

If you want to raise and keep chickens in your backyard....

....this is what you need to know.

To assist residents desiring a local source to help offset rising food costs, to more directly manage producing forms of food, or provide a learning experience for family members, among other purposes, the Portage Zoning Code permits the keeping of chickens as an accessory use in residential districts. The requirements established by the City of Portage are also intended to minimize the effects of your activity on nearby residents within your neighborhood. The following information is a brief summary of the minimum requirements to keep chickens, the application fee and review/approval process.

What are the requirements to keep chickens? A city resident occupying a single family home may obtain a permit to keep chickens subject to the following conditions:

1. Up to six hen chickens are permitted. Roosters are prohibited.
2. Chickens are for personal use only. Commercial sales are prohibited.
3. If you are a lessee or renter, written permission from the property owner is required.
4. Chickens must be kept in a completely enclosed coop and attached pen in the back (rear) yard.
5. The coop/pen must be setback at least 10 feet from all property lines and 30 feet from any adjacent home. If located in a lake side yard, the coop/pen must be setback at least 40-foot from the rear (lake side) property line.
6. Collectively, the coop/pen cannot exceed 80 square feet in area and 6 feet in height.
7. The coop/pen cannot be made from corrugated metal/fiberglass, sheet metal, plastic tarps, scrap lumber or similar materials.
8. The coop/pen must be designed and maintained to provide a safe and healthy living condition.
9. During daylight hours, chickens may be allowed to roam within the rear yard of the site if supervised and enclosed by at least a 4-foot high fence.
10. Feed and other items must be secured from rats, mice or other rodents.
11. Outdoor slaughter of chickens is prohibited.
12. City ordinances pertaining to noise, odors, dust, fumes, sanitation, health or comparable nuisances must be met.

Please feel free to contact the Department of Community Development for further assistance. For your convenience, a copy of the Zoning Code ordinance language (Section 42-121.D.) for keeping chickens in residential areas and a permit application can be obtained from the Department or from the City of Portage website at www.portagemi.gov/Departments/Community-Development.

Is there a fee to apply for the keeping of chickens? There is a \$55 fee that must accompany the attached application form after your completion and signature. A site/building sketch is also required. Once granted, the permit is personal to you at the approved property address and is not transferable.

How long will the review and approval process take? The Department of Community Development is responsible for the review and approval of the permit. After the completed application, site/building sketch and other materials you wish to include are submitted, the review and approval process will take approximately five (5) business days and include at least one on-site inspection.

You are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development at 269-329-4477 if you have any questions or require additional assistance.

Thank you for your cooperation.