

FEE PAID _____
RECEIPT NO. _____
REGISTRATION NO. _____

FEES: \$50.

Town of Merton - Zoning Division
W314N7624 State Rd 83
PO Box 128, North Lake, WI 53064
Phone: 262-966-2651 Fax: 262-966-2801
Email: planner@townofmerton.com



Registration Form for Recreational Chickens

Town of Merton regulations and Best Management Practices regarding the keeping of recreational chickens require lots between 40,000 square feet and three acres.

Tax Key Number

Name:

Lot size:

Property address:

Address where chickens are kept

Mailing address:

(If different)

Email address:

Phone number:

Number of chickens you are keeping:

Limit is five (5) chickens per lot (40,000SF minimum lot size)

Size of coop and coop/pen location:

Attach survey/site plan and sketch

Explain how manure will be disposed of/
removed from site:

This registration is non-transferable. The applicant understands and agrees their chickens are not to become a nuisance or burden on the community or neighbors which would violate this or other applicable ordinances. Failure to comply with the provisions of this or related ordinance shall result in fees, fine, penalties, and possible revocation in accordance to law. The applicant further understands that the Town of Merton may revoke this registration if the property is found to be in violation of the Zoning Ordinance or any ordinance regarding the keeping of recreational chickens. Failure to register and pay the required fee may result in double registration fee. By signing this form, the owner is giving their consent for the Town of Merton to inspect the site as necessary and related to this application even if the property has been posted against trespassing pursuant to Wis. Stat.

☐ Applicant has received Best Management Practices for recreational chicken keeping.

Signature of Property Owner

Date

Signature of Town of Merton Staff

Date

Please sign and return this form to the Town of Merton **with the required fee, survey/site plan, and sketch**. A copy of your approved registration will be signed and returned to the mail or email address provided above. If you have any questions regarding this form, please contact the Planner at Planner@townofmerton.com.

Fact Sheet & Recommended Best Management Practices for Recreational Chicken Keeping

Lifespan

- Chickens require daily care and can live up to 14 years or longer. An egg laying hen begins laying eggs at 4-6 months, peaks at 18 months and then declines with age.

Cost

- Start up: \$2,000-3,000 for coop, tools, cleaning equipment, maintenance, heating/cooling systems, dishes, food storage, scale, nets/fencing, security, lighting permits, etc. This does not include the per bird cost.
- Annual: \$300 per bird for food, bedding, nutrients, hygiene, permits, utilities.
- Vet care (per bird per service): \$100 plus additional as needed for illness or injury.

Time

- Daily average of one half to one hour per day minimum for a few birds: clean up droppings, clean dishes, provide medication/check health, feeding, egg collection, secure the chickens nightly. Chickens need to be tended to twice daily and arrangements must be made to have someone care for your chickens in your absence.
- Weekly average one hour minimum: maintain pen, add litter/straw to coop, parasite control, physical exam, grooming, spending time with chicken.
- Other recurrent tasks, 2 hours minimum, 4-6 times per year: thoroughly clean the coop and pen, winterize the coop and pen, travel time to purchase food supplies, coop/pen construction/repair.

Regulations

- Can you have chickens on your property? Check with Town and County, your Homeowners Association and even your neighbors before investing in the chickens and equipment. See the *Town of Merton Registration Form for Recreational Chickens* for details.

Public Health Risks

- Keeping chickens has some inherent health risks. The birds often carry harmful bacteria, such as salmonella, that can pose a risk of illness, especially to children, from handling the birds.
- Before eating the meat and/or eggs, read up on poultry processing recommendations.

Light

- Egg layers need a light source – either natural light or full spectrum incandescent lights in order to lay eggs. In the colder months, egg production decreases if light is not provided.

Noise

- Chickens should have darkness at night to help keep them quiet.
- Insulation should be used on the coop to help muffle noise and to keep the chickens warm in the colder months.
- Fenced pens also help with noise as does providing landscaping of the pen and yards.

Sanitation/odor/pests

- Chickens attract insects which may carry diseases, so the environment should be kept clean and free from insect-producing debris on a daily basis.
- Birds should be fenced for their own protection from people, predators, migratory waterfowl and game birds that carry their own germs and diseases (in the form of bacteria, viruses and parasites).
- Limit human interaction with chickens as animal waste can compromise shoes/clothing, lawn and garden equipment, tools, egg cartons, etc. Do not share items with other homeowners.
- Daily clean up and disinfecting is essential and helps with other unsanitary, aesthetic, or nuisance concerns, including pollution/contamination of soil and water. It is recommended coops be cleaned/disinfected daily and debris/litter, nesting material, dirt, feathers, and other materials cleaned up and managed so as not to decay. Wet litter shall be removed daily. A more thorough cleaning of the coop should be done every two weeks and thoroughly disinfect the coop and furnishings annually.
- Areas inside the coops should be kept dry and ventilated with fans, if necessary, in the warmer months.
- In winter, coops should also be draft free and provided with heat, if necessary.
- Coops should be free of weeds/grass around it.

Sanitation/odor/pests (continued)

- Clean food and water should be provided daily. Food and water containers should be cleaned daily.
- Limit the use of chemicals which may harm the environment for chickens.
- Keep new chickens separate from existing chickens for a period of time (quarantine). Also keep chicks separate from older birds.
- Dead birds should be removed promptly either by burial, incineration or landfill – check local regulations for acceptable disposal methods.

Manure management

- One chicken can produce 75 lbs. of manure annually.
- Keep waste disposal containers sealed yet aerated so as not to attract vermin.
- If the manure is composted and used on site, the critical safety factor is a 120-day interval between the time the material is added to the compost pile or garden and the time the vegetables are harvested and consumed to allow sufficient time for the natural death of any harmful bacteria. Compost in an area inaccessible to the chickens for at least one year.

Coop/nest boxes/roosts

- For egg layers, 1 to 3 nest boxes minimum are needed per 3 hens (one foot square and one foot high). Two to four inches of bedding (clean, absorbent, dry and relatively dust free shavings, straw, litter or grass) is recommended. Chickens prefer the SE corner of the coop.
- For egg layers, securely mounted roosts should also be provided no more than 1-3 feet from the floor, 18 inches from the back wall, 8-16 inches of space per bird, 1-1/2 inches in diameter, branches are best.
- The coop should provide shade, direct sunlight, good drainage, ventilation, and protection from wind.
- Three square feet of space minimum per chicken is recommended, so if you have four chickens, a twelve (12) sq. ft. minimum coop is recommended. Building materials should also be a consideration for aesthetic reasons.
- Openings should be screened to exclude flies, wild birds and predators.
- Coops help keep predators at bay and also provide protection from the weather. South facing is best.
- The chicken coop door should be secured at night.
- The floors should be concrete so they are easy to wash.
- Smoke alarms are recommended if the coop is heated/cooled.

Pens

- Pens provide secure access to safe exercise, sunlight, earth and vegetation and should be accessible to unsupervised chickens at all times (except at night).
- Fenced pens should be a minimum of 42 inches in height and shall be covered to prevent the bird's escape and prevent entry by intruders/predators. Reinforce the bottom with small mesh metal wire to prevent predators from tunneling under the fence. Ten square feet per bird is recommended.
- Pens should have some shade, a windbreak, a dust bath (use sand indoors in winter – place in a large low sided container like a kiddie pool), and enrichment furnishings (bushes, branches, stumps, platforms/ramps, etc.).
- Plant kale or other safe edible vegetation around the outside of the pen for foraging. Do not use plants that are toxic to chickens.

Exercise yard, if possible

- This can be a fenced back yard that provides safe exercise, sunlight, earth and vegetation when chickens are supervised. Recommended size is 175 square feet per five chickens. If no exercise yard is available, then chickens should have 16 square feet per bird in the pen.