

Seattle Municipal Code for Keeping Chickens

The number of chickens and other animals allowed on city properties is designed for the health and happiness of the animals and the human environment. Following is information regarding Seattle Codes in regards to keeping chickens and other animals on your 'urban farm'.
Special thanks to Seattle Tilth for the reprinting of this information.

Title 23 - Land Use Code

Subtitle IV - Land Use Regulations

Division 2 - Authorized Uses and Development Standards

Chapter 23.44 - Residential, Single-Family

SMC 23.44.048 Keeping of animals.

The keeping of small animals, farm animals, domestic fowl and bees is permitted outright in all zones as an accessory use to any principal use permitted outright or to a permitted conditional use, in each case subject to the standards of this Section.

A. Small Animals. Up to three (3) small animals may be kept accessory to each business establishment or dwelling unit on a lot, except as follows:

1. In no case is more than one (1) miniature potbelly pig allowed per business establishment or dwelling unit (see subsection B of this section).
2. In single-family zones,
 - a. accessory dwelling units shall not be considered separate dwelling units for the purpose of this section;
 - b. up to four (4) small animals are permitted on lots of at least twenty thousand (20,000) square feet; and
 - c. one (1) additional small animal is permitted for each five thousand (5,000) square feet of lot area in excess of twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. Accessory structures, including kennels, for four (4) or more animals must be at least ten (10) feet from any other lot in a residential zone.

B. Miniature Potbelly Pigs. That type of swine commonly known as the Vietnamese, Chinese, or Asian Potbelly Pig (*Sus scrofa bittatus*) may be kept as a small animal, provided that no swine that is greater than twenty-two (22) inches in height at the shoulder or more than one hundred fifty (150) pounds in weight may be kept in the City.

C. Domestic Fowl. Up to three (3) domestic fowl may be kept on any lot in addition to the small animals permitted in subsection A. For each one thousand (1,000) square feet of lot area in excess of the minimum lot area required for the zone or, if there is no minimum lot area, for each one thousand (1,000) square feet of lot area in excess of five thousand (5,000) square feet, one (1) additional domestic fowl may be kept.

D. Farm Animals. Cows, horses, sheep and other similar farm animals are permitted only on lots of at least twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. The keeping of swine is prohibited, except for miniature potbelly pigs allowed under subsection B of this section.

1. One (1) farm animal for every ten thousand (10,000) square feet of lot area is permitted.
2. Farm animals and structures housing them must be kept at least fifty (50) feet from any lot in a residential zone.

E. Beekeeping. Beekeeping is permitted outright as an accessory use, when registered with the State Department of Agriculture, provided that:

1. No more than four (4) hives, each with only one (1) swarm, shall be kept on lots of less than ten thousand (10,000) square feet.
2. Hives shall not be located within twenty-five (25) feet of any lot line except when situated eight (8) feet or more above the grade immediately adjacent to the grade of the lot on which the hives are located or when situated less than eight (8) feet above the adjacent existing lot grade and behind a solid fence or hedge six (6) feet high parallel to any property line within twenty-five (25) feet of a hive and extending at least twenty (20) feet beyond the hive in both directions.

F. Miniature Goats. The types of goats commonly known as Pygmy, Dwarf and Miniature Goats may be kept as small animals, provided that male miniature goats are neutered and all miniature goats are dehorned. Nursing offspring of miniature goats licensed according to the provisions of this Code may be kept until weaned, no longer than 12 weeks from birth, without violating the limitations of (Ord. 122508, Section 1, 2007; Ord. 122311, Section 23, 2006)

Definitions of terms used in Land Use Code. Link to Recent ordinances passed since 9/30/03 which may amend this section. (Note: this information is provided as an aid to customers, but is not guaranteed to provide comprehensive information about related recent ordinances. For more information, contact the Seattle City Clerk's Office at 206-684-5175, or by e-mail at clerk@seattle.gov)

Seattle Tilth

Seattle Tilth offers seminars on chicken related subjects, goats and organic gardening throughout the year. Contact Seattle Tilth directly at (206) 633-0451 to inquire of further information and register.



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