

KEEPING CHICKENS IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

The City of San Diego allows residents of single-family homes, community gardens and retail farms to keep and maintain chickens. Most single-family homes are allowed up to five chickens under municipal code, but specific regulations can be found by visiting the sandiego.gov website and entering the word “chickens” in the top right search box.



BENEFITS TO OWNING BACKYARD CHICKENS

- A healthy adult hen generally lays up to 300 eggs per year. Five hens would supply approximately 30 eggs per week.
- Eggs from backyard chickens contain 25 percent more vitamin E, 33 percent more vitamin A and 75 percent more beta carotene.
- Home raising reduces the need for transporting eggs resulting in a reduction in carbon emissions and packaging materials.
- You can ensure the chickens are raised and fed in humane conditions.
- Chicken manure can be added to compost piles or used directly as a fertilizer when tilled into the soil.

RISKS

As with most pets, chickens can carry germs that have the potential to cause illness in humans. Even if chickens appear healthy, Salmonella may be found in their droppings or on their bodies. Although it's good to be aware of this risk, there are simple actions you can take to stay healthy while handling and raising chickens.

REDUCING THE RISKS

- Children are more likely to become seriously ill from Salmonella, so children younger than five years of age should only handle or touch chickens with adult supervision. Adults should help them wash their hands after handling.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water



immediately after touching chickens or anything in the area where they occupy. Avoid touching your mouth before washing your hands. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

- Change out of soiled clothes and shoes and wash your hands once you're done.
- Don't eat or drink in the area the chickens occupy.
- Keep chickens outdoors and out of areas where food or drink is prepared, served or stored, such as kitchens, pantries or outdoor patios.
- Clean equipment and materials associated with raising or caring for chickens such as coops, feed containers and water containers outside.

SUMMARY OF REGULATIONS

Chickens may be kept and maintained on property with a single-family residence, a community garden or a retail farm in accordance with the following:

- Roosters are not permitted.
- Generally, up to five chickens may be kept when the coop is located outside of all required setbacks. More information about setbacks can be found on the sandiego.gov website.
- Up to 15 chickens may be kept when the coop is located 15 feet from all property lines and outside of all required setbacks, whichever is greater.
- Up to 25 chickens may be kept when the chickens are located at least 50 feet from any building used as a residence.
- Residents who own chickens must provide a predator-proof chicken coop that can be cleaned easily, is well vented and large enough to allow chickens to move freely. They must also provide access to a fenced, predator-proof outdoor enclosure that provides a minimum of 10 square feet of ground area per chicken.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is keeping chickens unsanitary?

Whether a situation is unsanitary depends on the animal care and maintenance provided. When chickens are properly cared for, they are just as clean as well-cared for dogs and cats.

Are chickens noisy?

Roosters crow, which can be noisy. They are illegal to own in the City of San Diego. Hens make minimal sounds, sleep when it's dark and are quieter than most pets that live in local neighborhoods.