



Before You Apply

Urban Agriculture Permit

What is an Urban Agriculture Permit Application for?

This permit is for a residential property to have a chicken coop or beehives in accordance with the [Christiansburg Town Code Section 42-663. Urban Agriculture; zoning permit required.](#)

Required Files

The following files are required to be submitted with your application. Required files must be in PDF format.

- For both Chickens and Bees
 - A site plan is required to show the location of the chicken coop or beehive(s). This should be an aerial of the property with the proposed project site drawn in. Setbacks are required to be called out to show the distance between the project site and the property line as well as the distance between the project and the closest neighboring residences.
- For the Chicken Coop ONLY
 - A management plan is required answering the following questions: how will the chickens be protected from predators? What bedding material will be used. How will feed be stored to prevent pest infestations? How will waste be disposed of?
- If you are not the property owner, a signed agreement from the property is required to approve the permit application.
- *If staff needs additional information, someone will reach out to a contact on file.*

Contact Information

Be prepared to enter contact information (name, address, phone number and/or email) for the applicant and property owner (if different from applicant).

Fees

You will receive an invoice upon approval for \$25.00.

Invoices can be paid for on your permit portal and staff will be notified the following business day of the payment. You can also pay in person or by mailed check. Please print a copy of your invoice and provide payments to the Finance Department in the Town of Christiansburg Town Hall.



Where to Apply

When you are ready to apply, you can find the application on the Town's permitting portal, linked below. You will need to register for an account the first time you use the portal. Once registered, you can click "Apply" and search for "Urban Agriculture" to find the correct application.

https://selfservice.christiansburg.org/energov_prod/selfservice#/home

What to Expect After you Apply

After you apply for an Urban Agriculture Permit, staff will review your application and may reach out with additional questions. If/when your application is approved, you will receive an email letting you know the next steps.

Permit Renewal

This permit type has a yearly renewal of \$25.00. An invoice will be issued a month prior to the permit's expiration date. If there are any changes to your management plan, number of chickens/beehives, or location, contact the planning department with the updated information prior to paying for the permit renewal.

If you no longer have chickens or beehives, contact the Planning Department to have the permit renewal cancelled.

Common Errors

Some common errors we see and important items to note on this type of application include:

- Giving too little detail for the management plan. Please ensure you address each question asked.
- Square footage Requirement – The pen, often called the “run” has a maximum size of 128 square feet and a minimum size of 8 square feet per chicken. The coop shall be, at minimum 2 square feet per chicken.
 - Example: for 6 hens, the minimum size of the coop (where they roost and lay eggs) must be 12 sq.ft. The pen (where they might eat, drink water, and run around) must be at minimum 48 sq.ft.



Additional Information:

The limited keeping of chickens and beehives may be permitted in association with one single family residence, per parcel subject to the following conditions:

1. No more than two beehive stands shall be allowed.
2. Chickens are defined herein as domestic female chicken hens. Roosters are prohibited.
3. Chickens shall be kept for the household's personal consumption only. Commercial use such as selling eggs or chickens for meat shall be prohibited.
4. There shall be no slaughtering or processing of chickens.
5. No more than 6 chicken hens or chicks shall be allowed.
6. Adequate shelter, care and control of the chickens is required. Any person permitted to keep chickens shall comply with all the provisions and requirements of the Town and State Code regarding care, shelter, sanitation, health, rodent control, cruelty, neglect, noise, reasonable care and another requirements pertaining to, but not limited to, the adequate care and control of animals in the Town.
7. The owner of the chickens shall take necessary action to reduce the attraction of predators and rodents and the potential infestation of insects and parasites. Chickens found to be infested with insects and parasites that may result in unhealthy conditions may be removed by an animal control officer.
8. Chickens shall not be allowed to roam free.
9. The materials used for pens shall be uniform and kept in good condition in order to protect the safety of the chickens.
10. Pens may be portable and shall meet setbacks at all times.
11. Pens and beehive stands shall have setbacks of 15 feet from all property lines and 50 feet from dwellings on adjacent properties and be no closer to the street right-of-way than the primary dwelling.
12. All pens shall be located away from any drainage areas that could allow fecal matter to enter a storm drainage system or stream.
13. All pens shall be constructed and maintained so as to be impermeable to rodents, wild birds, and predators, including dogs and cats, and to prevent such animals or other pests from being harbored



underneath, inside, or within the walls of the enclosure. All pens must be kept dry, well-ventilated, and in a sanitary condition at all times, and must be cleaned on a regular basis to prevent offensive odors. All manure not used for composting or fertilizing shall be removed promptly. Odors from chickens, manure, or other chicken-related substances shall not be detectable at the property boundaries.

14. All approved urban agriculture uses shall maintain the premises in a clean and sanitary manner and are required to present measures for food storage and containment and disposal of waste prior to approval and shall maintain compliance with all presented measures.

15. No dog or cat that kills a chicken or chick will, for that reason alone, be considered a vicious animal.

Salmonella Awareness

Salmonella bacteria have been isolated from nearly all vertebrates, and Salmonella infections have been associated with animal and human disease. Shedding of Salmonella bacteria in poultry often occurs in the absence of clinical signs, sometimes for extended periods. In some cases, human illness caused by

Salmonella has been attributed to the handling of live poultry or the consumption of poultry products. Typical signs of Salmonella infection in humans include fever and diarrhea. Salmonellosis in humans is typically self-limiting, with most people recovering within 1 week. Rarely, severe cases can result in death. Hand washing is an important measure for preventing the transmission of Salmonella from poultry to humans.

Urban chicken flocks might provide eggs for home; therefore, it is important that urban chicken flock owners be familiar with food safety precautions. The Centers for Disease Control provides the following guidelines to prevent foodborne illness from poultry products:

- Egg shells should be washed and sanitized to remove microorganisms such as Salmonella. Discard eggs that are cracked, broken, or leaking.
- Keep raw foods (meats, poultry, and eggs) separate from cooked foods in the refrigerator.
- Store eggs at 40°F or lower to reduce bacterial growth.
- Wash hands and cooking surfaces often.

Retrieved from:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/poultry/downloads/poultry10/Poultry10_is_Human-chicken.pdf



How do I reduce the risk of a Salmonella infection from live poultry?

DO

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.
- Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
- Wash hands after removing soiled clothes and shoes.
- If you collect eggs from the hens, thoroughly cook them, as Salmonella can pass from healthy looking hens into the interior of normal looking eggs.
- Clean any equipment or materials associated with raising or caring for live poultry outside the house, such as cages or feed or water containers.

DON'T

- Don't let children younger than 5 years of age, older adults, or people with weak immune systems handle or touch chicks, ducklings, or other live poultry.
- Don't eat or drink in the area where the birds live or roam.
- Don't let live poultry inside the house, in bathrooms, or especially in areas where food or drink is prepared, served, or stored, such as kitchens or outdoor patios.
- In recent outbreaks of Salmonella infections linked to contact with live poultry, ill people reported bringing live poultry into their homes.

Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/SalmonellaPoultry/index.html>