

**Urban Agriculture Management Plan - Chickens**

Town of Front Royal, Virginia

**Property Information.**

Site Address:

Tax Map Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Use of the Property (check one):

- Single Family Detached Dwelling
- Duplex or Two-Family Dwelling
- Other, (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Information**

Name(s):

Mailing Address:

Phone Number and/or email:

**Description of the Proposed Urban Agriculture Activity** *(please attach supporting information, such as, but not limited to, a sketch plan of the property and proposed use, coop plans, and a survey of the property. The sketch plan should show the location of all composting areas, coops, enclosures/run, fences, and other structures or activities related to the proposed keeping of chickens):*

**Best Management Practices (BMPs).** The following BMPs shall be used for the proposed urban agriculture activity described above.

- **Biosecurity & Health Measures**
  - If birds are removed from your flock for any reason and then returned, isolate them away from your resident flock for ten to fourteen days. Be vigilant and watch for signs of sickness. If your flock is experiencing a high number of mortalities or sick birds, please report the situation immediately to the local Agriculture Extension Office.
  
  - Any new birds should also be isolated for ten to fourteen days to watch for signs of illness. Be vigilant and watch for signs of sickness. If your flock is experiencing a high number of mortalities or sick birds, please report the situation immediately to the local Agriculture Extension Office.
  
  - Clean and disinfect all crates used to transport poultry to and from your property. Since some diseases can be carried on a person's clothing or shoes, in order to reduce the risk of transmitting disease to your birds it is recommended that you restrict access to your flock by others who also own poultry.
  
  - Obtain birds from a reputable source. The source of birds or hatching eggs must be from a *Salmonella pullorum* tested flock.
  
  - Wash your hands before and after you enter you come into contact with your chickens or area where your chickens are kept. Wash your hands when you get back from the store or mill where you purchase feed from.
  
  - Standard precautions” in the health care and manufacturing fields often involve wearing personal protective equipment like gloves, masks, eye protection and lab coats, overalls, or jump suit. This may seem a little extreme for keeping chickens, but it never hurts to keep your “chicken clothes” separate from the rest of your wardrobe. This may mean you keep a pair of boot and coveralls just for working in the chicken yard or it may be as simple as not wearing your gardening gloves when working on the chicken pen. If that's too much trouble, save those plastic supermarket bags to slip over your boots and throw them away when you're done.

- Waste Disposal

- Composting of chicken manure shall take place according to the following best management practices:

Active Pile Composting will be used as a means of waste disposal. This traditional method of composting is done by marking a pile of litter, maintaining sufficient water to make the pile moist throughout, and turning the pile regularly to add oxygen until it has completely decomposed. Active pile composting results in a high-quality product that can be added to gardens in the yard in confidence. Fully composted chicken litter will have no offensive odor and no recognizable particles of straw or bedding.

- Bedding material can help you manage chickens' waste effectively. Pine shavings are the preferred bedding material as they are highly absorbent - the waste dries out and becomes easier to clean. Other types of wood shavings can be used, with the exception of cedar. Cedar shavings are not recommended as they are believed to emit certain fumes that are toxic to birds. Hay or straw are popular bedding materials, but are not as absorbent as shavings, retaining moisture and becoming wet, messy and causing odor.
- Bedding and waste from routine cleaning should be added to a bin for composting or temporary storage for disposal.
- Chicken manure will not be applied directly as fertilizer without property composting time. The high nitrogen content will cause the plant to "burn." Also, salmonella and E. coli bacteria may transfer to vegetables if applied fresh to a vegetable garden. Once the compost pile is 12-15 inches deep, composting actively begins and after 6 months can kill harmful bacteria.
- Lime (calcium) will be added to the composting pile if odors become too strong. However, application of lime should be limited or it may shift the PH of the composing pile, which would result in potential loss of bacteria that work to break down the material.

- Suite Suitability

- A coop is required to house all chickens. It shall be covered and ventilated, and shall require an enclosed run area.

- Setbacks

- Chickens are kept within the coop or enclosure at all times. The coop and enclosure shall not be located within the front yard or corner side yard of a corner lot.

- The coop shall be a minimum of 25 feet from any residential structure on neighboring properties.

- The coop shall be setback at least 10 feet from all property lines.

- Animal Density

- Up to six (6) hens may be kept on the property.
- The coop shall provide a minimum of three square feet per chicken and be of sufficient size to permit free movement of the chickens.

- Appearance
  - Trash and debris are not kept on the property except in trash containers.
  - Screening, such as an opaque fence and/or landscaping may be required as a condition of approval where the chickens would be visible along a public street or in close proximity to a neighboring home.
- Odor Control
  - Chickens shall not be permitted to create a nuisance consisting of odor.
  - Composting areas should be kept away from adjoining properties to the greatest extent possible.
- Noise Control
  - Chickens shall not be permitted to create a nuisance consisting of noise.
- Maintenance
  - All facilities shall be kept clean and maintained in good condition at all times. The coop should be located and designed so that it can be easily accessible for cleaning and maintenance.
  - Chicken waste will be cleaned out of the coop and run area on a daily basis.
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- Other

- No roosters, crowing hens, other types of fowl, or any livestock will be kept on the premises.
- The slaughtering activities shall only take place within an enclosed building.
- No sales or services shall be offered on the property in regards to the keeping of chickens.

Signatures

**Agriculture Extension Agent Review**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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**Applicant(s)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Property Owner(s) - if different from Applicant**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_