

Urban Hen Keeping Guidelines

Urban Hen Keeping is managed under the [Non-domestic Animal Bylaw](#). These guidelines will help ensure that urban hen keeping is a positive addition to the community by providing best practices and responsible regulations to minimize impact on surrounding neighbors and ensure the health and well being of the hens being kept.

FLOCK SIZE

- Hens are social animals and keepers must have a minimum of two hens (maximum of six).
- No roosters simply because they are noisy.
- Hens must be a minimum of 16 weeks old when acquired so the keeper can determine the sex of the bird and avoid selecting a rooster.

COOP AND RUN SIZE

One coop and one run per property is permitted.

The coop* must:

- be a minimum of 0.37 square metres per hen
- contain a minimum of one nest box for every three hens
- provide 0.2 – 0.3 metres of roost space per hen
- provide warmth through heat lamps, wall insulation, poly sheeting, heat mats or other means
- be constructed to prevent rodents and other nuisance animals from accessing the coop

The run must:

- be a minimum of 0.93 square metres per hen

*If you plan on hardwiring your coop to provide power for lights, heating, etc. you need to apply for an [electrical permit](#).

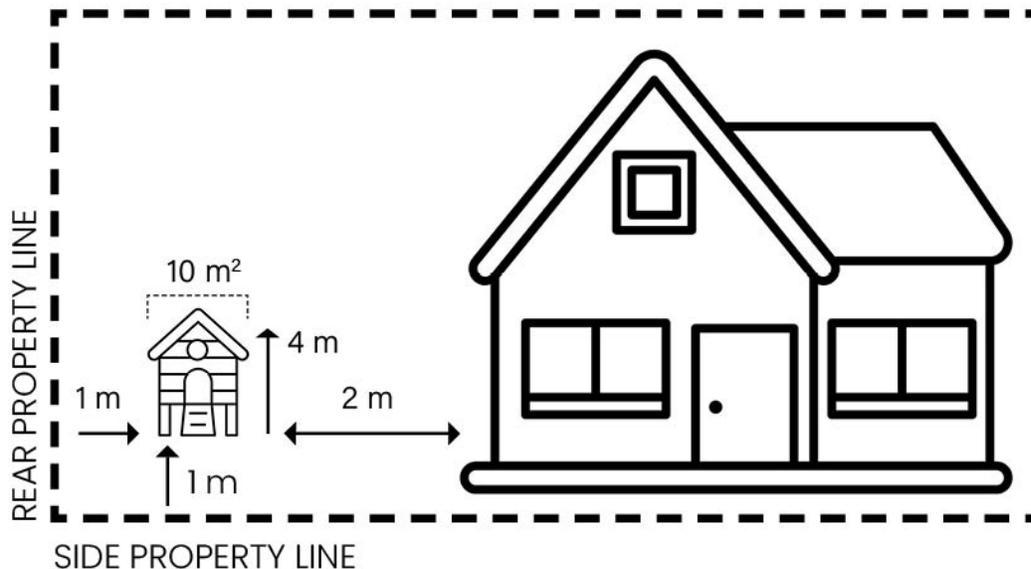
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COOP LOCATION

Below are general guidelines on where a coop may be placed on your property. Coops are considered an Accessory Development and regulated under the Town's [Land Use Bylaw](#) (see section 3.19.0 for further details).

The coop must be:

- in the backyard of a property
- a minimum of two metres from principal buildings (house or garage)
- a minimum of one metre from the rear and side property lines
- no more than four metres high*



*If your coop is larger than 10 m² you must apply for a [development permit](#).

HEN KEEPER RESPONSIBILITIES

Every hen keeper shall adhere to good management and husbandry practices and maintain the coop and hens in conditions that ensure good health and husbandry, including:

- Providing food, unfrozen water, shelter, adequate light, ventilation, warmth, veterinary care, and opportunities to scratch, peck, dust bathe, roost, and socialize with other hens

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- Hens may not be kept in a cage, kennel or other form of shelter except when transporting or quarantining hens to prevent or treat disease and only for as long as reasonably needed
- Hens must be kept in a secured area at all times
- Coops must be constructed so that predators cannot enter
- Feed must be stored in a fully enclosed, tamper-proof container
- Coops must be maintained in good repair and sanitary conditions free from vermin, and noxious or offensive smells and substances
- Leftover feed, trash, and manure must be removed in a timely manner
- Manure must be stored in a fully enclosed container and no more than 85 litres of manure may be stored at any time
- Slaughtering of hens within Town boundaries is prohibited (within town limits hens may only be euthanized at a veterinary practice)

HEN HEALTH – AVIAN INFLUENZA

Avian influenza (AI) is a viral disease of birds. There are many different strains of the AI virus, and most of these have little or no effect on bird health. However, two types – known as H5 and H7 – can cause severe illness and death in affected birds.

Your backyard hens could be at risk of catching bird flu when wild birds migrate to and through Canada in the spring and fall months, as wild birds naturally carry influenza viruses.

Preventative measures can help to keep your animals healthy. Simple, inexpensive practices can be very effective at keeping this serious disease away from your birds.

Signs of Avian Influenza

Infected hens may show one or more of these signs or symptoms:

- sudden death
- decreased food consumption
- huddling, depression, closed eyes
- respiratory signs (coughing, sneezing, gasping for air)
- decreased egg production
- watery greenish diarrhea
- excessive thirst
- swollen wattles and combs

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Protect Your Hens

To minimize the risk of your hens contracting avian influenza it is recommended you:

- Prevent contact with wild birds and other animals
- Frequently clean poultry coops, waterers, feeders, your clothing and your footwear
- Spot the signs and report early
- Limit exposure to visitors
- Keep new birds separate when introducing them to your flock

If you hens are sick

Hen owners are legally responsible to notify authorities of serious bird diseases such as bird flu. Call your veterinarian or the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\) Animal Health Office](#) if you suspect your birds have bird flu.

Resources

[What to Expect if your Hens are Infected](#)

FOOD SAFETY

Eggs from backyard hens should be for personal use. Keepers must follow provincial and federal regulations for animal health and food safety to protect themselves and the community.

Selling Products: Keepers may sell eggs and other products to friends and family. If keepers want to sell products at a market or event, they must comply with relevant regulations such as a business licence or insurance.

INSPECTIONS

Approved Urban Hen Keeping Licence holders shall make themselves, coops, and hens available for inspection at the reasonable request of Town of Stony Plain staff. This includes an initial inspection at the time of a First Time Licence application or in the case of complaints or issues made regarding hen keeping at your location.

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Last Updated: January 2026



REVOCABLE PERMISSION

Should the Town of Stony Plain find a site, coop, hens, or hen keeper to be unsuitable at any time or in contravention of Town bylaws or any other provincial or national regulation, the Urban Hen Keeping Licence may be revoked, and the owner shall work with the Town to relocate the hens to a location outside the Town of Stony Plain. All costs and associated expenditures related to the removal are the sole responsibility of the hen keeper or property owner.

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