

Salt Lake Valley Health Department

Guidelines for the Keeping of Backyard Poultry Flocks In Residential Communities

(Applicable to the keeping of ALL Fowl and Lagomorphs)

REVISED March 29, 2010

The following guidelines are recommended for keeping fowl within residential zones. These steps will minimize nuisances for your neighbors. At the same time, you will also reduce conditions that could otherwise cause the proliferation of rodents in your community.

These guidelines will help protect flocks from predation by raccoons, skunks, rats, and other carnivores; and from diseases transmitted by rats, mice and wild birds. You will also eliminate the loss of feed to sparrows, rodents, etc.

1. Fowl should be confined a minimum of 50 feet from the nearest habitable buildings at all times. The coop and enclosure should be 3 feet from the property line and other structures to permit easy observation for any rodent activity.
2. Coops and runs containing food and water should be totally enclosed (top and bottom) with a rodent proof barrier; i.e., solid wood, metal, etc with no unprotected opening greater than ¼ inch and in good repair or hardware cloth having a maximum of ¼ inch spacing or equivalent to render coops and runs rodent proof. SLVHD Reg # 7 General Sanitation 4.8.3 requires animal food storage and feeding areas to be secured from insects, rodents, and other vermin.* Without this fine mesh, sparrows and mice can raid your feed. A solid roof will better protect your flock from diseases transmitted from wild birds flying over your property as well as provide shade and protection from the elements.

If the feeding and watering areas are not floored as above, there should be a flange from the vertical wall made of ¼ inch hardware cloth that extends two feet out from the vertical barrier to minimize the risk of rodents burrowing into the enclosure. The flange may be buried as little as three inches below the surface (up to 24 inches would be more effective) and continuous with the vertical wall. The 3 in. of cover may consist of dirt, gravel, concrete pavers, etc. Two protective coats of paint will help retard the development of rust below ground. See Washington State's Department of Fish and Wildlife's web site and search for Living with Wildlife, Old World Rats [Fig 9] at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/rats.htm> for a diagram of this underground barrier.

All elements of the enclosure should be maintained in good condition so as to keep it rodent proof.

3. There should be a written plan for appropriate methods for rodent control and supplies needed for controlling rodents should be kept on hand. Upon the appearance of any sign of rodent infestation, the rodent control plan should be implemented.
4. There should be a written plan for approved methods of mosquito and fly control and supplies needed for controlling mosquitoes and flies should be kept on hand. Upon the appearance of any sign of mosquito or fly infestation, the mosquito and fly control plan should be implemented.

5. Manure shall be removed from the coop and run at least weekly or more often as necessary to prevent insect breeding, vermin attraction, offensive odor, or any other nuisance as per SLVHD Reg. # 7 General Sanitation 4.8.1.* This material shall be either removed from the property weekly or placed in a properly managed compost pile.
6. A compost pile shall be contained and located at least three feet from the nearest property line and shall be managed in a way that prevents the spread of disease, the propagation or harborage of insects or rodents, the creation of any nuisance, offensive odor at the property line, or any other condition that might adversely affect public health as required by SLVHD Regulation # 7.4.1.5.*
<http://www.slvhealth.org/envRegs/reg07genSanitation.html#compost415>
7. Dead birds and rotting eggs should be removed as soon as possible and within at least 24 hours and properly disposed. Be alert to the warning signs of sick birds. Call your veterinarian or the Utah State Veterinarian (538-7160) if there is any sign of disease or questions about the health of the birds.
8. Roosters, crowing hens, peafowl, turkeys, and geese are a potential cause of noise disturbances. Noise generated by the flock shall not exceed maximum limits established by SLVHD Regulation # 21 Community Noise Pollution Control for general maximum outdoor sound pressure levels as given in Table 1.*
<http://www.slvhealth.org/envRegs/reg21CommunNoisePolluCtl.html>
9. The slaughtering and cleaning of wild game, livestock, rabbits, or poultry in a non-agricultural zoned area is prohibited by SLVHD Regulation # 7 General Sanitation.*
<http://www.slvhealth.org/envRegs/reg07genSanitation.html#slaughtering414>
10. To help protect your flock from diseases, appropriate bio-security measures should be in place. See United States Department of Agriculture's website at [USDA.gov](http://www.usda.gov) and search for poultry biosecurity or go to http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/biosecurity/basicspoultry.htm
11. Applicable municipal and county permits shall be current. Some municipalities require a permit or, in some cases, registration, with local government. Contact your local Animal Services Agency for more information.

* Underlined passages are current SLVHD regulations.

NOTE: As of March 30, 2010, except as noted above, this is not an adopted regulation of the Salt Lake Valley Health Department.

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