

CHICKENS & DUCKS IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY



**License application and
Information packet**

On November 18th 2013, The Anne Arundel County Council passed Bill 79-13 regarding chickens and ducks in residential districts. The bill permits keeping or maintaining chickens and ducks on a lot of less than 40,000 square feet. Roosters are strictly prohibited on lots less than 40,000 square feet. A County resident keeping chickens or ducks on a lot less than 40,000 square feet for any length of time must obtain and maintain a license. Keeping of ducks and chickens on lots greater than 40,000 square feet does not require an Anne Arundel County License. The provisions, requirements and restrictions, based on lot sized are as follows:

Lots 20,000 square feet to 39,999 square feet: On a residentially zoned lot of 20,000 to 40,000 square feet improved by a single-family dwelling, chickens and ducks may not exceed a ratio of one bird unit per 20,000 square feet. A bird unit is defined as follows:

8 Chickens – Hens Only	= 1 Bird Unit
4 Ducks	= 1 Bird Unit

Lots 10,000 square feet to 19,999 square feet: On a residentially zoned lot of 10,000 to 19,999 square feet improved by a single-family dwelling, no more than four (4) chickens are permitted. Ducks not permitted are lots less than 20,000 square feet.

Lots 9,999 square feet or smaller: Chickens and ducks are not permitted on lots smaller than 10,000 square feet.

Chickens or ducks on lots less than 40,000 square feet shall be kept in a secured enclosure with a chicken coop (see requirements below: § 12-4-801 Animal Outdoors).

Accessory structures for chickens and ducks on lots less than 40,000 square feet shall be located at least 25 feet from a side or rear lot line and 25 feet from any dwelling.

Relevant Provisions of Anne Arundel County Code, Articles 12 and 18

12-4-709. Chicken and Duck License.

- A. License – scope. A chicken or duck license permits the owner to own chickens or ducks as pets and to consume eggs produced by the kept chickens or ducks.
- B. License – generally. A county resident keeping chickens or ducks on a lot less than 40,000 square feet for any length of time shall have and maintain a license for keeping chickens and ducks on the property. An owner shall:
 - (1) Apply for a license before obtaining the chickens or ducks or bringing the chickens or ducks into the county;
 - (2) Provide evidence of current registration with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Domestic Poultry and Exotic Bird Registration Division unless the owner is exempt from registration under state law;
 - (3) Acknowledge that they are solely responsible for assuring that chickens and ducks may be kept on the property under any applicable covenants or bylaws; and



- (4) Acknowledge that the falsification of any information on the application is cause for revocation of the license.
- C. License – fee and renewal. The fee for each license is \$30.00. All licenses shall be valid for three (3) years and be renewed before expiration for as long as an owner keeps chickens and ducks on the property. Unless specifically exempted by law or variance, all zoning requirements set forth in § 18-4-104 of this code must be met before a license issued under this section may be renewed. An Application for renewal shall be accompanied by the required license fee. Failure to make application for renewal before the renewal date shall result in a late fee of \$10.00
- D. License – prohibition. Roosters may not be kept on a lot less than 40,000 square feet.
- E. License – Revocation. A license may be revoked or suspended pursuant to 12-4-710(B).

12-4-710. Notice of denial, nonrenewal, revocation, or suspension of license.

- A. **Notice.** Before denying, withholding renewal of, suspending, or revoking any license, the Chief shall give notice to the licensee. The notice shall:
- (1) specify the violation or other basis for the action;
 - (2) state a time within which the licensee shall take corrective action to abate the violation or cure other defects, if the violation or defect is something that can be cured; and
 - (3) inform the aggrieved party of the right to appear before the Commission to show cause why the license should not be revoked or other action upheld.
- B. **Finality.** A decision by the Agency to revoke a license shall be final except as provided in § 12-4-711.

12-4-801. Animal Outdoors.

(d) **Shelter for animals outdoors other than dogs.** A shelter for any animal other than a dog shall be maintained in accordance with the following provisions.

- (2) Buildings and sheds used for the housing of animals shall be lighted and ventilated; provide protection from the weather' and be kept clean, free of any debris that could endanger the animal, and in good repair at all times.
- (3) Manure shall be removed from the building and sheds and coops daily.
- (4) An enclosure where animals are kept shall be graded and drained so as to keep the surface reasonably dry.
- (5) Garbage and fecal matter, or any debris that could endanger the animal may not be placed or allowed to remain in the enclosure
- (6) An open drain may not be allowed to run through the enclosure.
- (7) Flies shall be controlled in the enclosure.



(8) Coops for chickens and ducks shall have four walls and a roof, be ventilated, constructed to be raised two (2) feet from the ground, have a minimum of three (3) square feet per chicken, have secure door or gate closures, attached bottoms or anti-digging devices to prevent escape, and be built in such a manner to prevent access from predators and withstand weather.

(9) Outside enclosures for chickens or ducks shall have a minimum of ten (10) square feet per chicken.

(e) **Manure.** Other than on a farm, a manure pile may not be allowed to stand for longer than one (1) month between October 15 and April 30 or for longer than seven (7) days between May 1 and October 14. A manure pile on a lot less than 40,000 square feet may not be allowed to stand for more than seven (7) days.

To-Do Checklist

- Register your chickens using the "Maryland Poultry Registration Form". Include a copy with your permit application.
 - o Find the form attached or at http://mda.maryland.gov/animalhealth/forms2/poultry_registration.pdf
- Review requirements for chicken coop and enclosed run. You must have an approved coop and run PRIOR to having any chickens.
 - o See "Animal Outdoors" of Anne Arundel County Code 12-4-801 to ensure all regulations are followed.
 - o Note: Coops and enclosures for chickens and ducks on lots less than 40,000 square feet shall be located at least 25 feet from a side or rear lot line and 25 feet from any dwelling. For more information, please contact Zoning at 410-222-7437.
 - o See "Pets; livestock or fowl" of Anne Arundel County Code 18-4-104 to determine how many chickens or ducks may be possessed based on the lot size you possess.
- Build your coop and enclosed run according to requirements outlined. (see Anne Arundel County Code 18-4-104, 12-4-709, 12-4-710 and 12-4-801)
- Complete and sign the Chicken and Duck License Application.
 - o In order to be considered for approval, thoroughly read the conditions and initial next to each.
 - o Don't forget to print and sign your name with the date at the bottom of the application.
- Submit all completed permit applications and paperwork along with the site plan and payment of \$30.00 for the registration and inspection fee. Checks are made payable to the Anne Arundel County. Applications accepted at:
Anne Arundel County Animal Control
411 Maxell Frye Road
Millersville, MD 21108
- Schedule an inspection.



- **YOU MUST HAVE PASSED YOUR INSPECTION BEFORE YOU WILL BE ISSUED A LICENSE. YOU MUST POSSESS A CHICKEN AND DUCK LICENSE PRIOR TO BRINGING CHICKENS OR DUCKS TO THE PREMISES.**

Do more research on chickens! Peruse the internet, take a class on raising chickens, and attend forums. A list of useful websites can be found on the “Useful Sources” page.





Anne Arundel County Animal Control
Chicken and Duck License Application
PAGE TWO OF TWO

- 5) I am aware that I am responsible for keeping any and all chickens within the confines of my property at all times.
6) I am aware that chickens shall be provided with daily food and water, free of visible contamination...
7) I am aware that I am responsible for any property maintenance violations related to keeping chickens.
8) I am aware that I shall conform to any registration requirements of the Maryland Department of Agriculture...
9) I am aware that I am subject to random unannounced inspection upon the issuance of this permit.
10) I am aware that I am required to provide any and all chickens on my property a sturdy coop and an attached secure enclosure...
11) I am aware of Anne Arundel County Article 18 Title 4-Residential Districts, Subtitle 1 and have reviewed the requirements therein.
12) I acknowledge that I am solely responsible for assuring that chickens and ducks may be kept on the property under any applicable covenants or bylaws.
13) I acknowledge that the falsification of any information on the application is cause for revocation of the license.
14) I am aware that Anne Arundel County Code Article 12 requires all dogs and cats six (6) months of older have a license with the county.
15) I am aware that any uncorrected violation to conditions contained herein may result in the revocation of my license.

I certify under penalty of law that I have personally examined and am familiar with the information submitted in this document and attachment, and that based on my inquiry of those individuals immediately responsible for obtaining the information herein, I believe the submitted information is true, accurate, and complete.

Printed Name: _____ Signature _____
Date _____

FOR COUNTY USE ONLY

Permit Fee: \$30.00 Paid _____ Payment Type (circle): CASH CHECK # _____
Maximum number of chickens allowed (circle): N/A 4 8
Maximum number of ducks allowed (circle): N/A 4

Lots Size: _____

Cats (circle): YES NO Licensed (circle): YES NO
Dogs (circle): YES NO Licensed (circle): YES NO

Zoning Compliance (circle): YES NO PENDING: _____
Approval by: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Coop Compliance (circle): YES NO PENDING: _____
Approval by: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Enclosure Compliance (circle): YES NO PENDING: _____
Approval by: _____ Date: ____/____/____

AACAC FINAL APPROVAL _____ DATE _____

LICENSE NUMBER _____ EXPIRATION DATE: ____/____/____

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL

411 Maxwell Frye Road, Millersville, Maryland, 21108

Phone: (410) 222-8900 Fax: (410) 222-8915

www.aacounty.org/animalcontrol

Chicken Coop and Enclosure Requirements

Choosing the Right Home for Your Chickens

The Chicken and Duck License Application specifies how much space in the coop and the secure run that each chicken is required to have. Each chicken requires at least three (3) square feet in the coop and at least 10 square feet in the enclosure. Please refer to the table below:

Maximum number of chickens	<u>Minimum interior coop area (in square feet)</u>	<u>Minimum interior enclosure area (in square feet)</u>	Example dimensions
1	3	10	1.75'x1.75' coop, 2'x5' enclosure
2	6	20	3'x2' coop, 2'x10' enclosure
3	9	30	3'x3' coop, 5'x6' enclosure
4	12	40	3'x4' coop, 4'x10' enclosure
5	15	50	3'x5' coop, 7'x7.25' enclosure
6	18	60	3'x6' coop, 7.5'x8' enclosure
7	21	70	4'x5.25' coop, 7'x10' enclosure
8	24	80	6'x4' coop, 8'x10' enclosure

You must have submitted all application materials and have been notified by the County that your site plan was approved before you build your coop.

Coops have the same requirements as a shed. A building permit is not required for coops 64 square feet or less.

The Anne Arundel County Zoning Code applies to all accessory structures and setbacks within each residential zone. Please note that coops and enclosures must always be 25 feet from side or rear lot lines and 25 feet from any dwelling. Please reference **the County Code** for minimum setbacks for your residential zone. The County Code can be found online at <http://www.amlegal.com/library/md/annearundelco.shtml> . Chicken coops will be categorized under “Buildings accessory to single-family dwellings, other than as specified elsewhere in this table”.

If you belong to a home owners association (HOA), check with the rules and regulations as indicated for having chickens/ducks and chicken coops. Anne Arundel County approval does not override an HOA's approval.

Chicken Coop and Enclosure Guidelines

Choosing the Right Home for Your Chickens

There are many different chicken coop and enclosure designs available online, and any one can fit your style or need.

The design is up to you and your local rules and regulations. Anne Arundel County will approve coops and enclosures based on the Three S's: size, sturdiness, and security.

1. **Size:** Coops require at least three (3) square feet per chicken and attached enclosures require at least 10 square feet per chicken.
2. **Security:** Coops shall be completely enclosed on ALL sides. A protective cover shall cover the top of the attached secure enclosure. The enclosure openings shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent predator access.
3. **Sturdiness:** Coops and attached enclosures will be able to withstand weather and predator stressors.

The attached enclosure shall have the bottom secured to prevent predator access. The most common material for securing the sides and bottom of the enclosure is galvanized hardware cloth or welded wire mesh with half-inch openings. There are two options:

1. The enclosure shall be buried at least 12 inches into the ground. Before digging, call Miss Utility at 800-257-7777; or
2. The entire bottom of the enclosure is secured.

One type of structure often recommended for “backyard chickens” is a chicken shelter called a “chicken tractor”. A chicken tractor (also known as an ark) is a coop with an attached enclosure built without a solid floor to encourage foraging for grasses, weeds, bugs. This widens their diet and lowers their feed needs. Chicken tractors have wheels on them so you can easily move the shelter around your property. Chicken tractors are not required to be built on a foundation or anchored to the ground.



Photos courtesy of thecitychicken.com



Are Chickens Right for your Home?

Before you think about getting chickens, it is advised that you do some research of information including State and local laws on keeping chickens, how to care for chickens, the responsibilities regarding raising chickens, and how to create a chicken coop that's right for you. To start, see the "Useful Sources" page.

The Anne Arundel County Code states that each lot that is 10,000 square feet or greater and is improved by a single family dwelling may be allowed, upon issuance of a license, to have chickens or ducks; roosters are strictly prohibited on properties less than 40,000 square feet. Owners must have a coop and run approved by Anne Arundel County before they can have chickens on their property.

A sturdy coop with an attached, secure enclosure meeting County specifications must be provided to your chickens as a condition of ownership. According to the County Code, the coop shall have four (4) walls and the roof and must be constructed to prevent predators from gaining access to your chickens and their eggs. The enclosure must also be constructed to prevent predators from gaining access to your chickens and their eggs.



The coops and enclosures are subject to accessory structure setbacks. For information on zoning setback requirements, please contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 410-222-7437.



Choosing the Right Chicken

According to the County Code, only female chickens are allowed in residential areas with lots sizes less than 40,000 square feet.

All owners of chickens will have to apply with the **Maryland Department of Agriculture's Maryland Poultry Registration**. More information regarding the registration form can be found at http://www.mda.state.md.us/animal_health/poultryreg/index.php.

Researching chicken breeds will help find a perfect fit for you and your family. Consider:

- Temperament;
- Weather Tolerance;
- Chicken Size;
- Egg Size; and
- Egg production.

Much like rescue dogs and cats, you also have the option to adopt hens. There are several rescues in the area that are looking for homes for their chickens. For more information, see the "Useful Sources" page.



Look for chickens from reputable establishments where the birds are National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Certified. This certification verifies that the chickens that you receive are free of certain diseases. For more information on the NPIP Certification, please contact The NPIP Administrator for the State of Maryland, Kim Arnold, at 410-543-6610.



Useful Sources

Please visit the websites and read documents listed below for more information on keeping backyard chickens:

- **Maryland Poultry Premises Registration** by Maryland Department of Agriculture
http://www.mda.state.md.us/animal_health/poultryreg/index.php
http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/poultry_registration.pdf
- **Raising Your Home Chicken Flock** by University of Maryland Extension.
<http://www.healthybirds.umd.edu>
- **BackyardChickens.com** www.backyardchickens.com
- **TheCityChicken.com** www.thecitychicken.com
- **MyPetChicken.com** www.mypetchicken.com

Adopting Chickens

- **Cheryl's Rescue Ranch** in Odenton, MD 240-882-7963
- **Poplar Spring Sanctuary** in Poolesville, MD 301-428-8128
- **Petfinder.com** http://www.petfinder.com/pet-search?pet_breed=Chicken&animal_type=Bird&location=Annapolis%2C+MD
 - Look for Female chickens only.
- **Adoptapet.com** <http://www.adoptapet.com/other-pet-adoption#bird>
 - Look for Female chickens only.

