

Town of Rocky Mountain House

Keeping Urban Hens



Information Bulletin
JANUARY 2025

The Town of Rocky Mountain House allows for the restricted keeping of hens within the Town limits under the [Livestock Bylaw](#).

The **five-step process** of becoming a licensed owner of urban hens in Rocky Mountain House is:



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| 1 | Apply to the Town for a Coop License. |
| 2 | Learn about the health needs of hens. |
| 3 | Develop a coop in conformance with the Town's Livestock Bylaw. |
| 4 | Contact the Community Peace Officers to have the coop inspected to ensure it is within the guidelines. |
| 5 | Keep the coop clean, well-maintained and odour-free. |

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Apply to the Town for a Coop License

The Town's Livestock Bylaw requires that all residents that wish to keep hens within Town limits must receive an **annual** Coop License.

- If it is a first time license, you must complete the [Coop License Application](#) and submit it to the Protective Services Department.
- Every coop must pay the annual license fee each year, as per the the Town's Rates, Fees and Charges Bylaw. *The annual license fee is \$75.00 but is reduced to \$50.00 if payment is made prior to January 31 of the calendar year.*
- For each license issued, a maximum of four (4) hens is permitted in each coop. Having more than four hens or a rooster on a residential property is **not** permitted.



Contact Us

Protective Services Department

Email: PeaceOfficers@trmh.ca

Phone: 403-846-4268

www.rockymtnhouse.com

2 Learn about the health needs of hens

It is important to have a knowledge of hen care and nutrition prior to embarking on urban hen ownership. Hens can be expensive and are also fragile to changing weather environments.

Comprehensive care instructions for small flocks are available from the Government of Alberta:

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9780773261174>

A few quick facts about hen needs:

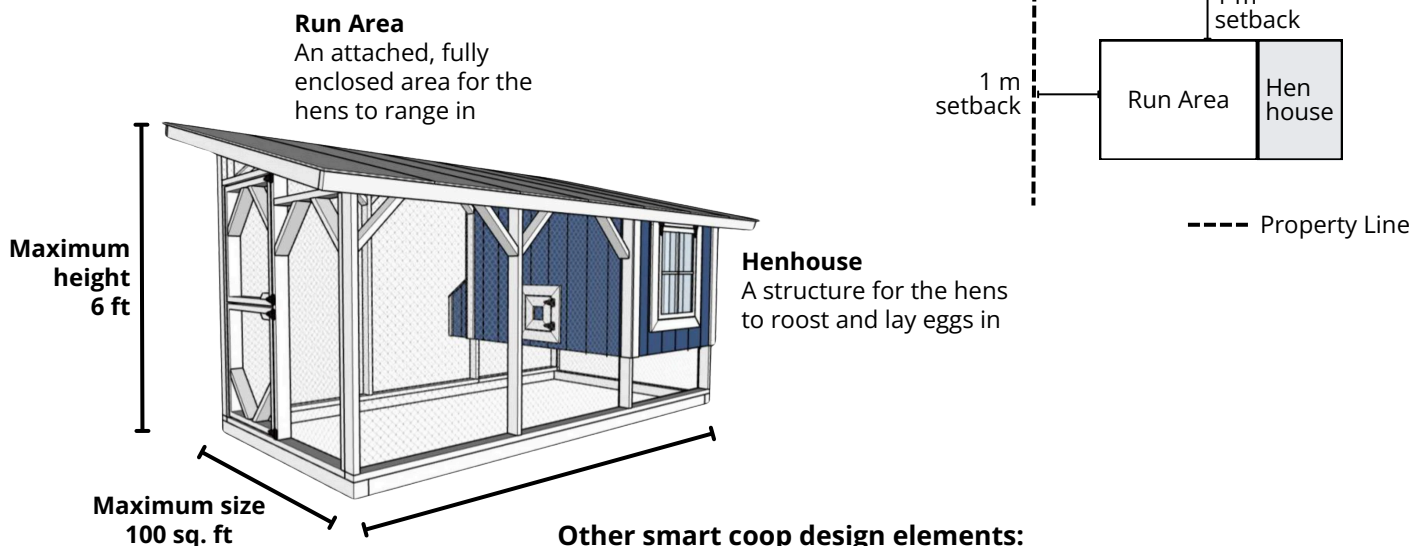
- Hens need approximately 15 hours of daylight to lay eggs. Shorter days should be supplemented with artificial light in the coop.
- Hens need an area of loose soil to dig their own holes and have “dirt baths”.
- Hens are social animals, therefore having more than two is encouraged.
- Hens need an elevated place to sleep/roost.

3 Develop a coop in conformance with the Town’s Livestock Bylaw

The Town’s Livestock Bylaw requires that every coop must be fully enclosed, with both a henhouse and attached run area.

The maximum allowable size of the coop is 100 square feet and can be no more than 6 feet in height. Hens are not permitted to be at-large or unconfined in rear yards, so be sure to factor this in when developing your coop.

The coop must be placed on the property in conformance to the Town’s Land Use Bylaw, which requires a 1.0 m setback from the side and rear property lines.



Other smart coop design elements:

- Sloped roofs to prevent water pooling.
- Elevated nesting boxes to reduce contamination.
- Easy-access doors for simple cleaning and egg collection.
- Venting to maintain good airflow and prevent ammonia buildup.
- Provide lighting, especially during winter months.



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Contact the Community Peace Officers to have the coop inspected

For new Coop License Applications, you must contact the Community Peace Officers to arrange for an on-site inspection of the coop to make sure it is within the guidelines. Once the coop inspection is passed and applicable fee is paid, the license will be issued and hens will be allowed.

Community Peace Officers can be reached at 403-846-4268 or peaceofficers@trmh.ca.

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Keep the coop clean, well-maintained and odour-free

By following these steps, your urban chicken coop will stay clean, in good repair, and free from strong odors, ensuring a healthy environment for your flock and happy neighbors!

Regular Cleaning Routine

- **Daily:** Refill water and check for any signs of illness or injury in chickens.
- **Every Two Weeks:** Change bedding, remove droppings, and scrub feeders and waterers.
- **Annually:** Deep clean the coop, hose off and spray with a poultry-safe disinfectant.

Waste & Odour Management

- Chicken manure has a natural odour—prevent buildup through regular cleaning.
- Use ample bedding (like pine shavings or straw) to absorb waste and control odour and moisture.
- Compost manure properly to reduce odours and create garden fertilizer

Pest & Predator Prevention

- Store feed in sealed containers to prevent attracting pests.
- Secure all coop openings to keep out predators.

Structural Maintenance

- Regularly inspect for damage to walls, roof, and flooring.
- Fix any leaks to prevent damp conditions that breed bacteria.
- Replace broken or rotting wood to maintain a sturdy, secure coop.
- Check and repair hinges, locks, and wire mesh to keep the coop predator-proof.

Further Restrictions

- You are not permitted to slaughter hens on your property.
- Dead hens must be disposed to a farm, abattoir, veterinarian, mobile slaughter unit or any other licensed facility.
- Hen waste must be stored in a fully enclosed structure or container.
- Eggs produced from the keeping of urban hens must not be sold commercially.
- Hens are not allowed to be unconfined on a hen owner's property.

Enforcement

The Town's Community Peace Officers ensure compliance with the Livestock Bylaw for the "Keeping of Hens" program. Coops may be inspected periodically or in response to complaints to ensure cleanliness and adherence to regulations.

Healthy sustainable living is the goal of this program and active enforcement ensures that all participants can enjoy their hens in a safe and healthy manner!

If an Officer finds a hen within Town limits, they will first attempt to locate the owner using the Town's registry. If unsuccessful, the hen may be impounded for up to 72 hours.

Complaints: To report concerns about hen keeping, contact the Protective Services Department.

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