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TOWN OF DEDHAM
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Chickens in Dedham – How to Apply for a Permit

Any resident keeping chickens on their property **must** get a permit through the Health Department. **Roosters are not allowed in Dedham**. Please read through the Board of Health's Keeping of Domestic Animal Regulations.

The Board of Health has prepared the following Frequently Asked Questions to help residents understand and navigate the permitting process in accordance with town regulations:

How do I get a permit?
1. Complete the Health Department Application.
2. Submit a plot plan showing the following:
   - Property lines
   - Chicken coop location and dimensions
   - Location of accessory structures, principal structures, abutting structures, fences/barriers, wetlands, and septic systems, drinking well within 100 feet of property lines
   - All direct abutters of the proposed property requesting to keep domestic animals
   - Location of manure containers and drainage details
3. Provide the following detailed plans:
   - Detailed manure management plan for the management and disposal of animal waste and feed storage
   - Detailed pest management plan for the prevention of odors, flies, vermin, and other pests
   - Detailed plan of the proposed chicken coop structure

How many chickens can I have?
- The total number of chickens is dependent upon the following factors:
  - The size of the chicken coop – at least 3 square feet of floor space must be available inside the coop for each chicken.
  - The size of your property – lot must include a minimum 1/8 acre of useable land (no wetlands).
  - The annual permit fee to keep chickens is $35, regardless of the number of chickens.

What are the property requirements?
- Distance requirements for chicken coop:
  - 100 feet from wetlands
  - 15 feet from sideline and rear line (all property lines) or public way
  - 30 feet from abutting dwelling
  - 10 feet from own dwelling
  - 100 feet from any public or private well used as a drinking water supply

What are the chicken coop requirements?

- Cannot be designed, constructed an/or maintained in a manner that would likely endanger the animals or promote unsanitary conditions.
- Supply of potable water must be available for cleaning and drinking purposes.
- Must be adequately ventilated, provide food and water, and provide protection from weather elements.
- Must be kept in a clean and sanitary condition, free from decaying food, filth, feces, vermin infestation, and stagnant water.
- Food shall be stored in a sealed, moisture-proof and vermin-proof container.

What is the administrative process for receiving a permit through the Health Department?

1. The Health Department must contact the Building Commissioner and Conservation Agent to receive clearance for keeping chickens on the proposed property.
2. Notification of abutters: the applicant must notify abutters by certified mail of their intent to keep chickens on their property. Proof of notification must be provided to the Health Department. Abutters with objections must file objections in writing to the Health Department. 14 days after abutters have been notified, if there are no objections and if the applicant meets all requirements, the Health Department may issue the permit. Abutter is defined as owners of the properties whose boundaries touch the boundaries (front, back, left, and right) of the lot where the animals will be kept.
3. If there are objections from neighbors, a hearing with the Board of Health must be held. The applicant shall serve a copy of the hearing notice to all abutters by certified mail at least 7 days prior to any hearing.
4. A hearing is also required if an applicant is seeking a variance from the regulations.
5. At a hearing, the Board of Health may vote to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the permit.