

BACKYARD HEN KEEPING GUIDELINES

Table of Contents

Hen Care and Safety	2
Hen Enclosure Specifications	2
Coop Specifications	4
Run Specifications	4
Example Hen Enclosure Diagram	5
Inspection and Enforcement	6

Hen Care and Safety

- Hen keepers must engage in good management and husbandry practices to prevent diseases and distress. Hens must be provided with appropriate food, water, shelter, light, warmth, ventilation, veterinary care and opportunities for essential behaviours such as scratching, pecking, dustbathing, roosting and socializing.
- Hen keepers must follow biosecurity procedures recommended by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Please see the [National Biosecurity Standards and Biosecurity Principles for Poultry Service Industry Biosecurity Guide](#).
- Hens and coops must be inspected regularly for signs of health problems or disease. The City must be notified immediately of any disease that may affect the public or other hen keepers and the steps that have been taken to rectify the situation.
- Hen enclosures must be kept in good repair and in sanitary conditions to prevent negative impacts including but not limited to: attracting nuisance animals, the spread of food over the property and excessive smells or noise.
- Leftover feed and manure must be removed and discarded to prevent nuisance odours.
- In the winter, runs must be wrapped in corrugated plastic, heavy polyethylene wrap or tarpaulin.
- The coop must have adequate ventilation at the top of the coop to reduce moisture and moderate the temperature in the winter.
- On-site slaughter or euthanizing of hens is prohibited. If removal of a hen is required, the hen may be euthanized humanely by a veterinarian, moved to a new home or taken to a licensed abattoir.

Hen Enclosure Specifications

The hen enclosure includes both the coop and the run. Hen enclosures must be weather and predator proof. All enclosures will be evaluated on whether they prevent hens from escaping and other animals from entering. Additionally, enclosures must have adequate ventilation, climate-appropriate roosting platforms/bars, nest boxes, and sufficient perch locations.

For sizing, the total hen enclosure:

- must not exceed a maximum floor area of 9.2 square metres (m²);
- must be located a minimum of:
 - 1.2 metres (m) from all adjacent property lines,
 - 1.5 m from the property’s house, and
 - 3 m from windows and doors of the residential structure on the property and any neighbouring house;
- must be a maximum height of 1.8 m or less; and
- must include the appropriate amount of coop and run space for the number of hens to be housed.

Applicants can follow Table 1, below, to guide them in sizing their hen enclosures appropriately to the number of hens they intend to keep.

Table 1. Site and Hen Enclosure Area and Dimensions

Minimum Hen Enclosure Dimensions and Areas										
# Hens	Coop Size (m)*		Coop area (m)*	Run Size (m)*		Run area (m)*	Enclosure Size (m)*		Min. Area Metric (m ²)**	Min. Area Imperial (ft ²)
	Length	Width		Length	Width		Length	Width		
3	1.05	1.05	1.11	1.66	1.66	2.76	2.71	2.71	3.87	41.66
4	1.22	1.22	1.48	1.92	1.92	3.68	3.13	3.13	5.16	55.54
5	1.36	1.36	1.85	2.14	2.14	4.60	3.50	3.50	6.45	69.43
6	1.49	1.49	2.22	2.35	2.35	5.52	3.84	3.84	7.74	83.31

Backyard Area Requirements with Setbacks						
# Hens	Minimum Yard Length (m) <i>(assuming 1.2m from fence setback and 3m from windows and doors of residence building)</i>		Minimum Yard Width (m) <i>(assuming 1.2m from property line on both sides of the rear yard)</i>		Min. Yard Size (m ²)*	Min. Yard Size (ft ²)
3	6.91		5.11		35.37	380.71
4	7.33		5.53		40.60	436.99
5	7.70		5.90		45.50	489.72
6	8.04		6.24		50.16	539.93

*Measurements provided assume that the built structures will be square in shape.

**Enclosure area provided assumes that the coop is not elevated. If an elevated coop is proposed by the applicant, the overall enclosure area may be smaller.

Coop Specifications

The coop within the hen enclosure must be enclosed, insulated, heated, and ventilated to function in all seasons. Ventilation is recommended at one square foot per hen, at the top of the coop, adjustable, and sheltered from wind, rain and snow. Windows that create a draft at hen level in the winter will not be permitted.

Heating or lighting the coop on a permanent basis may require consultation with the City of Leduc Planning and Development Department regarding an [electrical permit](#).

Coops must:

- Provide a minimum of 0.37 m² of coop area per hen;
- Be weather, predator, and rodent proof;
- Have adequate ventilation while being free of drafts;
- Possess at least 1 nest box for every 3 hens;
- Have at least one smooth, rounded roost available that is 1.5-3.0 inches wide; and
- Have appropriate bedding material (e.g., not hay).

Run Specifications

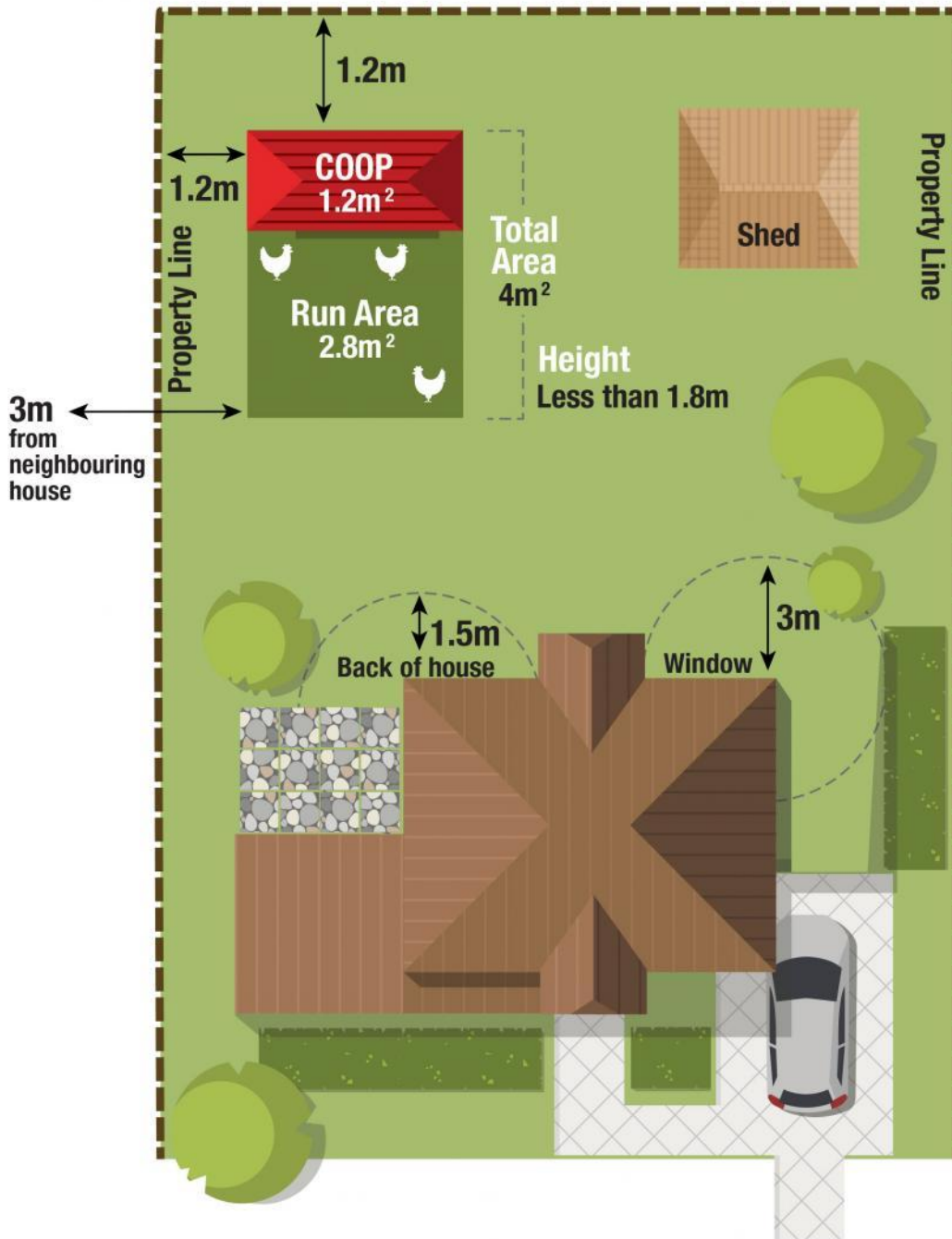
Runs may have either plant-based (e.g, grass, ground cover, etc.) or bare earth floors. The run within the hen enclosure must be weatherproof, with shade available and an appropriate winter wrap for colder months. The run must also be predator and rodent proof, by being secured with hardware mesh and NOT chicken wire.

Runs must:

- Be attached to the coop;
- Provide a minimum of 0.92 m² of run area per hen;
- Have a water source and dust bath available.

Example Hen Enclosure Diagram

Backyard Three Hen Coop Example
Minimum Requirements



Inspection and Enforcement

- After the hen enclosure is built, the Environmental Inspector will inspect the work to confirm the structures have been built to the outlined criteria. Additional inspections may be conducted bi-annually to ensure the hen enclosure is sufficient in both summer and winter conditions and may be conducted more frequently if a complaint is received.
- Complaints regarding unsightly premise, smell or noise can be subject to further enforcement action by the City of Leduc Enforcement Services under the [Community Standards Bylaw 995-2018](#).
- Failure to comply with the guidelines at any time may result in the participant's licence being revoked. Individuals continuing to keep hens without a licence will be subject to further enforcement action by City of Leduc Enforcement Services under the [Animal Licencing and Control Bylaw 1019-2019](#) for keeping a prohibited animal.

Participant licences may become void or be revoked in the following circumstances:

- When any information such as the Applicant Information or Site Information changes from the Licence Application without notification of and approval from the City of Leduc. In this case, a new application process must be initiated.
- Should a backyard site, hen enclosure or licence holder be non-compliant with the guidelines at any time, the City has the authority to revoke that participant's hen keeping licence. A 14-day written notice will be provided within which time hens and the hen enclosure must be removed from the property.
 - The timeframe for removal may be extended at the discretion of the Environmental Inspector.
 - All costs and associated expenditures related to the removal of hen keeping structures are the responsibility of the participant.