

Backyard Hen Enclosure Guide

The District of Mackenzie is now permitting the keeping of backyard hens for egg laying purposes in some residential areas within the townsite. The community has displayed overwhelming support to permit this activity. To ensure the safety of the animals and to mitigate any potential impacts on adjacent property owners, residents who wish to keep backyard hens must adhere to a number of District requirements. In addition to meeting District requirements, prospective hen keepers are required to undertake the following tasks prior to applying for a Backyard Hen Permit.

Note: Rural residential properties in the Gantahaz and Gagnon subdivisions do not adhere to these backyard hen regulations. Please refer to the District's Animal Control and Licensing Bylaw for information on the keeping of animals in these areas.

1. Understand your property's zoning

Before investing any time or resources into backyard hen keeping, make sure you familiarize yourself with the District of Mackenzie Zoning Bylaw No. 1368. This bylaw regulates where in the townsite backyard hens are permitted. Your property may or may not be suitable to have backyard hens. For assistance in verifying your zoning, please contact the District office.

2. Complete the backyard hen enclosure checklist and understand District backyard hen requirements

Once you confirm that your property is permitted to have backyard hens, you should familiarize yourself with the District's regulations and requirements. Review the District's Zoning and Animal Control and Licencing Bylaws to understand the District's requirements in relation to backyard hens. For any questions in relation to the requirements, please contact the District office.

3. Familiarize yourself with hen keeping and health

There are many resources available to educate residents on proper hen keeping and health. Some resources available are included below:

BC SPCA – Caring for Urban and Backyard Chickens: <http://spca.bc.ca/news/backyard-chickens/>

Government of Canada – How to Prevent and Detect Disease in Backyard Flocks and Pet Birds:
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/bird-health-basics/eng/1323643634523/1323644740109>

Province of BC – Small Flock Poultry Health:
http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/animal-and-crops/animal-production/small_flock_manual.pdf

Interior Health – Backyard Chickens in an Urban Environment
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/HealthyLiving/FoodSecurity/Documents/Food-UrbanHens.pdf>

Once you are familiarized with District zoning, regulations and hen keeping practices, you may proceed to the application stage:

4. Complete and submit our Backyard Hen Permit Application

Complete the Backyard Hen Permit Application form and checklist and submit it to Animal Control/Bylaw Services with the required permit application fee of \$25. You must receive your permit prior to keeping hens on your property.

5. Get your inspection from a District staff member

Once your permit application and fee has been submitted to and preliminarily approved by the District office, a District staff member will conduct an inspection of your property. Your hen coop, pen and other requirements must all be in place prior to inspection. If all requirements are satisfied, the District will issue your permit, in effect allowing you to keep hens on your parcel. If your property is permitted for backyard hens but you fail to meet other requirements (i.e. coop/pen location or fencing), you may reapply for a permit, including providing an additional permit fee.