

Proposed City Zoning Ordinance for Bountiful, Utah

City Ordinance governing fowl in the City of Bountiful Utah:

Keeping Backyard Chickens:

It is lawful to keep poultry (residential chickens) in zones R4, R3, R2, and R1 of Bountiful City under the following terms and conditions:

- A. Chickens shall be contained within a secure outdoor enclosed area.
 - 1. The enclosed area shall include a covered, ventilated, and predator-resistant chicken coop.
 - 2. Coops shall provide space for chickens to roost.
 - 3. Coop and other enclosures must be situated at least 25 feet from any house used for human habitation including neighbor's residential dwelling.
 - 4. Coops, cages & runs shall be maintained in sanitary condition & cleaned as necessary to prevent offensive odor at property line of adjacent parcels.
 - 5. Chickens are allowed to free range on owners property however must be restricted from entering adjacent property.
- B. Number of chickens allowed.
 - 1. No more than six (6) hens shall be allowed for each single-family dwelling. Owners of parcels larger than 1/3 acre may have six additional hens. Residents are cautioned about having more than 6 hens because of the work involved in keeping the coop and run odor free.
[Consider using square foot area of the back yard as a guideline for number of chickens – it's easier to measure and calculate. The area in the back yard seems to be the determining factor anyway]
 - 2. Roosters are not allowed. Newly hatched roosters shall be removed within 5 months of hatch (or within 2 weeks of when they begin crowing).
- C. Related poultry guidelines.
 - 1. Chicken feed must be stored in rodent and predator resistant containers.
 - 2. Feeders shall be suspended rather than placed on the ground to minimize attracting rodents.
 - 3. Slaughtering of birds is permitted but must be conducted out of the view of neighbors.

Nuisance Resolution Suggestions

In an effort to minimize expenses for Bountiful City and to preserve our heritage as a friendly community, we encourage citizens to seek resolution with the chicken owner prior to calling the city offices. Owners of chickens are highly motivated to resolve issues because they value the benefits they receive from owning chickens. Most issues have a quick solution. If the owner fails to resolve the issue and you are not able to reach a satisfactory resolution (compromise) within a reasonable time (one or two weeks), call the city offices with a nuisance complaint.

Chickens are subject to the nuisance animal clause in the Bountiful City Code (8-2-121 Nuisance Animals) covering noise, odor and unsanitary conditions.

Prior to acquiring chickens, residents are encouraged to read educational materials about caring for chickens, building coops and the methods to avoid offensive odors (care of litter, cleaning up droppings & composting).

Noise

Roosters generate most nuisance noise and are not allowed. Request that owners remove the noisy rooster. Allowance should be granted for the occasional cackle of hens. They make noise when they lay eggs and when they are frightened or nervous such as being stalked by a neighborhood cat. 5 or 6 hens are usually much quieter than an average outside dog. Hens are never noisy during the hours of darkness unless a predator is bothering them. If a neighbor feels that normal chicken noise is unacceptable we suggest that both neighbors attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution or compromise.

Resolution Options:

- **Construct a wood or vinyl fence** as a noise barrier. Sometimes both neighbors are willing to contribute to the expense because both benefit from the privacy.
- **Insert slats** in an existing chain link fence.
- **Move the chicken run** and/or coop to another part of the yard further away from the neighbors' residential dwelling.

Odor

If an offensive odor is detectable on an adjacent property, request that the owner immediately clean up or remove the cause of the odor. Odors are caused by coop litter getting wet or by a buildup of droppings that remain wet. In well-maintained coops the droppings dry quickly and no longer produce significant odor.

Resolution Options:

- **Use the “Deep Litter” method** inside the coop – (keeps coop droppings dry, avoids wet build-up).
- **Keep coop litter dry.** If litter gets wet you must spread it out in the sun to dry or immediately place it in the compost bin to decompose.
- **Add more litter** to the coop (deep litter method).
- **Build a “catch board”** under the roost to catch droppings and make clean up easier. Also keeps coop litter clean longer.
- **Clean the coop more often.**
- **Clean nesting boxes more often.**
- **Clean the run more often.**
- **Dry droppings** before collecting for use in a compost bin (or giving to neighbors for their garden/compost bin).
- **Keep droppings dry** in storage while waiting to place in compost or give to neighbors.
- **Compost droppings** with plant matter such as weeds or grass clippings to help control the odor of composting.

Dust

Chicken owners must keep chicken run dust to a minimum. Request corrective action from chicken owners if dust levels are affecting your property. Dust is caused when the chicken run gets dry, gets over grazed and/or plants die.

Be aware that a small area of dry loose dirt is beneficial for the chickens. Chickens love to take a “dust bath”. This is their natural way to care for themselves. The dust bath kills tiny mites that can live on the chickens.

Dust Control Options:

- **Water the run** to keep grass and weeds growing and dust to a minimum. This benefits the chickens and owner because the hens are healthier if they eat grass, weeds and seeds. They also will eat less commercial feed if they supplement their diet with grass. The droppings can be washed into the grass of a grass-covered run with a hose every day or two. This solves the manure problem and fertilizes the grass as you water.
- **Move the chicken run often** so the vegetation is never destroyed in any one area. This method is common with small flocks when a “chicken tractor” type of coop is used. A tractor coop is a movable coop and run, which can be moved around the back yard. The tractor has an open bottom and sits right on the grass. Moving the coop often disperses the droppings and limits the grazing in any one area of grass.
- **Increase the size of the run** so it doesn’t get overgrazed.
- **Reduce the number of chickens** in the run so it doesn’t get overgrazed.

Chickens Entering Adjacent Property

If hens leave the owners yard and enter the street or adjacent property, notify the owner immediately. Owners want to keep their hens safe and do not want to aggravate neighbors.

Resolution Options:

- **Better fences** on coops & runs to keep hens contained.
- **Limit free range options** for the hens by using fences, etc.
- **Clip the wings** of hens that fly over fences.

Sensitive Areas on adjacent property

When a chicken coop or run is located near sensitive areas on an adjacent property such as a frequently used patio or children's play area we suggest these resolution options.

- **Install a solid fence** such as wood or vinyl in that area. A solid fence should provide a visual, dust and sound barrier. Sometimes neighbors are willing to split the cost of the new fence because both benefit by the privacy.
- **Fence the chickens away** from that particular area.
- **Move the chicken run/coop** away from that particular area.