397.2458



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**From:** Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <[ccuinc@yahoo.com](mailto:ccuinc@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 28, 2024 3:06 PM  
**To:** Gary Medvigy <[Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov)>; Karen Bowerman

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**Subject:** International Building Code (IBC), the Washington State Building Code, and the Clark County Code.

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Clark County Council  
March 28, 2024  
P.O. Box 5000  
Vancouver, Washington 98666

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Re: International Building Code (IBC), the Washington State Building Code, and the Clark County Code.**

Dear Councilors,

Clark County Citizens United, Inc. continues to research aspects of the Agriculture Building Permit Exemption code and process. There are a number of items of interest that CCCU found, particularly as it relates to the International Building Code (IBC), the Washington State Building Code, and the Clark County Code.

The IBC was not adopted until 2000, so it is a fairly new document. It was updated in 2021, but nothing related to agriculture buildings was added. This standard came from the ICC committee, which was a volunteer group of various states with various code requirements. They decided to consolidate them into, first the Universal Building Code, and then added International, to allow for consistency in other countries. All codes of this type began in approximately 1925, in response to profound events, such as the fire in San Francisco, and started as more of a safety item.

The Washington State Uniform Building Code was adopted in 1997, and in 2003 incorporated the IBC. It is interesting to note in our research, that Washington State did not adopt the IBC, as it relates to Agriculture Buildings. That item is not part of the Washington State code.

Clark County Code in Title 40 and otherwise, claims to have a permit exempt agriculture building code, but they really don't. The code handout and technical information found on the county website, and in other places, shows that these buildings most certainly go through a permitting process, very similar to a residential building permit. The difference is that for agriculture buildings, they have very limited

use. To use the word "exempt" is a misnomer, and clearly these buildings are not exempt from anything that is substantial.

Therefore, almost all of the City of Vancouver downtown buildings are illegal and are illegally being use, if we use the assumption that all buildings must follow code. Most of them were built before codes were in place. The same is likely true for all of the other cities in the county. It is very easy to find the history of the downtown buildings to determine they were once a livery stable, turned into a business, a warehouse, turned into a restaurant, or shop, with living quarters above the business. The majority of those buildings did indeed have the owners living in the building as a residence. In fact, today county planning encourages living quarters above businesses. This exposes a clear double standard, when it comes to rural versus urban.

Folks think its great to have a restaurant located in a shipbuilding warehouse, or an old brick manufacturing building. Yet, when a rural family meets hard times and a newly graduated son can't find housing, because of his age or income, it would be considered illegal for that son to temporarily set up living quarters in their parents shop or even barn. These people do not want to break the law, but it is either that, or put their child out into the streets, or have them live in a tent in the back yard. Where is the justice, fairness and equity to all of this?

On a personal level, our 18 and 19 year old sons, who had jobs, graduated from high school, and could not find an apartment to rent, because of their age and their income to rent ratio. We suggested they find something to rent in Battle Ground They both chimed, "No one wants to rent to 18 year olds". The one son was a mason and the other was going to college and working, wanting to pay his own tuition. Neither qualified for rent. We didn't have a suitable agriculture building for someone to live in, and if we had, we likely would have renovated it for them. Instead, we went to a realtor and asked if a fixer-upper was for sale for cheap, in the area. He directed us to a man who had an old early 1900s home, built long before codes, on a lot in Battle Ground that he wanted to sell. We bought it and the boys moved in. They lived there for a while, until wa later went into partnership, demolished the old house and built an apartment complex, where they lived until they built their own homes. Those units were set up for just that kind of tenant.

Not every household has the luxury of doing what we did, but their children still need housing. Where are they going to start? Clark County has prevented rural and resource landowners from giving land to their children for housing. The county won't let the children live in auxillary housing, independent of their parents home. They punish the rural people for trying to help their children have a roof over their heads and be out of the elements. Yet county government thinks nothing of letting a restaurant use an old run down warehouse to serve hundreds of people, every day. This reeks of bias.

First, this county needs to see what is happening under the hand of staff, then they need to fix it. An agriculture building that is truly being used for that purpose, needs no permit whatsoever, when called exempt. What has happened is that staff tries to

"backdoor" regulate these buildings, using environmental causes. The "feel good", "sky is falling" concept. Clearly, anyone wanting to build a building, any building, does not want to put it in a wetland or a stream, and because they know the land, are not going to do that. But if a critical land staff says they did, then the favor goes to the staff, regardless if staff is correct or not. In order for landowners to refute the claim, it will cost is thousands of dollars. Where is the fairness and equity in these situations?

Clark County Citizens United, Inc. does not know how this county became the "regulatory police" that it is today. Who is it that thinks more and more regulation is good for the people? All of you likely campaigned on and subscribe to less government intrusion, why then, are you burdenng the rural and resource people with just that? You were not voted in to create new laws, but rather to reduce laws. While our law enforcement agents suffer an inability to perform their duties, rural people are now considered the criminals who need to be found, punished, and regulated with more laws.

With all due respect, is there not a way to turn this ship around, before it's too late? Do we need more homeless people on the streets for this to hit home? Is the county going to force the rural children onto the streets, to be taken up with drugs and violence, for all of this to matter? Why doesn't it matter that urban people are planned for but there is no mention of rural people. Does this council think we don't exist, except at election time? Something is very wrong here, and it is open for all to see. We need your help, and not your regulations.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Exec. Secretary

Clark County Citizens United, Inc.  
P.O.Box 2188  
Battle Ground, Washington 98604

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<https://www.dictionary.com > browse > exempt>

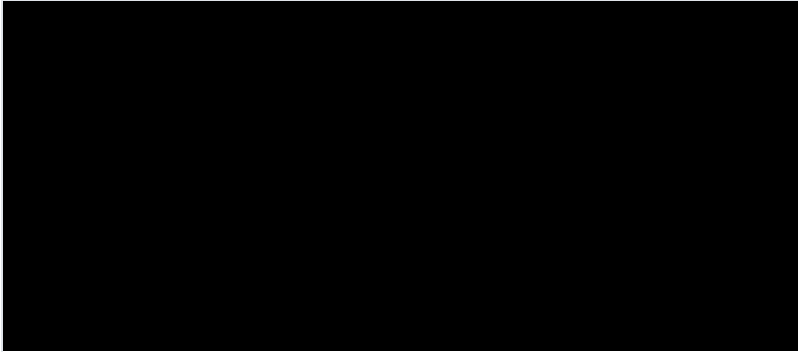
[EXEMPT Definition & Usage Examples | Dictionary.com](#)

**Exempt** means to free from an obligation or liability, or to be released from a particular rule or condition. It can be used as a verb, an adjective, or a noun. See synonyms, origin, and usage examples of **exempt**

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March 31, 2021 Clark County Council Work Session: Permit-Exempt Agricultural Buildings



March 31, 2021 Clark County Council Work  
Session: Permit-Exempt Agricult...

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**EVOLUTION OF CODES IN THE USA** Jim Rossberg\* & Roberto T. Leon\*\* \*  
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[https://www.nehrp.gov/pdf/UJNR\\_2013\\_Rossberg\\_Manuscript.pdf](https://www.nehrp.gov/pdf/UJNR_2013_Rossberg_Manuscript.pdf)

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## **INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE**

[https://duckduckgo.com/?  
q=when+was+the+IBC+international+building+code+established%3F&ia=web](https://duckduckgo.com/?q=when+was+the+IBC+international+building+code+established%3F&ia=web)

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## **WASHINGTON STATE BUILDING CODE**

[https://up.codes/viewer/washington/wa-building-code-2021/chapter/35/referenced-  
standards#35](https://up.codes/viewer/washington/wa-building-code-2021/chapter/35/referenced-standards#35)

## **WAC**

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=51-50>

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## **CLARK COUNTY BUILDING CODE**

<https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/2022-03/ag-bldg.pdf>

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**BRENT DAVIS LETTER**

[https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/2021-04/033121\\_WS\\_PermitExAgBuilding-Packet.pdf](https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/2021-04/033121_WS_PermitExAgBuilding-Packet.pdf)

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