



For Immediate Release
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Chicken Permits Accepted

Harrisonburg, Va. – The city of Harrisonburg has recently revised an ordinance to allow more citizens to keep backyard chickens.

In mid-June, Harrisonburg City Council amended Section 15-2-24 of the City Code and residents who meet certain requirements may apply for a permit to keep chickens within the city limits.

Chickens are permitted at single family dwellings but not townhouses, duplexes, apartments, or mobile homes. To help protect the commercial poultry industry in the city, backyard chickens will not be permitted on any parcel of land that is within 500 feet from any poultry processing plant, poultry hatchery, poultry feed mill, poultry truck lot, poultry farm, or from property where facilities are operated by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

City residents keeping chickens must abide by the following terms and conditions:

- No more than four chicken hens shall be allowed for each single family dwelling. Chickens allowed under this section shall only be raised for domestic purposes and no commercial use such as selling eggs or selling chickens for meat shall be allowed.
- Roosters are not permitted in the city.
- There shall be no outside slaughtering of birds.
- Chicken hens must be kept at all times in an enclosed and covered, secure, movable or stationary pen that contains at a minimum four square feet per bird.
- Pens shall be located in the rear yard and situated at least five feet from all property lines. In addition, pens shall be located at least 20 feet from streams, tributaries, ditches, swales, stormwater management facilities, drop-inlets, or other storm drainage areas to prevent fecal matter from entering any city storm drainage system or stream.
- Pens must be kept in a neat and sanitary condition at all times and must be cleaned on a regular basis.

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- All feed for the chickens shall be kept in a secure container or location to prevent the attraction of rodents and other animals.
- Chicken litter and waste shall not be deposited in any trash container that is collected by any public or private waste collector. The litter and waste shall be disposed of by composting on site, collected by a bona fide poultry litter service, or bagged and taken to the county landfill.
- Any dead bird shall not be deposited in any trash container that is collected by any public or private waste collector but shall be either composted, buried, or taken to the county landfill. All unexplained bird deaths shall be reported to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services prior to composting, burial, or transport to the landfill.

To begin this process, city residents must visit <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals-premises-registration.shtml> for a premises registration. Once that is complete, an application will need to be submitted to the Department of Planning and Community Development. There is a \$25 application fee and a sketch showing the area where the chickens will be housed, proper setbacks, dimensions, and locations of the pens is required. If approved, all permits are valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

The city also recommends residents interested in applying for this permit to speak with their neighbors. Ensure your surrounding neighbors are educated on this process and refer them to the city's website for additional information.

To review the complete ordinance and fill out an application, visit www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/chicken-permit. All questions can be directed to the Department of Planning and Community Development at 540-432-7700 or by visiting them on the second floor of City Hall.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 50,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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