

Feed and Water

A chicken will only grow and perform to the extent to which it receives proper nutrition. Feed and water must be kept as fresh as possible and should be accessible within the coop. Ensure that feed does not become stale or moldy. Shallow waterers are also necessary to help prevent chicks and small hens from drowning. Vegetable scraps, bread, & bugs are also great treats for your chickens and are an alternative to throwing away food scraps. You may want to research which feed best meets all the requirements for your breed of chickens, especially if you are relying on them to be egg layers, meat products, or shown as 4-H exhibits. Also, make sure to have a safe and effective way to keep water from freezing in the winter.



Cleaning & Maintenance

Chicken Coops must be kept neat and sanitary at all times. This isn't just a good idea, it's a condition of your permit to keep chickens in the city. Coop cleaning should be done regularly and waste should be disposed of properly in the garbage or in an effective composter. Chicken manure is a great fertilizer for flower beds and gardens but needs to be composted first with other yard waste, like leaves and lawn clippings. Composting will create an environment that kills harmful bacteria in the manure and reduces the nitrogen

content to a more plant friendly level. Keeping a clean coop is not just important for your chickens, but also for the health of your family. Be aware that anyone handling chickens, eggs, and manure are at risk for being exposed to Salmonella bacteria which is naturally found in chickens, but can cause disease in humans. Teaching children proper handling and cleaning techniques is very important. A simple strategy of always washing hands and checking clothes and shoes after being in the coop will go a long way in preventing illness.

Rambler or Victorian?

The design and function of your coop is up to you, but whatever you construct, be courteous of neighbors, and be very cautious of fire hazards. Also, if your coop is an expansion of an outbuilding or is attached to your residence you may need to contact the City Planning Dept.

For permit applications to keep chickens in the City of Livingston contact:

Park City-County Health Department
414 E. Callender Street
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-4145 ext. 2



URBAN CHICKENS

A Guide to Keeping Chickens in the City



Why Chickens?

Chickens, once just found on farms and ranches are now in suburban subdivisions and in many neighborhoods inside city limits. There are many reasons people have for raising chickens, such as having fresh eggs, locally resourced meat, for showing at exhibition, as well as for just the enjoyment of watching their interesting behavior. Raising chickens has also become a popular and successful way for families to introduce children to many of life's important lessons while they discover the joy and challenges of laboring and caring for animals.

This brochure is to help families that want to raise healthy chickens in their city backyards and abide by city and public health codes.

Hens Only Club



Since your chickens will be within city limits and not on a farm or ranch, you are limited to having a maximum of 6 chickens and no roosters will be permitted. Roosters would quickly become a nuisance for your neighbors and may also add to your flock. If any of your chicks turns out to be a rooster, find them a new home or have them for dinner, but don't think about releasing them to run loose anywhere in the city or you could be fined or even charged with a misdemeanor. If you need assistance with a rooster relocation, contact the Park County Sanitarian's Office.

The Coop

Providing a covered, predator-proof coop that is well ventilated and adequately sized will make any chicken happy. Generally, allow for 2-3 ft² per adult hen when building the coop. Plan an enclosed area that provides warmth and an area to stay dry, but still allow in plenty of natural light. Air quality is essential, so make sure that no odors, moisture, or drafts develop. Flooring within the coop ought to be easily cleanable with an addition of cover like straw, hay, or pine shavings. Give your chickens a place to



roost. Make sure that roosts are the right thickness so your chickens can comfortably perch, and place roosts at a height of approximately 18 inches off the floor. Insulating your coop is especially important in our climate of cold winters and hot summers. You may need to rely on a heat lamp if you have chicks, but ensure that the lamp, electrical cords, and outlets do not become a fire hazard.

Nesting Boxes

Another important feature of the coop, if you hope to get any eggs, is the nest. A 12" by 12" box elevated at least 2 ft. off the ground with a liner of sawdust or wood shavings is all you need. Hens take turns using the nests so you will just need a couple. Laying hens are most productive

when they have 14-16 hours of light per day; this can be natural or artificial. Placement of the boxes should allow easy access for frequent cleaning and gathering of eggs, but still be secure from predators. Eggs should be collected twice a day, cleaned, and refrigerated promptly.



Outdoor Area

Your chickens will naturally want to explore your yard and scratch at the ground hoping to find bugs and worms. You should plan ahead and build a secure pen area. Sturdy woven wire and some fence posts are as fancy as you need to get. The fence could be any size or shape, but must be covered, unless you're an expert at clipping wings. The outdoor area also offers a safe place for your chickens to go while you're cleaning up the coop, and if your backyard is big enough, your pen area could be moved periodically giving your birds a fresh area to scratch. You may find that purchasing a pre-constructed pen is better suited to your yard. This picture shows a pen that is designed for 4 – 8 chickens and is light



enough to be moved around the backyard by two people.