



Animal Keeping

Public Information Handout

What is animal keeping?

There are different forms of animal keeping. There are commercial and sport animal keeping activities as well as the desire of citizens to keep pets. The guidelines in this handout will assist you in using your personal discretion in animal keeping. However, since the City is characterized as an intense urban environment with people living in close proximity, these regulations also emphasize the significant responsibility of animal owners and keepers to protect the rights and lifestyles of their neighbors. Animal owners and keepers are expected to follow these guidelines as a reflection of their responsibility.

Unrestrained animals:

Owners and keepers are to keep all animals contained within a structure or fenced yard or on a leash. No animal may be permitted to run loose off the premises. Racing/homing pigeons are allowed to fly unrestrained during periods of exercise, training and racing.

Noisy animals:

Owners and keepers are to prevent their animals from making unnecessary or unusual noises to the extent that other persons are annoyed. SMC 10.03 & 10.08 related to noisy animals.

Potentially vicious animals:

SMC 10.03 requires owners and keepers of potentially vicious animals to confine and control such animals at all times so as to prevent them from endangering any person or property.

Potentially rabid animals:

SMC 10.24 prohibits the keeping of any dog over age six months that has not been properly inoculated against rabies. It also specifies that any animal afflicted with rabies or that has been bitten by a rabid animal be either destroyed or detained and treated in a manner directed by the health officer, license officer or licensed veterinarian.

What kinds of animals can be raised?

The keeping of large domestic animals is permitted outright in the RA (Residential Agriculture) zone, but is not permitted in any other zone.

Large domestic animals include (but are not limited to) horses, donkeys, burros, llamas, bovines, goats, sheep,

swine and other animals or livestock of similar size and type. Horses, mules, donkeys, burros and llamas under one year in age, bovines under ten months in age, and sheep, goats and swine under three months in age are not included when counting large animals.

Small domestic animals or fowl are also only allowed in the RA (Residential Agriculture) zone. They include (but are not limited to) chickens, guinea hens, geese, ducks, turkeys, pigeons and other fowl not listed or otherwise defined, mink, chinchilla, nutria, gnawing animals in general, and other animals of similar size and type. Young small animals or fowl under three months in age are not included when counting small animal or fowl.

The following ratios of land to animals apply:

- Large domestic animals: Three animals per gross acre on irrigated land.
- Large domestic animals: One animal per gross acre on non-irrigated land.
- Small domestic animals: One animal per two thousand square feet of land.

No structure or enclosure for animals or poultry other than fencing or grazing land may be located less than ninety feet either from the centerline of any street nor from any adjoining lot.

What about potbelly pigs or miniature horses?

Miniature versions of the large domestic animals listed above are regulated the same as the large varieties.

What animals are allowed in residential zones?

Animals classified as “household pets” are allowed in all zones. A household pet can be a cat, dog, rabbit or bird (canary, parakeet, etc.), amphibian/reptile (turtle, lizard, etc.), rodent (rat, mouse, gerbil, etc.) or tropical fish that lives in or is kept within a residence or on the property of the owner’s residence.

Up to four animals per dwelling unit is permitted. Five or more dogs or cats constitute a kennel. Young household pets under the age of six months are not included when counting household pets. Birds, reptiles, rodents and fish that are always housed entirely within the dwelling unit are excluded from the numerical limitations.

Is beekeeping allowed?

Beekeeping is allowed as an accessory use to the owner's personal residence in the RA zone and is subject to the following standards:

- Number of beehives is limited to one beehive per 4,350 square feet of lot area, up to a maximum of twenty five (25) hives; and
- The accessory use setbacks are observed and the beehives are completely enclosed with a six-foot barrier (solid fence, hedge, landscaping, etc.) that necessitates the bees flying over; or
- A fifty-foot setback is maintained from all property lines and the beehives are isolated from public access by a security fence; or
- The accessory use setbacks are observed and the beehives are at least ten feet in height above grade and isolated from public access by a security fence or located on a restricted access platform.

Are racing/homing pigeons allowed?

Racing and homing pigeons are permitted as an accessory use to an owner's personal residence by a Type II permit application in the RA and RSF zones subject to the following standards:

- The owner demonstrates compliance with the noise standards for a commercial noise source as identified in WAC 173-60-040.
- The structures and outside runs or areas, when allowed, housing the animals are more than two hundred (200) feet from any dwelling (other than the dwelling of the owner) and are more than fifty feet from any property line.
- Outside runs or areas, where permitted, are enclosed by a solid fence or wall which will abate noise and area.
- The area must be landscaped to the L1 landscaping standards.
- In the CB and GC zones, animals must be kept continuously within a soundproof building.

For more information contact:

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