



## Backyard Chickens in Fargo

### How do I obtain a permit for backyard chicken keeping?

Permit applications can be filled out online at the link below or printed and filled out. Completed applications can be returned in the mail or via email. Specific instructions are at the bottom of the application.

Along with the completed application, a scaled diagram must be attached that includes the intended location of the chicken coop and the approximate size and distance from adjoining structures and property lines. Prior to receiving a permit, the city must inspect and approve the installed chicken coop and run. Permits must be renewed for the next calendar year.

[https://download.fargond.gov/0/application\\_for\\_permit\\_to\\_keep\\_chickens\\_11.20.23.pdf](https://download.fargond.gov/0/application_for_permit_to_keep_chickens_11.20.23.pdf)

### Can I move my coop around my yard?

Yes, if you plan to use a portable coop and periodically move it around the yard, indicate possible locations on the permit application.

### Am I allowed to have the coop in my garage?

Chicken coops are not allowed in any part of a home or attached garage. A coop may be part of a detached garage or shed as long as there is a physical separation between the coop and run and the space used for non-chicken-keeping purposes.

### What if there are private restrictions or covenants on my property?

Private restrictions on the use of property remain intact. A permit issued to a person whose premises are subject to covenants that prohibit the keeping of chickens is void.

### Can I compost the manure from my chickens?

Yes, chicken manure may be placed in yard compost piles. If you choose not to compost the manure, the waste must be disposed of properly on a regular basis.

### Are chickens noisy?

Hens are social animals and generally cluck amongst themselves during daylight hours at a decibel level similar to that of human conversation. They will briefly make more noise when they are laying their egg. Hens will occasionally squawk if disturbed by an unfamiliar person or animal.

## How many eggs do hens lay?

According to the University of Minnesota Extension Service, hens begin laying at around six months of age and can continue for 5-10 years. Peak production occurs in the first 2 years with the laying of roughly 5-6 eggs each week. Hens need at least 12-14 hours of light each day to continue laying eggs. A regular light bulb is sufficient to supply this light.

## Where can I take my chickens if I decide I don't want them anymore?

Slaughtering chickens in town is prohibited. Unwanted birds may be given to another chicken owner or an area farmer.

## Where can I dispose of a dead bird?

If an animal is dead, please double bag the animal and place it in the trash.

Visit the [City of Fargo's Pets & Stray Animals webpage](#) for more information.

## Can I get *Salmonella* infection from my chickens?

Chickens can carry germs such as salmonella even when they appear healthy and clean. Germs can get on coops, feed, water dishes and soil in the areas where they live. Germs can also get on clothing, shoes and hands when handling the birds and if you touch your mouth germs can be transmitted and make you sick. Young children are at risk because their immune systems are still developing and they are more likely to put their fingers in their mouth, and adults with compromised immune systems are more susceptible to becoming infected.

## How can I reduce the chance of *Salmonella* infection?

To avoid getting sick from *Salmonella*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests:

- Washing your hands immediately after touching backyard poultry, their eggs, or anything in the area where they live and roam.
- Supervising kids around flocks. Young children are more likely to become very ill from *Salmonella*.
- Not kissing or snuggling backyard poultry, and not eating or drinking around them.
- Handling eggs safely.
- Calling your healthcare provider right away if you are experiencing any severe symptoms of *Salmonella*.

For more information, visit the [CDC's media alert on this topic](#).

## What is avian influenza or “bird flu”?

Avian influenza, commonly referred to as bird flu, is a potential concern with backyard poultry. This is a respiratory disease in birds that has many different subtypes. These viruses occur naturally among wild aquatic birds worldwide and can infect domestic poultry and animal species. Avian flu viruses do not normally infect humans. Rare cases of human infection with these viruses have been reported. Visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm) for additional information on avian influenza.

## What steps should I take if I suspect bird flu?

Bird diseases can spread quickly and kill other nearby birds. Early detection can help prevent this. Call your local veterinarian or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services office at 1.866.536.7593.

For more information, visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/bro-protect-poultry-from-ai.pdf>

## Who do I contact to file a complaint?

Complaints can be sent to [DBaumann@FargoND.gov](mailto:DBaumann@FargoND.gov)

## Where can I find additional information about backyard chicken keeping?

- [North Dakota State University Extension](#)
- Cass County Extension: 701.241.5700
- [University of Minnesota Extension](#)
- Internet searches will also provide many sites on how to get started and what you need to do to raise healthy, egg-laying chickens.