



# McCandless Backyard Chicken Permit Guidelines



In July 2021, Town Council passed a series of ordinance amendments to permit responsible ownership of backyard chickens on single-family properties. Participants in the backyard chicken program must obtain a building/zoning permit from the Town and display a Town-issued Certificate of Approval directly on the coop.

If you are interested in the backyard chicken program, these guidelines will help you learn about where you can locate a coop and chicken run on your property, how big your coop needs to be to fit your desired number of chickens, and what aspects of the coop’s appearance are regulated.

For a full list of chicken care performance standards, please review Section 701.08(d) of the Town of McCandless Codified Ordinances.

If you just want to find out what must be submitted with a backyard chicken application, skip to the last section.

## Where to locate your coop

The entire coop-and-run structure must be located at least 50’ from all property lines and in the rear yard only.

The Town needs a survey of your property prepared by a registered surveyor to verify your backyard chicken enclosures can comply with the setbacks required by the zoning code. You will also need to take your copy of the survey to MTSA to verify there are no easements conflicting with your coop’s proposed location.

## Designing your coop

### *Space requirements*

The number of chickens you are permitted to keep depends on the size of your coop. Chickens must be provided with at least 2 square feet of indoor coop space per bird. Chicken runs must provide at least 10 square feet of run space per bird. Your permitted number of chickens will be noted on your Certificate of Approval.

This table can help you calculate how big your coop and run must be to keep your desired number of chickens:

I want to keep _____ chickens	× 2	= _____ sq ft of indoor coop space
	× 10	= _____ sq ft of outdoor run space

### *Appearance standards*

The materials used to construct the chicken coop must be uniform for each element of the enclosure. This means the walls should be made of the same material, the roof only uses one form of covering (i.e. shingles), and windows and other openings also use the same materials. The materials may be different across different features.

Example: Window and door trim may be different from the material used for the walls, but all of the trim must be the same.

Coops must also provide natural lighting, protection from the weather, and adequate ventilation.

This checklist can help you determine whether your coop design is compliant with the backyard chicken program's regulations:

#### **Function**

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- Provides natural lighting and ventilation
- Windows covered with 1/2" hardware cloth
- Door can be locked

#### **Appearance**

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- All walls made of same materials in one color
- Windows and trim made of same materials in one color
- Roof is made of one material in one color
- Scrap and waste board are not used

## Screening your coop and run

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Your chickens must be in either their coop, their chicken run, or a fenced-in area at all times. Depending on the shape of your property and proximity to neighbors, you may be required to install screening fences or shrubs.

### **What if I don't have a fence?**

Your chickens will be limited to the run. However, if the chicken coop and run could potentially be seen from neighboring properties or from the street, it must additionally be enclosed by a fence or shrub screen that is at least 4' tall. Your application will need to show how you intend to satisfy this requirement.

### **Do I need to get a fence permit separately?**

If you're applying for a coop and run permit, the review of the screening fence is included in the permit fee. You do not need to apply for a fence permit separately.

### **Does the screening have to be at least 50' from the property line too?**

No. The screening fence or shrubs are permitted to follow the standard fence regulations in the Town's zoning code.

### **Are my chickens allowed to roam outside of their chicken run if my yard is fenced?**

If your yard is securely fenced in, your chickens may roam outside of the run, but within the fence, only under your direct supervision to ensure they do not escape the enclosure.

## Required documents and information

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The following information must be included in your permit submittal:

- Survey of your property prepared by a registered surveyor with proposed location and dimensions of coop and run drawn directly on survey copy  
\*MTSA must stamp your survey to verify no easements conflict with your proposed enclosures.
- One of the following:  
Spec drawings/product brochure of your proposed coop  
A list of materials to be used for each element if your coop is not pre-made
- Completed Building/Zoning Permit application
- RENTERS must provide written permission from the property owner or landlord to keep chickens
- Permit fee of **\$50** can be paid by cash or check at Town Hall

**Care requirements for backyard chickens set by Section 701.08(d):**

The keeping of chickens for personal use and enjoyment, and any coop or run used for such purpose, is subject to the following requirements:

- (1) Upon issuing zoning approval for the erection of a chicken coop, the Town shall issue a Certificate of Approval. The Certificate must be displayed on the coop.
- (2) Care of chickens.
  - A. All chickens must be in a coop, chicken run, or fenced area at all times. Chickens may be in a securely fenced yard if supervised so that they cannot stray beyond the premises on which they are secured. The chickens shall be secured within the coop during non-daylight hours.
  - B. Chickens shall be provided with access to feed and clean water at all times. All feed, water, and other such items associated with the keeping of chickens shall be properly stored in a clean and sanitary manner so as to prevent the infestation of rats, mice, or other rodents.
  - C. Chicken droppings shall be removed and collected daily in a rat-proof and fly-tight container. The container shall remain closed when waste is not being added or removed. At least twice a week, the waste in the container shall be disposed in a manner that eliminates the presence of fly larvae.
  - D. No person shall keep or harbor chickens in the Town in a manner that creates an offensive odor, excessive noise, or unsanitary conditions which disturb neighboring residences or threatens public health.
- (3) Chicken coops and runs.
  - A. Chicken coops and runs shall be easy to access, clean, and maintain; designed to prevent injury to the birds; and provide natural lighting.
  - B. Coops and chicken runs shall provide shade in the warm weather, suitable protection from inclement weather, and adequate ventilation.
  - C. A chicken run shall be adequately fenced to contain the chickens on the property and to prevent predators from gaining access to the chicken run.
  - D. Pine shavings or straw should be used for the chicken bedding. The owner shall regularly clean out any wet or compacted litter and shall remove slippery surfaces.
  - E. A chicken coop shall be enclosed on all sides and shall have a roof and doors. Access doors must be able to be shut and locked at night. Openings, windows, and vents must be covered with vermin-, predator- and bird-proof wire of 1/2-inch hardware cloth.
  - F. Materials used for making a chicken coop shall be uniform for each element of the enclosure such that the walls are made of the same material, the roof has the same shingles or other covering, and any windows or opening are constructed using the same materials. The use of scrap, waste board, or similar material is prohibited. A coop shall be painted or stained; the color shall be in harmony with the surrounding area.
- (4) Composting. Chicken manure may be composted only on the property where the chickens are housed with the composted material then applied to the property's gardens or yards.
- (5) No person shall keep a rooster.