

Backyard Chickens

The care and keeping of chickens requires time and commitment. Before you start, know the City's requirements. Chickens require daily care, specific food, shelter and sanitation to ensure they stay healthy and happy for continued egg production. Be aware of ALL the rules before securing your permit and purchasing your chickens. For reference, the Ordinance is an addition to Chapter 6, Section 6-9 Limited Keeping of Chickens.

YES, A PERMIT IS REQUIRED

The ordinance requires that the owner of the chickens shall live in the dwelling on the property and the property owner is in receipt of the permit. The permit is valid through the end of the calendar year 12/31/2023 and must be renewed at the beginning of each calendar year.

- No more than four (4) female chickens;
- No roosters;
- No slaughtering/processing on the property

CHICKENS SHALL BE KEPT SEPARATE...

They are to be kept in a separate enclosed accessory building and fenced outdoor containment area:

THE COOP...

- The "coop" shall be less than 40 square feet in size, no less than 12 inches off the ground, and not in excess of 6 feet in height;
- Be fully enclosed;
- Shall comply with setbacks and other standards for accessory buildings—outside any drainage and utility easements and a minimum of 10 feet from any other structure;
- Located in the rear yard only, and at least 25 feet from adjacent habital structures on neighboring properties; and
- Chickens must remain in the coop from sunset to sunrise each day.

THE FENCE...

- Must contain the coop;
- Must have rot resistant wood around the base of the perimeter to prevent burrowing of predators;
- Must be screened from view from all neighboring properties and right-of-ways year around;
- Shall not exceed 20 square feet per bird; and
- Cannot exceed 6 feet in height and be fully enclosed.

ABOUT THE WASTE...

Owners should be aware that birds can carry harmful germs that make people sick. Take precautions when handling poultry litter to avoid potential health risks. Chicken waste also carries many pathogens that can pollute public waters. The coop and surrounding area must be cleaned frequently and in a manner that will prevent the discharge of pollutants into stormwater runoff.

Feces, waste, and discarded feed shall be regularly collected and only stored temporarily on site in a leak-proof container with a tight-fitting cover to prevent nuisance odors and the attraction of vermin. Such waste shall not be composted on site, but can be composted at the City of Buffalo composting facility or disposed of in a separate, tightly secured bag in the trash.

Regarding the City's compost facility—Waste must be received in compostable bags. There is no "special" place for this waste, it simply gets added to the leaf or grass clippings piles and will naturally compost.

Proper disposal and/or composting will minimize fly-breeding and wind induced pollutants from stored manure.

08/29/2023

More Questions? Contact Us!

permits@ci.buffalo.mn.us



THE FIRE CHIEF would like you to be aware of the following Common Fire Hazards where chickens are concerned:

- **Heat Lamps** Chickens can get rowdy and knock lamps down, clamps can become loose, and lamps can be placed too close to flammable objects such as bedding for your flock. **For this reason, the fire chief doesn't recommend heat lamps.**
- **Extension Cords** The unsafe use of extension cords can be very dangerous. Overloading a cord or leaving cords exposed to the elements especially at connection points is a recipe for disaster. Extension cords are to be used **temporarily** according to the fire chief.
- **Flammable Bedding** Straw and/or pine shavings are both excellent options for bedding but they are highly flammable. It is essential to manage them responsibly to minimize the hazard.
- **Heated Waterers** These are excellent tools during the winter months and save time and energy breaking ice on frigid mornings. Any time electricity is a factor, it can also be a fire hazard, especially outdoors.

Heat Lamp Safety

Chicks need a heat source until 6-10 weeks of age depending on the surrounding temperatures where they live. A common mistake made by owners is putting a heat lamp in the coop during the winter to keep the chickens warmer or boost light hours for egg production.

Typically, hens do not need extra warmth during the winter, unless you live in a particularly cold climate (frequently below 0 degrees F). There are safer heating options discussed later. If you are providing a heat light for your hens to reach the recommended hours of light exposure for egg production, there are safer lights that can be purchased and put on a timer so light does not burn 24/7.

If you use a heat lamp for your chicks, secure it and then double secure it! You can use something like a paracord to double secure your light. It's a good idea to suspend your heat lamp outside of the brooder with wire to cover over the brooder so that when the brooder is heated, chicks cannot bump the light around.

Rot-resistant wood or burying hardware cloth (6-12" deep) around the base of the perimeter of the coop and fence are ideal to hinder vermin and predators from burrowing and entering the coop/run.

Heat Lamp Alternatives

Heating plates and infrared radiant heaters are a much safer alternative to heat lamps. While heat plates and infrared heaters may initially be more expensive than heat lamps, they are built to last. An additional bonus is you won't have bulbs to replace. Most heat plates come with adjustable legs so that you can raise the plate as your chicks grow. Heat plates are more soothing to chicks as they simulate the warmth of a mother hen without the bright light. You can find coop-sized infrared radiant heaters at www.sweeterheater.com

If you decide to "wire" your coop with electricity... we encourage you to hire a licensed electrician as the wiring must meet National Electric Code. Just a reminder: you would secure that permit through the State of MN Dept. of Labor & Industry.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

U of MN Extension

www.extension.umn.edu

CDC Guidance www.cdc.gov

MN Institute for Sustainable Resources www.misa.umn.edu

mypetchicken.com

backyardchickens.com

