



Chicken Permit

Moorhead Police Department
Animal Licensing
PO Box 817
Moorhead, MN 56561
policerecords@moorheadmn.gov

PERMIT IS VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31.

Permits purchased after January 1 in any given calendar year will also expire December 31 of that year; and permit fees will not be pro-rated. Chickens may be permitted to be kept at all single and two-family homes (including in mixed-use districts). Chickens not permitted in commercial, industrial, institutional, or other mixed-use districts.

APPLICANT/PROPERTY INFORMATION

Applicant Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Property Zoning District: _____ Find the information by searching for your property [here](#) or contact Planning & Zoning (218.299.5370 or planning@moorheadmn.gov)

APPLICATION REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Permit Type: ☐ Tier 1 (1-6 chickens) ☐ Tier 2 (6 – 12 chickens – RLD-1 lots of 1 acre or more only)
- Total chickens kept: (roosters not allowed): _____
- ☐ Provide site plan showing location of coop/run, setbacks, fencing, property lines, easements, landscaping requirement (if applicable) and existing structures.
- ☐ Complete Site Plan Requirement Checklist (Attached).
- ☐ Fee - \$10.00 (Checks made payable to City of Moorhead)
- ☐ Review neighborhood covenants and obtain approval, if applicable. A copy may be found at the Clay County Recorder's Office (The City of Moorhead does not enforce covenants).
- ☐ Review keeping of chickens ordinance (Attached).

**If chickens are located in public, it is possible that they will be impounded. The impound will follow standard animal protocols with the designated pound. Owners will be responsible for all fees before the animals will be released.*

**Providing false or misleading information, complaints of birds escaping, odors, etc., or failing to adhere to the requirements above can lead to your permit being revoked.*

**Learn more about keeping chickens on the U of M extension page: <https://extension.umn.edu/poultry/small-scale-poultry>*

SIGNATURE

I hereby certify that the information submitted is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and further agree to fully comply with said regulations found in Title 3, Chapter 7, Animal Control. If the requirements are not complied with, the City of Moorhead may revoke the permit.

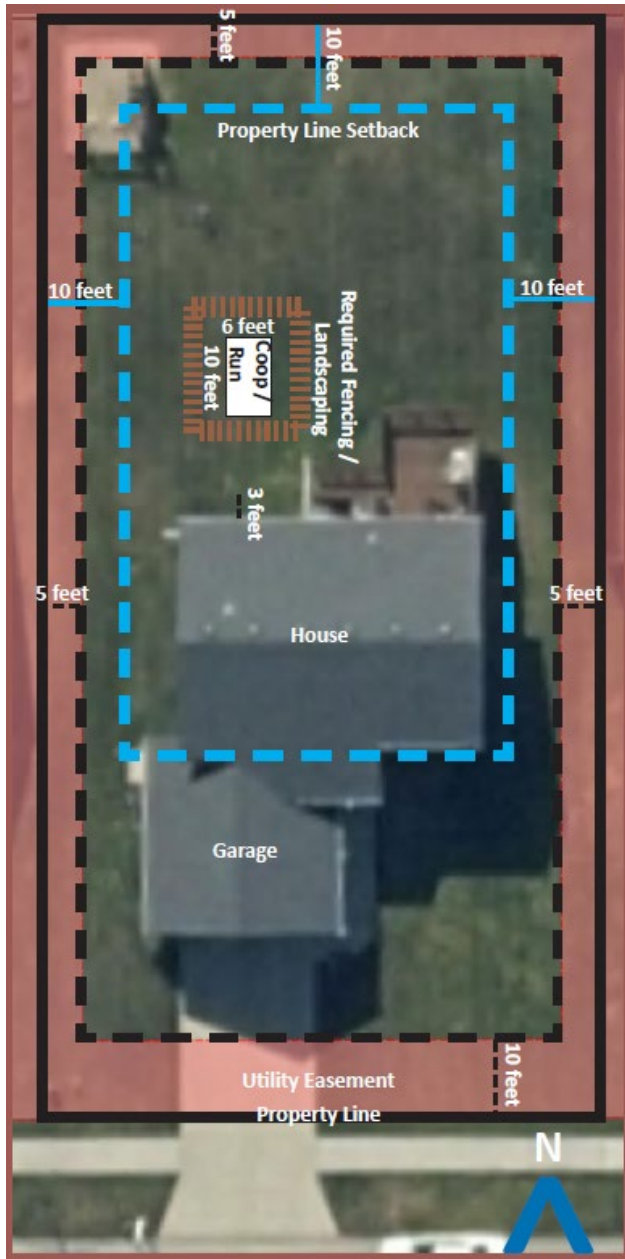
Applicant Signature

Date

Office Use Only:	
Staff Review	☐ Approved – This application is your permit



Site Plan Example



Site Plan Requirement Checklist!

Please check and fill out all of the following:

- ☐ Chicken coop/run dimensions:

Coop: Length: _____ Width: _____ Area: _____ Height: _____

**Coop must be a minimum of 4 sq. ft. per chicken not to exceed 10 sq. ft. per chicken and may not exceed 7 ft in height.*

Run: Length: _____ Width: _____ Area: _____ Height: _____

**Run must be a minimum of 15 sq. ft. per chicken not to exceed a total of 200 sq. ft. and may not exceed 7 ft in height (RLD-1 lots are exempt from maximum requirement)*

Is the coop elevated a minimum of 24 inches off the ground? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the run entirely enclosed with non-opaque materials? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the coop and run constructed of rodent resistant materials that are of similar style to the house? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- ☐ Fence to be used for screening (RLD-1 lots are exempt from this requirement):

☐ Option 1: Solid/Opaque of at least 6 ft in height

☐ Option 2: Light-permeable or solid/opaque under 6 ft in height with landscaping

If Option 2, please explain how required landscaping will sufficiently screen the chicken coop and run.

Chicken Permit Site Plan Requirements:

Please clearly indicate and label the following on the site plan:

- ☐ Location of chicken coop and run

**If the coop and run will be moveable, please indicate where you anticipate locations.*

- ☐ Property lines

- ☐ Easements

**Coop/Run must not be located within any easements.*

- ☐ Existing structures

- ☐ Property / Building Setbacks

**Coop/Run must be setback 10 ft from the property lines and 3 ft from any structure*

- ☐ Required Fencing / Landscaping

Locate Easements

- Must be located outside of easement area and if easement present, may increase setback from property line.
- Visit https://gis.cityofmoorhead.com/public_link/ to locate easements.
 1. Select layers list
 2. Expand Cadastral
 3. Check Easements

Call GopherOne (811) before you dig



Chicken Coop and Run Submission

If you purchased a commercial coop and run please include building plans in your application submission.

If you build your own coop and run clearly indicate the following on the site plan:

1. Chicken coop dimensions
2. Chicken run dimensions
3. Total area of chicken coop and run
4. Height from ground to bottom of coop
5. Height from ground to top of coop
6. Height of run fencing
7. Height and material of required fencing/landscaping if your yard is not already fenced.

Common Questions

How do I find the area of my coop and run?

Area = Length x Width. If your coop is 6 ft long and 4 ft wide the area is 24 sq. ft.

How much area do I need per chicken?

See Coop and Run table for guidance.

I bought a commercial coop and run that is slightly smaller/larger than required standards. Is this acceptable?

The commercial coop should differ by no more than 30% of the requirements. City staff will review to determine if the standard is met.

What is acceptable for the required fence if my yard is not fenced?

Wood, vinyl, composite, metal, or masonry of a minimum of 6 ft in height. Fences that are see-through or shorter than 6 ft in height are permitted provided that the coop and run will be screened with approved landscaping.

What considerations should be made for sunlight?

Chickens need access to daylight in order to be happy, healthy, and produce eggs and also need access to shade to prevent overheating. Make sure to locate the coop and run in a place that will have access to both sunlight and shade throughout the day.

Chicken Coop and Run Plan Submission Example



**Dimensions are not to scale and are for reference purposes only.*

Coop and Run Area Requirements				
# of Hens	Coop Area (sq. ft.)		Run Area (sq. ft.)	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
1	4	10	15	200
2	8	20	30	200
3	12	30	45	200
4	16	40	60	200
5	20	50	75	200
6	24	60	90	200

* Maximum run area does not apply to lots in the RLD-1 zoning district

ORDINANCE 2024-07

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND REENACT TITLE 3, CHAPTER 7, SECTION 10, ANIMALS PROHIBITED IN CITY, OF THE MOORHEAD MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO KEEPING OF CHICKENS

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Moorhead as follows:

SECTION 1. Title 3, Chapter 7, Section 10, Animals Prohibited in City, of the Moorhead Municipal Code is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows (unchanged portions of this chapter have been omitted from the text below):

3-7-10: ANIMALS PROHIBITED IN CITY:

...

B. Keeping of Chickens: It is unlawful for any person to own, control, keep, maintain, or harbor chickens on any premises within the city unless that person has a permit to do so as provided in this chapter. The keeping or harboring of male chickens or roosters is prohibited.

1. Permit: A person shall not maintain a coop or run unless granted a permit by the city. The permit is subject to all terms and conditions of this chapter and any additional conditions deemed necessary by the city to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

a. Annual Permit: Permits will not exceed one (1) year and are subject to annual renewal. The initial permit automatically expires at the end of the initial calendar year and, thereafter, renewals of said permit extend for calendar-year periods. The annual permit fee is set by resolution of the City Council, as amended from time to time.

b. Number of chickens:

i. Tier I Permit: One to Six (1 – 6) chickens: Permit may be issued to any property that meets requirements for keeping chickens.

ii. Tier II Permit: Seven to Twelve (7 – 12) chickens: Permit may be issued to properties zoned RLD-1: Residential Low Density – 1 that are one (1) acre or more and meets requirements for keeping chickens.

c. Permit Requirements: A completed application for a permit includes:

- i. Applicant and property information;
- ii. The number and species of chickens to be maintained at the premise;
- iii. A signed statement that the applicant will, at all times, keep the chickens in accordance with this chapter and comply with all the conditions within the application and permit. Failure to comply with said conditions, or modification thereof, will constitute a violation of the provisions of this chapter and are grounds for the revocation or suspension of the permit.
- iv. Fee
- v. A scaled drawing with the following:
 - a. The location and dimensions of the coop, run, fence and landscape screening (where required);
 - b. Approximate distance of the coop and run from adjoining structures and property lines;
 - c. If coop or run is intended to be moveable, indicate area or areas where they may be moved;

d. A property with three (3) or more residential dwelling units or zoned for commercial, mixed-use, institutional, or industrial use is prohibited from keeping chickens.

i. Exception: Single and two-family homes in mixed-use districts may keep chickens.

2. Chickens may be slaughtered on the premises if out of view of the general public and only for consumption by the occupants of the premises.

3. Confinement: A person who owns, controls, keeps, maintains, or harbors chickens must keep them confined in a coop and/or run and may not allow the chickens to run at large, which means chickens roaming off permitted property.

a. Exception: Chickens may roam outside of their coop or run within yards with perimeter fencing or coop/run perimeter fencing between sunrise and sunset with adult supervision.

b. Coops and Runs

	Location	Setbacks	Materials	Height
Coop and Run	-May not be located in front yard (beyond front façade of house) -May not be located in easements -May not be located in dwelling or garage	-3 feet from onsite structures -10 feet from property lines	-Must be predator-proof and constructed from durable materials which are compatible with the principal structure. -Runs must be entirely enclosed and allow airflow and sunlight with non-opaque materials such as chicken-wire. -Coop floor, foundation and footings must be constructed using rodent resistant materials -Materials such as exposed plywood, particle board, unfinished metal, plastic sheets or tarps and snow fencing are not permitted	-May not exceed 7 feet
Feed	-Must be kept within coop, run or other structure on site within animal-proof containers			
Fencing¹	-Must be either around perimeter of yard or around perimeter of coop and run	-Perimeter fencing is permitted up to the property line	-Must be either: 6-foot solid fence consisting of typical residential fence materials such as wood or vinyl² or 4-6 foot light permeable fence with landscaping sufficient to screen from neighbors and/or street² -Materials such as exposed plywood, particle board, pallets, snow fences and other materials not customarily associated with residential fence materials are prohibited	-Minimum: 4 feet² -Maximum: 7 feet² -Fence bottom must be no more than 4 inches from the ground or surface

	Size ³	Clearance from ground to coop floor	Bedding	Manure
Coop	-Minimum: 4 square feet per chicken -Maximum: 10 square feet per chicken -Chickens must be secured in a chicken coop from sunset to sunrise each day	-2 feet -The area under the coop may be used as up to 50% of required run space if at least 2 feet in height and open to airflow	-To be layered with quality bedding such as straw, hay or hemp that is clean and changed frequently to prevent odor, pests and other nuisances	-Must be removed frequently - Manure which is not properly disposed of and/or causes odor issues will result in revocation of the permit.
Run	- Minimum: 15 square feet per chicken -Maximum: cannot exceed 200 square feet except in RLD-1 where there is no maximum -At least 50% of run must be in direct sunlight			

1. Exception: Properties in RLD-1: Residential Low Density – 1 are exempt from fence/screening requirements except that chickens that roam outside of coop/run must roam in a contained area.
2. Residential Protection Screening: Where any chicken coop/run abuts property zoned for residential use, screening along the boundary of the residential property shall be provided. All fencing and screening specifically required by this title shall be subject to title 10-19-5, Fences, and shall consist of either a:
 - a. Six (6) foot solid fence; or
 - b. Solid fence less than six (6) feet in height or light permeable fence four to seven (4-7) feet in height shall have a greenbelt planting strip provided as follows:
 1. A greenbelt planting strip shall consist of evergreen and/or deciduous trees and plants, and shall be:
 - a. Of sufficient width and density to provide an effective visual screen, as approved by zoning administrator.
 - b. Minimum height of six (6) feet.
 - c. Earth mounding or berms may be used but shall not be used to achieve more than three (3) feet of the required screen.
3. Commercially purchased coops/runs that substantially conform with the requirements of this ordinance may be permitted. "Substantially conforms" means it may not differ more or less than thirty percent (30%) of the noted coop/run standards, as approved by the Zoning Administrator.
4. Conditions and Inspections: A person who owns, controls, keeps, maintains, or harbors chickens must keep premises in a healthy, sanitary, and non-nuisance condition. Premises may not create noxious odors that may affect adjacent properties. Any coop or run authorized by permit under this chapter may be inspected at any reasonable time by an animal control officer, law enforcement officer, public health official, or other employee or agent of the City.
5. Private Restrictions/Covenants: A permit issued to a person whose premises is subject to private restrictions and/or covenants that prohibit the keeping of chickens is the sole responsibility of the person applying for the permit. The interpretation and enforcement of the private restrictions and/or covenants is the sole responsibility of the private parties involved, the city is in no way responsible for interpreting or enforcing private restrictions and/or covenants.
6. Refusal to Grant Permit: The city may refuse to grant or renew a permit to keep or maintain chickens for failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter, submitting an inaccurate or incomplete application, failure to comply with permit conditions, creation of a nuisance condition, or if the public health and safety is unreasonably endangered by the granting or renewing of such permit. Any coop or run constructed or maintained on any premises must be removed from said premises within thirty (30) days after the suspension, expiration, or revocation of the permit for said premises or after a period of thirty (30) days from which chickens have not been lawfully kept on the premises.
7. Suspension and Appeal: A permit for keeping of chickens may be revoked or suspended by the city for any violation of this chapter following written notice or, upon request for renewal, the renewal permit may be refused by the city. The applicant may appeal the revocation, suspension, or refusal to renew the permit to the

city clerk by requesting a hearing before the City Council within seven (7) days of the date of the notice. The City Council shall hear testimony from the permittee and city staff and render a decision on the matter or request additional information.

8. Violation: A person who owns, controls, keeps, maintains, or harbors chickens without obtaining or maintaining a current permit or after a permit has been suspended or revoked is guilty of an infraction as provided under City Code §§ 1-4-2 and 1-4-4.

9. A person who had a permit to harbor chickens and who no longer harbors chickens must remove any related structures (coop, run, or other) within ten (10) days of no longer harboring chickens.

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This Ordinance shall take effect after publication in accordance with the Moorhead City Charter.

PASSED: August 12, 2024 by the City Council of the City of Moorhead.