



Measure #:

TOWN COUNCIL MEASURE SUBMITTAL

Date: Submitted By: Telephone #:

MEASURE DESCRIPTION:

Signed: Daniel Donovan

PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION:

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

ATTACHMENTS:

REFER TO SUB-COMMITTEE:

Chapter 108 Animals

Article 1 Animal Control

§ 108-4 Keeping of Chickens

A. By Right.

Residents may keep chickens on their property by right, subject to the conditions of this section. Chickens shall be considered domestic animals under §108-2.

B. Licensing.

1. The owner or keeper of chickens shall obtain an annual license for each property where chickens are kept. Licenses shall be issued by the Town Clerk.
2. The license period shall be from April 1 through March 31 of the following year. License fees shall be established by the Town Council.

C. Inspection.

1. The Animal Control Officer shall conduct an annual inspection of all licensed chicken coops to ensure compliance with sanitary, safety, and rodent-prevention standards.
2. No additional inspections are required after the initial inspection is satisfactorily completed.
3. If the ACO, Board of Health, or any other governmental body receives a complaint about the licensed coop(s), a follow-up inspection by the ACO may be conducted to ensure compliance with the terms of this bylaw.
4. Owners and keepers shall allow access for inspections upon reasonable notice.

D. Cooperation with Health Agent.

Owners and keepers shall cooperate with the Town Health Agent in responding to complaints concerning the health, sanitation, rodent activity, or nuisance conditions related to chickens or chicken coops.

E. Number of Chickens by Zoning District.

The maximum number of chickens permitted per property shall be:

- R10: six (6) chickens
- R15/R20: twelve (12) chickens
- R40: no maximum limit

Chickens in excess of these limits are prohibited unless a variance is granted in accordance with the Town's Zoning Bylaws.

F. Roosters.

Roosters are prohibited in all zoning districts except R40.

G. Rodent-Prevention and Sanitation Requirements.

1. **Feed Storage.** All chicken feed shall be stored in rodent-proof, weather-tight containers made of metal or other rodent-resistant materials.
2. **Feeders.** Feed shall be provided only in covered, rodent-resistant feeders, such as treadle or gravity feeders. Open feeding or scattering feed on the ground is prohibited.
3. **Spilled Feed.** Spilled or excess feed shall be cleaned up daily.
4. **Coop Construction.** Coops and runs shall be constructed to prevent entry by rodents, including the use of ¼-inch hardware cloth for any openings or ventilation areas.
5. **Sanitation.** Coops and runs shall be maintained in a clean condition with regular removal of manure and waste to prevent odors, pests, and rodent harborage.
6. **Water Sources.** Water shall be provided in containers designed to minimize spillage and shall be removed or secured overnight to prevent attracting pests.
7. **Surrounding Conditions.** Owners shall maintain the area around the coop free of trash, food waste, and other materials that could provide food or shelter for rodents.

H. Enforcement.

Violation of this section shall constitute a public nuisance under §108-2 and may result in fines, revocation of the chicken license, or other remedies as provided by law.

I. Building Permit Clarification.

A building permit shall not be required for chicken coops or runs that are less than 200 square feet in area, not permanently affixed to a foundation, and not intended for human occupancy, consistent with the Massachusetts State Building Code. A permit shall be required only when a coop exceeds these thresholds or otherwise falls within the scope of the State Building Code.

J. Setback Requirements.

1. Chicken coops and runs shall be located not less than ten (10) feet from any adjoining property lot line, or the line of any street, court, passageway, swamp, marsh, stream, or pond.
2. Coops and runs shall not be located within any required front yard setback under the Town's Zoning Bylaws.
3. The ACO may grant minor adjustments of up to **2 feet** to accommodate lot constraints, provided no nuisance conditions result.