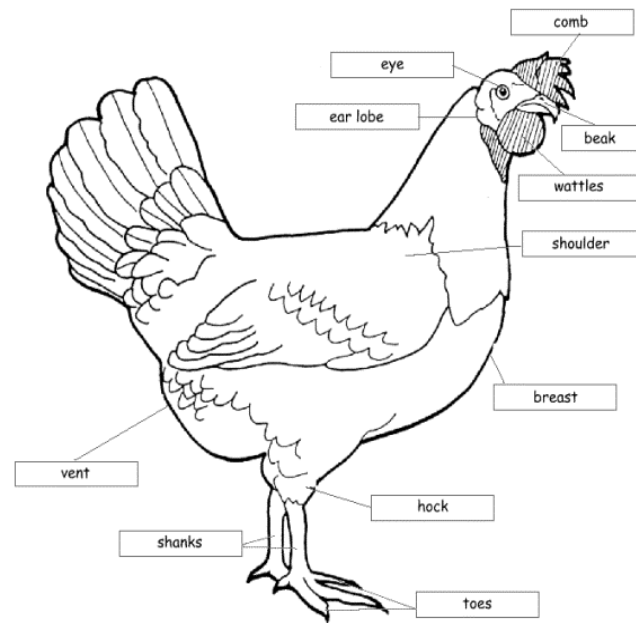


A Guide to the Rules and Regulations
+
Best Practices for Keeping Backyard Hens



Town of Garner
Planning Department
(919) 773-4449
900 Seventh Avenue
Garner, NC 27529

Backyard Hens Rules and Regulations

SEC. 3-6.

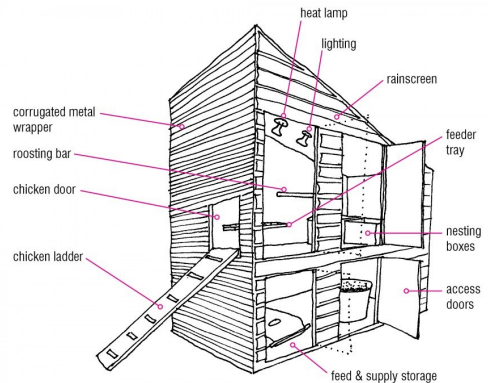
The phrase backyard hens is specifically referring to female chickens

BACKYARD HENS

- a) **Legal Parameters**—It is unlawful to keep backyard hens (i) without an approved permit, (ii) in violation of the terms of this ordinance and a duly issued permit, or (iii) after a permit has been revoked.
- b) **Backyard Hen Permit**—A backyard hen permit may be issued, regardless of zoning, on lots that contain single-family, duplex, triplex, quadraplex, or townhome dwelling units, excluding apartment complexes and condominiums.
- c) **Number Permitted**—No more than eight (8) hens are allowed per lot regardless of size and number of dwelling units except in those areas zoned for agricultural uses. It shall be unlawful to keep or maintain any rooster.
- Uses**— All aspects of the keeping of hens, including keeping chicks, eggs, manure, compost and other related attributes and activities, must be only personal and noncommercial.
- d) **Coop and Run Standards**
- 1) A coop is a roofed-housing structure where hens are kept. The coop has an indoor area where chickens sleep, perch, nest and lay eggs. The coop also provides shelter from weather and predators.
 - 2) A run is an enclosed pen located outside of the coop structure.
 - 3) An enclosed run is completely bounded on all sides, including overhead, by a fence, cage, or wire.
 - 4) An open run is bounded on all sides by a fence, cage, or wire but is open overhead.
 - 5) A coop, combination coop and run of sufficient size should be provided for the hens to include a minimum coop area of four (4) square feet per chicken if a run is provided. A minimum of ten (10) square feet coop area is required if no run is provided or chickens are to be contained in the coop.

Coop and Run Standards Cont.

- 6) Chickens shall be secured in the chicken coop during non-daylight hours. During daylight hours, chickens may be located in the run if provided. The coop and run shall be properly designed and constructed to provide adequate security from rodents, wild birds, and predators and provide sufficient ventilation
 - 7) The maximum area for all coop and run structures is 300 square feet.
 - 8) The maximum height for a coop and run is seven (7) feet measured from the ground to the top of the structure.
 - 9) The minimum height for an open run is four (4) feet.
- f) **Location-**
- 1) All hens, coop structures and runs must be located in the rear yard.
 - 2) Coop structures and runs must be located at least 10 feet from any rear or interior side lot line. For corner lots the corner-side yard setbacks shall be the same as the principal building.



Pictures Courtesy of w/c studio: Crème de la Coop

For more information: www.wc-studio.com

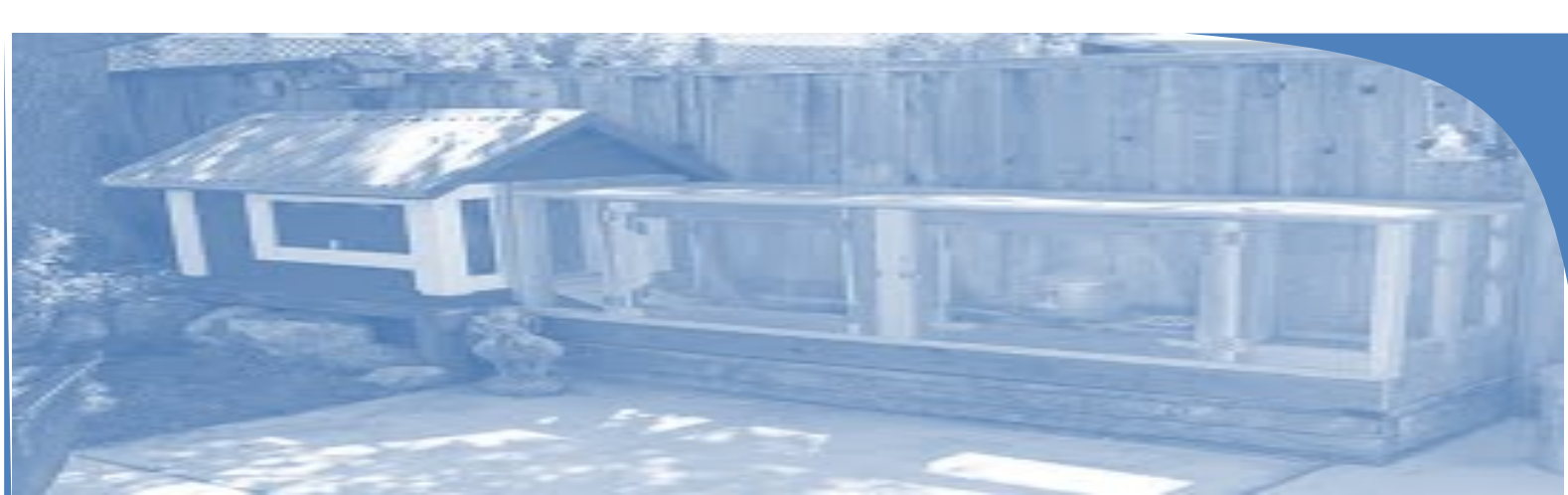
- g) **Maintenance**—All areas within the coop and run shall be kept in a neat and sanitary condition, including removal of droppings, uneaten feed, feather and other waste, in order to preclude odors and other nuisance violations
- h) **Slaughter**

 - 1) On-premise slaughter shall be prohibited as provided for under section 3-11 Town Code.
 - 2) Dead hens shall be removed according to the provisions of Section 3-4 of the Town Code

- i) **Enforcement**—See Section 3-6.



Roosters—3-6(C) - It shall be unlawful to maintain any rooster.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a permit required to have backyard hens in Garner?



Yes- A Backyard Hen Permit is required prior to having chickens or placing a coop. A completed application form accompanied with a plot plan showing the location of the coop and/or run is required.

What is the cost for a Backyard Hens Permit?



\$25 application fee submitted at the time of application.

Garner allows me to have chickens, but my Homeowners Association (HOA) does not, which rules do I follow?



Homeowner associations have private authority to regulate the structures and uses permitted within a neighborhood. Whether or not Garner permits them, if your HOA prohibits chickens, you are not allowed to have them. Always check with your HOA prior to making any home improvements or keeping chickens.

Can my chickens roam free in my yard?



No. chickens must be secured in the coop and/or run. Chickens must be secured in the coop during non-daylight hours.

Can I sell my eggs, chickens, manure, compost, chicks, or other chicken products?



No. All activities related to the keeping of backyard hens are for personal use of the residents only and may not be sold.

Can I keep roosters or other domestic fowl?



It is unlawful to keep any domestic fowl or roosters, except for backyard hens as outlined in this document and Section 3-6 of the Garner Town Code.

What do I do when a chicken dies?



Deceased chickens should be removed immediately and disposed of per the Town Code. On-premise slaughter is prohibited per the Town Code.

My neighbor has chickens, but I don't think they have a permit, who should I call?



To report the keeping of chickens without a permit you should contact the Planning Department at (919) 773-4449.

Where do I get more information about the proper care and best practices for keeping backyard hens?



We have several links and information on the Town's website (www.garnernc.gov/departments/planning). You can reference the back panel of this handout for tips to keeping chickens or reference any of the materials below.

Best Practices Resources

- [Chickens in Five Minutes a Day](#) (Murray McMurray Hatchery)
- [Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens](#) (Gail Damerow)
- www.petchicken.com
- www.backyardchickens.com
- ["Chickens in Your Backyard: A Beginners Guide"](#) (Rick Luttmann)



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Chicken care essentials

Once hens have been adopted, proper care and housing are vital. In addition to regular daily attention, feed and clean water, and securing them in their shelter at night, the following care principles are also essential:

- **Chickens are heat- and cold-sensitive.** Like dogs and cats, chickens must have shelter to protect them from temperature extremes. Hens and roosters with large single combs are prone to frostbite in cooler climates, and all chickens need shade during periods of heat. It is important that the shelter is both insulated and well-ventilated. Straw bedding will add comfort and warmth to a shelter's floor space, but it should be replaced regularly with new, clean straw.
- **Predator protection is vital.** Chickens need absolutely secure shelter at night or they can easily fall prey to urban wildlife like raccoons and opossums. Dogs may also attack chickens. They must be completely enclosed in a safe henhouse, with four solid walls and a sturdy roof, every night. Predators can also dig under fences and walls, so this should be considered when planning the chickens' home. During the day, chickens should be kept in a fully-fenced enclosure or yard with proper protection from aerial day-time predators, neighborhood dogs and, in the case of small bantam hens, free-roaming cats.
- **Hens need an appropriate environment.** Hens need an enclosed nesting space (a "nestbox") in which to lay their eggs. They also need an elevated roost on which to perch at night; this is where they prefer to sleep. Hens enjoy loose substrate such as dirt, sand, or peat for dustbathing, and they should also have free access to grass and other vegetation to engage in natural pecking, scratching, and foraging behaviors. Often-used areas may become denuded, and it is important to provide plenty of space, giving them as much room as possible to express natural behavior outdoors. Hen houses, coops, and runs must be kept very clean at all times, for the health of the chickens and the food safety of the eggs.
- **Chickens will require veterinary care.** While it may be tempting to think of a backyard flock as a source of inexpensive eggs, hens, like cats and dogs, require periodic veterinary care. Chickens can become ill or get injured, and vet exams and treatment can easily cost over \$100 per visit. These expenses should be carefully considered before the decision is made to keep backyard chickens. Not all avian veterinarians are experienced with chickens, so be sure to locate a trusted poultry vet in your area ahead of time.
- **Vacation help is a must.** Since chickens require daily care, a designated caretaker must be arranged for vacations and other periods away from the house. Someone must be present to feed and water the hens and to put them inside their secure shelter every evening.
- **Chicken nutrition is important.** It is a common misperception that chickens can be fed on corn kernels or kitchen scraps alone. Chickens need a balanced diet, like one of the commercially available feeds that have been carefully formulated by nutritionists specifically for adult hens. The protein requirements of chickens change with the birds' age, so it's important to feed an age-appropriate diet. Laying hens also need access to a supplemental source of course calcium, such as limestone (available at livestock supply stores) if their feed ration does not already contain enough. In addition to calcium, hard insoluble granite grit should be fed, free choice, 2 or 3 days per month. Chickens enjoy fresh fruits, grains, and vegetables in addition to their regular feed, but certain plants can be toxic. Avoid raw green potato peels, dried or undercooked beans, and avocados. Chickens should receive fresh feed and water daily—discard any feed that is old, moldy, or stale. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System has published a detailed page on the [feeding requirements](#) of backyard chicken flocks throughout their lives.
- **Prevent disease** Chickens can carry and become ill from a variety of infectious diseases. It is important to keep the hens' environment clean with regular manure removal, and by washing the feed and water containers. You should also avoid mixing birds from different flocks. (Temporarily quarantine any new birds for two weeks and watch them closely for signs of illness or parasites before introducing them into an already established group.) Don't share equipment with neighbors (each chicken house should have dedicated tools, wheelbarrows, buckets, etc.), because pathogenic organisms can travel on these items.
- **Give your birds plenty of attention** If you spend time watching and interacting with your chickens, you will find that each one has a unique personality, and they are friendly and curious when treated kindly. They display interesting behavior patterns such as dustbathing and foraging, and their complex social interactions are entertaining to observe. Enjoy their antics, and remember that your hens are completely dependent on you for responsible, committed care for their entire lives

*From the Humane Society of the United States website: http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/chickens/tips/adopting_chickens.html