



# **FIRE PREVENTION POLICY 211 GROUP U OCCUPANCY FIRE SPRINKLER REQUIREMENTS**

## **CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION**

**1.1 Purpose.** To establish criteria under which automatic fire sprinklers are not required in Group U occupancies in accordance with the 2022 Ventura County Fire Code (VCFC) Section 903.2.

**1.2 Scope.** This policy shall only apply to Group U occupancies without mixed-uses or occupiable space. Buildings containing mixed-uses or occupiable space shall comply with the code requirements based on the Non-Group U occupancy.

**1.3 Applicability.** This policy shall only apply to structures classified as a Group U occupancy and located within the jurisdiction of the Ventura County Fire Department.

**1.4 Authority.** Authority for this policy is granted under Section 13861 of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 104 of the 2022 Ventura County Fire Code.

**1.5 Responsibility.** It is the responsibility of all fire prevention personnel and anyone constructing a Group U occupancy to read and be familiar with this policy.

### **1.6 Definitions.**

**1.6.1 Accessory Structure.** Buildings and structures located on the same parcel as a principal building, and which the use is customarily accessory and incidental to the principal building.

**1.6.2 Agricultural Building.** A structure designed and constructed to house farm implements, hay, grain, poultry, livestock, or other horticultural products. This structure shall not be a place of human habitation, or a place of employment where agricultural products are processed, treated, or packaged, nor shall it be a place used by the public.

**1.6.3 Group U Occupancy.** Buildings and structures of an accessory character and miscellaneous structures not classified in any specific occupancy. Group U occupancies shall include, but not be limited to, agricultural buildings, barns, carports, greenhouses, nurseries, livestock shelters, private garages, sheds, pole barns and stables.

**1.6.4 Mixed-Use Occupancy.** Buildings containing two or more distinct occupancy classifications as determined by the California Building Code (CBC).

**1.6.5 Occupiable Space.** A room or enclosed area, whether conditioned or unconditioned, designed for human occupancy in which individuals congregate for amusement, dining, entertainment, hobbies, employment, labor, or similar purposes.

## CHAPTER 2 POLICY

**2.0 General.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required in Group U occupancies in accordance with this section.

**2.1 Residential Accessory Structures.** Structures classified as a Group U occupancy that are accessory to a Group R-3 residential dwelling are not required to have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed when all the following are met:

1. Located on the same lot as the Group R-3 occupancy that it is accessory to.
2. Less than or equal to 400 square feet of gross floor area.
3. Contains no *mixed-use*, *occupiable space*, or plumbing fixtures.
4. Separated from other structures in accordance with the California Building Code.

**2.1.1 Fire Sprinkler Demand.** For residential *accessory structures*, the automatic fire sprinkler demand shall be based on NFPA 13D requirements.

**2.2 Agricultural Buildings.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required in Group U occupancies used for agricultural purposes when all the following are met:

1. Building shall be accessory to an agricultural operation.
2. Less than or equal to 12,000 square feet of gross floor area.
3. Contains no *mixed-use* (An office/workspace 120 square feet or less is allowed), no public access, or plumbing fixtures.
4. No processing, treating, or packaging of agricultural products.
5. Separated from other structures in accordance with the California Building Code.

**2.2.1 Fire Sprinkler Demand.** For *agricultural buildings*, the automatic fire sprinkler demand shall be based on NFPA 13 requirements, density of Ordinary Hazard Group II with a minimum 4-head sprinkler design. Water storage shall be designed for a minimum volume capacity per NFPA 1142 or a 60-minute fire sprinkler demand with 250 GPM flowing, whichever is greater.

**2.3 Greenhouses.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required in Group U occupancies used as greenhouses when all the following are met:

1. Contains growing areas only.
2. Contains no *mixed-use*, no public access, or plumbing fixtures.
3. Total gross floor area of the building does not exceed the amount allowed under Section 506.2 of the California Building Code.
4. Separated from other structures in accordance with the California Building Code.

**2.4 Pole Barns, Covered Arenas, and Shade Structures.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required in pole barns, covered arenas, and shade structures when all the following are met:

1. Less than or equal to 12,000 square feet of gross floor area.
2. Constructed of non-combustible materials only.
3. Open on all sides.
4. No combustible material shall be allowed underneath.
5. Not used for employee working spaces or public attendance/events.
6. Separated from other structures in accordance with the California Building Code.

**2.5 Hay Covers.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required in hay covers when all the following are met:

1. Open on all sides.
2. Structure is provided with 60-foot side yard setback on all sides.

**2.6 Trash Enclosures.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required in trash enclosures when all the following are met:

1. Constructed of non-combustible materials (including the doors).
2. Less than or equal to 180 square feet of gross floor area.
3. The enclosure is a stand-alone building.
4. The enclosure is separated a minimum of 20 feet from adjacent buildings and 10 feet away from property lines.

5. The enclosure is used exclusively for waste garbage or recyclables contained within approved trash containers. No outdoor storage is permitted within the enclosure.

**2.7 Communications and Utility Structures.** An automatic fire sprinkler system shall not be required for structures housing accessory equipment that is part of a communication or utility system when all the following are met:

1. Less than or equal to 500 square feet of gross floor area.
2. The structure is not intended to be occupied except for servicing and maintaining the equipment within the structure.