

Humane Considerations for Backyard Hen Owners

DISCLAIMER: The following information is not intended to be exhaustive; inclusion as a resource in no way is intended to represent an endorsement by the City of Vancouver or a warranty as to the accuracy of the information or the quality of products or services listed on this page.

Humane treatment of farm animals is commonly defined by the “five freedoms,” as developed by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, an advisory body to the UK government. These include:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from discomfort - by providing a suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions that avoid mental suffering.

To enjoy the Five Freedoms, hens need shelter, food, water, adequate space, environmental conditions (such as adequate ventilation and light) conducive to good health, and the opportunity to socialize and engage in fundamental behaviours, which for them include scratching (foraging by scraping the ground with their claws), roosting (resting on a stick or branch), and dustbathing (thrashing around in the dirt to clean feathers and remove parasites). The Animal Control by-law [\(include link\)](#) includes provisions to meet these basic needs.

For more information on providing humane care for your backyard hens, consult the many excellent links included on our resource list [\(include link\)](#), or contact one of the organizations below:

Humane Organizations

**British Columbia Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
(BCSPCA)**

Vancouver Chapter
1205 E. 7th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5T1R1
604/879-7721

<http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/>

Vancouver Humane Society

#303 - 8623 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC V6P 5A2
604/266-9744

<http://vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca/>

United Poultry Concerns

<http://www.upc-online.org/>

Chicken Run Rescue

<http://www.brittonclouse.com/chickenrunrescue>