Chicken coop requirements

Longmont Municipal Code – Backyard Chickens
http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=14590

Permit http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/planning/permits/documents/henpermit.pdf

Lafayette Municipal Code – Backyard Chickens

http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=10101

Permit http://www.cityoflafayette.com/documentcenter/view/2776

Superior Municipal Code – Backyard Chickens and Goats

http://www.colocode.com/superior_07.pdf

Municipal code complete http://www.colocode.com/superior.html

Boulder County Land Use Code

http://www.bouldercounty.org/property/build/pages/lucode.aspx

City of Boulder Code

http://www.colocode.com/boulder2/chapter6-1.htm

Louisville Municipal Code

http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientID=13149&stateID=6&statename=Colorado

Broomfield Municipal Code

http://www.broomfield.org/documentcenter/view/5654

License http://www.broomfield.org/documentcenter/view/6402

Coop Design Requirements

Every coop should have the following attributes.

1. Be easy to clean
2. Protects the chickens from extreme temperatures, wind, sun, predators and wild birds
3. Have good drainage around it
4. Provide sufficient space for the flock size – from 1 to 4 square feet of coop per chicken (space depends on size of breed)
5. Well ventilated but not drafty
6. Includes plenty of both natural or artificial light

7. Provides both nesting and roosting areas
8. Provides sanitary area for both water and feed
9. Coop and run are both predator and rodent proof
10. Meet applicable building codes

The coop first of all must be easy to clean. You will want to clean the coop out at least once a year. The type of bedding you use will determine if you need to clean more often. Bedding that does not easily mat down is the best (such as pine chips, straw mats down easily and can harbor parasites). Any bedding should be periodically "fluffed" up. Your municipality may restrict the coop size so you may not be able to build one large enough for you to walk into. If this is the case, you can build one with a hinged side or roof so that you can thoroughly clean and sanitize the coop. Keeping roosting areas spate from nesting areas will help keep the nesting areas and your eggs cleaner and safer. Having a droppings pit below the roosting area, feed and water areas, allows for easier cleaning and sanitization. You do not need a nest box for every hen. You need 1 box for every 5 hens. Your nesting boxes should have a slick roof to keep the chickens from roosting on top and soiling the box potentially adding contaminates to your eggs.

Consider insulating the coop and also providing vents that can be open or closed as needed. Ventilation is important to keep chickens healthy. Although you want them to spend as much time outside as possible, that is not always possible. Adequate ventilation will provide clean air, allow unhealthy gases to vent out, dilute harmful airborne organisms and remove excess moisture.

Depending on where you live you may need to consider how you will heat the coop in the winter. Do you want to provide and electrical outlet at the coop? Make sure that you keep wiring cords and outlets out of reach of your chickens. Chickens ideal temperature range is 70 to 75oFe. Hotter or colder temperatures will affect egg production and extreme temperatures their health. You do not need to go to the extreme measure of providing them a furnace heated and air conditioned coop just protect them from extreme hot and cold. A heat lamp or two will provide sufficient heat if needed. Make sure that they have access to cool water in the summer (don't put the water in the sun in summer) and not frozen water in the winter. You will most likely need a heater for the water in the winter. Provide plenty of natural light by using windows. To keep egg production up in the winter months, you may want to have a light on a timer in the coop to provide 16 hours of light. This is not required to keep your chickens healthy. You can allow production to drop in the winter. As daylight hours increase in the spring, production will increase. The coop and run should not be in a low area that allows water to accumulate. They are should be kept dry as possible. Providing some shade in the run area will encourage the chickens to spend more time outside.

There should be an access door that must be closed at night to protect the chickens from predators. The coop and run should also be designed in such a way so as to keep rodents, predators and wild birds from accessing your chickens. Rodents will be attracted to the chicken feed so any that is not being used must be stored in a rodent proof metal or heavy plastic container with a tight fitting lid. Keep spilled feed cleaned up. Design the coop so that there are no openings larger than ¼ inch when

it is closed. The run should have a top to keep wild birds from accessing the run and coop. Wire used to enclose the run should extend into the ground at least 12 inches. This will deter predators from accessing the area by digging under the fence.

Most municipalities do not allow chickens free run of the backyard, they must be contained in a fenced run. Since your birds will hopefully spend plenty of time outdoors, you will need to provide them with an average of 10 square feet per birds (depending on the size of the breed) in the run area. Smaller breed require less space. You need to meet the code requirements for your area.

Disposal of waste from coop and dead animals

Local waste management companies do not allow dead animals to be disposed of in your normal trash. Contact a local veterinarian, animal shelter or your waste management company for information on carcass disposal.

Consider how you will dispose of the water material from the coop cleanout. If you plan on composting it yourself, whether you use wood chips or straw will determine how quickly it composts. The waste is a carbon source so you will need to add adequate nitrogen (green plant materials) to make the composting process work. It you don't plan on composting it yourself, check with your community or waste management company to see if they have a composting program that will accept the waste.

Chicken Coop Elements

Droppings Pit

Door

Feeder

Adjustable
Ventilation

Heat Lamp

Water

Window

Roosts

Nesting boxes