

Proposal for Chicken Keeping Regulations in Poolesville

PURPOSE: The following regulations govern the keeping of chickens and are designed to prevent nuisances and prevent conditions that are unsanitary or unsafe. No person shall keep chickens unless the following regulations are followed:

1. **NUMBER:** Up to four (4) hens shall be allowed for residential lots up to 10,000 square feet. One (1) additional hen is allowed for each additional 2,000 square feet. In the event the calculation results in a number other than a whole number, the property owner is allowed to round up to the next whole number.

2. **SETBACKS:** Coops or cages housing chickens shall be kept at least twenty-five (25) feet from the closest door or window of any dwelling or occupied structure other than the owner's dwelling.

3. **ENCLOSURES:** Chickens shall be provided with a covered, predator-proof coop (or cage) that is well ventilated and designed to be easily accessed for cleaning. The coop shall allow at least two (2) square feet per chicken. In addition, the chickens shall have access during daylight hours to an outdoor run (or enclosure) that is adequately fenced to contain the birds on the property and to prevent predators from access to the birds, and which provides at least four (4) square feet per chicken. Chickens shall not be allowed out of the outdoor run/enclosure unless a responsible individual is directly monitoring them and is able to immediately return them to the outdoor run/enclosure if necessary.

4. **SANITATION:** The coop and outdoor enclosure must be kept in a sanitary condition and free from offensive odors. The coop and outdoor enclosure must be cleaned on a regular basis to prevent the accumulation of waste. Food shall be kept in secure, preferably metal, rodent-proof enclosures.

5. **FOOD:** Food shall be kept in designated storage containers (metal containers would be preferable) with lids that fit securely, that are reasonably rodent-proof and placed in an area where wildlife, rodents and domestic animals would have limited access.

6. **CARE OF CHICKENS:** Coops and enclosures shall provide reasonable and adequate protection from predators, weather, and disease. Chickens shall have an adequate supply of clean drinking water and food of sufficient quantity and quality as is conducive to good health. Chickens with obvious sores, diseases or other maladies shall receive prompt veterinary attention.

7. SLAUGHTERING: There shall be no slaughtering of chickens on residential properties.

8. ROOSTERS: It is unlawful for any person to keep roosters.

9. PERMITS: A permit shall be required to keep chickens in Poolesville. An application for a permit must contain the following information: a. The name, phone number and address of the applicant. b. The size of the subject property. c. The number of female hens the applicant seeks to keep on the property. d. A drawing indicating proposed location of the coop/enclosure on the property, as well as a description of any coop/cage and outdoor enclosure providing dimensions.

10. PERMIT RENEWAL: Permits will be granted on an annual basis. The permit will be presumptively renewed, and the applicant may continue to keep chickens under the terms and condition of the initial permit. The county may revoke the permit at any time if the permittee does not follow the terms of the permit, if the county receives complaints regarding the permit holder's keeping of chickens, or the county finds that the permit holder has not properly cared for the chickens or maintained the coop or outdoor enclosure in a clean and sanitary condition.