



Keeping of Animals

Do you know about Fairfax County's zoning rules on animals?

Rules will differ based on the type of animal and lot size, but general guidelines are:

- ◆ Sect. 2-512 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes limitations on the keeping of animals. Keeping animals in greater number than permitted by Sect. 2-512 of the Zoning Ordinance requires approval of a special permit by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). **Note: for keeping of certain animals there is a lot size minimum that must be met or the keeping of that animal is prohibited from the property.**
- ◆ Keeping **commonly accepted pets** is allowed as an accessory use on any lot provided such pets are for personal enjoyment, not commercial purpose. Pets include: *domestic rabbits; hamsters; ferrets; gerbils; guinea pigs; pet mice/rats; turtles; fish; dogs; cats; domestic chickens, ducks and geese (under two (2) months old); birds such as canaries, parakeets, doves and parrots; worm/ant farms; non-poisonous spiders/snakes; chameleons and similar lizards. Other pets may be permitted, with a special permit, by the BZA in accordance with the provisions of Part 9 of Article 8.*
- ◆ Housing structures for bee hives and other animals must be located in accordance with the provisions of Section 10-104-9c of the Zoning Ordinance.
- ◆ **Cats:** There are no Zoning Ordinance limitations on the number of cats/lot.
- ◆ **Dogs:** The number of dogs permitted is based on lot size, and only dogs six (6) months or older in age are counted towards the permitted number.
 - ◇ One (1) to Two (2) Dogs—Allowed on lot of any size
 - ◇ Three (3) to Four (4) Dogs— requires minimum lot size of 12,500 sq. ft.
 - ◇ Five (5) to Six (6) Dogs— requires minimum lot size of 20,000 sq. ft.
 - ◇ Seven (7) or more Dogs— requires minimum lot size of 25,000 sq. ft. plus 5,000 sq. ft. for each additional dog above 7.
- ◆ **Pigeons:** Homing, racing or exhibition pigeons are permitted on any lot 10,000 sq. ft. or more in size, with no limit on the number of pigeons.

Turn Over





Keeping of Animals, continued...

◆ **Honeybees:**

- ◇ Up to Four (4) beehives are permitted on a lot of any size.
- ◇ More than Four (4) beehives requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, plus 2,500 square feet for each hive above 4.

◆ **Livestock and Domestic Fowl:**

- ◇ Minimum lot size for the keeping of livestock and/or domestic fowl is two (2) acres; and the number of animals permitted is based on a ratio of animal or bird units to lot size. Permitted animal units vary depending on the type of animal. AND
- ◇ Cattle, sheep, goats and swine one (1) year or older in age are counted in the ratio; for all other livestock or domestic fowl, animals six (6) months or older in age are counted.

◆ **Exotic Pets:**

- ◇ The keeping of wild, exotic, or vicious animals shall not be allowed, except as may be permitted by the County Code, Chapter 41.1— Animal Control and Care.
- ◇ Prohibited animals include: any live monkey, raccoon, skunk, wolf, squirrel, fox, leopard, panther, tiger, lion, lynx, poisonous snake or tarantula, crocodile or alligator, caiman or gavial.

For complaints or concerns about the health, safety, or welfare of any animal, call Animal Control at 703-691-2131.



To report a possible violation:

**Fairfax County Department of Code Compliance
12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035**

Phone: 703-324-1300, TTY 711

Web: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code



To request this information in an alternate format, call the Department of Code Compliance.

This Fairfax County, VA Publication (published August 2016) summarizes a few regulations. See relevant codes for specific requirements.

