

## Shop Size

An existing outbuilding, such as a barn or storage shed, attached or detached garage, or a basement can work for small equipment. With bigger equipment, you'll typically need a large, dedicated building with doors and ceilings that allow several feet of clearance. Even with smaller tractors, a garage-style roll-up door is a huge help in getting equipment in and out.

## Electrical

Whether you're outfitting an attached or detached shop, it's best to have a dedicated circuit box, and be sure to check local building codes. You'll need a mixture of 240- and 120-volt outlets. Also, think about equipment that will require dedicated outlets.

Always go beyond the capacity you think is needed, as you'll most likely add equipment to your shop over time. A system-wide surge protector at the circuit box will protect your entire shop. For further protection, be sure to use power strips with built-in surge protectors.

## Lighting

Try to gain as much natural light as possible in your shop. Windows on the south-facing side of a shop will give you the most daylight throughout the day and year. Install large overhead lights, such as fluorescent tube fixtures, for overall ambient light.

Also, consider overhead task lighting—either hard-wired fixtures or brooder-style shop lights that can easily be repositioned and attached by their spring clips. Compact fluorescent bulbs actually work nicely, especially when using 100-watt daylight bulbs.

## HVAC

In an effort to save money, you may be tempted to dispense with heating and cooling systems for your shop. But consider this: Do you work better (and are you more likely to work) if you're comfortable than if you're not? That cost of HVAC may be paid for by your ability to work longer hours and more efficiently.

**"In winter, we spend about 75% of our time in the shop doing whatever needs to be done,"** says Boone. He adds that up to 80% of what they need fabricated is done in their own shop. Besides a heating and cooling system, proper insulation is the best way to keep your shop comfortable. Also, check for gaps and cracks, and seal them with spray foam, back rod or caulk as needed. Lastly, consider floor coverings. Many ergonomic options are available that are easy to install, provide basic comfort and add insulation.

## Storage and Workspace

Most shops, large and small, will need space for storage of spare parts and supplies for your equipment, as well as raw materials and tools. Solid steel or dimensional-lumber shelving lining the walls and positioned away from main thoroughfares are a must.

Another recommendation from Boone is lockable storage. "We have a separate room for high-dollar tools that we put under lock and key," he says. "We also keep our parts inventory secure."

Put as many workbenches and tool workstations on casters as possible, so they can be positioned as needed for working, and for creating open spaces. Boone's shop has dedicated workspace as well, including a tire-changing station.

## Safety

Fire extinguishers and first aid kits come to mind initially when talking about shop safety, but don't forget about safety gear, such as eye and hearing protection, as well as welding helmets, gloves, aprons, etc. Look through farm equipment and commercial equipment catalogs for other safety equipment, such as eye-wash stations. Think this through thoroughly and don't skimp. Safety is priceless.

## Office Space

The biggest challenge to maintaining an office (and keeping office equipment running properly) is the dust and debris native to workshops. The absolute best option is to create a defined space by walling off a small area.

Ideally, you want either a well-sealed door or an entry that does not face the main work area of your shop. Computer and phone equipment, unless you purchase products specifically designed to withstand harsh elements, needs to be protected and covered, particularly at night or during extended periods of time when not in use. Dust and other particulates will settle over—and in—everything. **FL**

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A workbench is a shop necessity. There are many prefab options available, but if you'd like to make your own, see the instructions we've provided for an all-purpose workbench at [go.myFarmLife.com/settingupshop](http://go.myFarmLife.com/settingupshop). You'll find a detailed, printable PDF download showing every cut and every measurement.