

# Guide to Animals

## INTRODUCTION

The Douglas County Department of Community Development (DCD) is committed to providing open, transparent application processes to the public. This Guide has been developed to assist anyone interested in accessing the necessary materials needed to determine the number and type of animals that are allowed on a property.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE COUNTY'S ANIMAL REGULATIONS?

Landowners, neighbors, and anyone interested in purchasing land should be aware of Douglas County's Animal Regulations. It is important to review Section 24 of the Douglas County Zoning Resolution (DCZR) and the Planned Development (PD), if applicable, regarding animals to ensure compliance both in quantity and type of animals allowed in your area. This is particularly important if land is used for agricultural, or kenneling and boarding operations. To find out what an area is zoned, please visit the Zone District Map online at [www.douglas.co.us/zoning](http://www.douglas.co.us/zoning) or call Douglas County Planning Services at 303-660-7460. You may also contact Planning Services with any other questions related to animals.

## WHAT ARE THE TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF ANIMALS ALLOWED?

This is a brief summary of the animal regulations and is meant to be used in conjunction with the DCZR:

- **Household pets** including, but not limited to, dogs and cats shall be permitted in all zone districts allowing for residential use. Kennels, boarding facilities and commercial activities are not allowed. Please see the Zone District Animal Limits chart on page 3 for details.
- **Poultry, fowl and small livestock** shall be properly housed (e.g., chicken coop, rabbit hutch) and located in accordance with the required accessory use setbacks. Please see the chart on page 3 for details.
- **Hoofed animals** including horses, cattle, mules, llamas, sheep, goats and swine. They are categorized by animal unit and restrictions are shown in the chart on page 3.
  - Horse/Mule/Cow/Llama: 1 = 1 animal unit
  - Miniature horse/Swine/Sheep/Goat/Alpaca: 4 = 1 animal unit
- **Exceptions:**
  - Young animals less than 6 months of age shall not count toward the allowable unit.
  - Non-domestic or exotic animals are permitted only as a "Use by Special Review" upon approval by the Board of Douglas County Commissioners, in the Agriculture-One (A-1) and Large Rural Residential (LRR) zone districts.
  - A non-domestic animal is generally considered to be an animal not normally adapted to live and breed in a tame condition.
  - An exotic animal is generally considered to be an animal introduced from another country that is not normally kept as a household pet or farm animal.

Refer to Section 21 Use by Special Review of the DCZR for more information.

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# Animal Regulations

## SETBACKS

The following setback information is for barns, corrals, arenas, paddocks, run pens, round pens, or parking areas.

Lot Size	SETBACK FROM A		
	Street	Side Lot Line	Rear Lot Line
2.3 - 4.49 acres	25'	25'	25'
4.5 - 8.9 acres	50'	25'	25'
9 - 34.9 acres	100'	50'	25'
35+ acres	100'	50'	50'
Temporary catch pens and loading chutes are exempt.			

**Definition of a setback:** The required minimum horizontal distance between the location of structures or uses and the related front, side, or rear lot line measured perpendicular to such lot line.

## VEGETATION REQUIREMENTS

Vegetation requirements apply to all land having permitted livestock. The site, excluding that area which is allowed to be devegetated, must be maintained with vegetative groundcover. Vegetative groundcover includes native or introduced grasses and forbs, but does not include weeds on bare dirt. In areas where exposed shelf-rock or caprock is the natural terrain, this will be considered to be vegetative groundcover.

The maximum land area that may be devegetated is as follows:

Lot Area	Maximum Devegetated Area
2.3 - 4.49 acres	25% of the total site
4.5 - 8.9 acres	1.25 acres or 20%, whichever is greater
9 - 34.9 acres	2 acres or 15%, whichever is greater
35+ acres	5.2 acres or 10%, whichever is greater, to a maximum of 10 acres

All corrals, outdoor arenas, paddocks, run pens, round pens, unpaved or ungraveled parking areas shall be included when calculating the maximum area devegetated. The area within the required minimum setback shall be fully maintained with vegetation. A variance from the above vegetation standards may be sought from the Board of Adjustment.

## WASTE AND ODOR REGULATIONS

The following regulations apply to all lands having permitted livestock. County regulations pertaining to nonconforming uses shall not be applicable with respect to waste and odor regulations.

- Remove manure in a regular and reasonable manner, or otherwise compost or spread in such a manner as to protect surface and groundwater, minimize the breeding of flies, and to control odors. Do not bury manure.
- In agricultural zone districts, manure piles shall be set back a minimum distance of 100' from any lot line, well, stream or body of water.
- In residential zone districts, manure piles shall be set back from the lot line in accordance with the zone district accessory use setback requirements.
- Animals shall not be allowed to create excessive odor problems or present a health hazard to surrounding lands.
- Adequate drainage facilities or improvements shall be provided by the landowner and constructed to protect any adjacent land from run-off containing contaminants, such as sediment or organic waste.



# Zone District Animal Limits

Animal/District	Agriculture - One (A-1)	Large Rural Residential (LRR)	Rural Residential (RR)	Estate Residential (ER)	Suburban Residential (SR)
Dog/cat/pot-bellied pig	<b>Less than 9 acres:</b> 4 per parcel (No USR*)  <b>9+ acres:</b> 8 per parcel; 9+ requires a USR*	<b>Less than 9 acres:</b> 4 per parcel (No USR*)  <b>9+ acres:</b> 8 per parcel; 9+ requires a USR*	4/du** (No USR*)	4/du** (No USR*)	4/du** (No USR*)
Horse/llama/mule/cow (1 animal = 1 unit)  OR  Goat/sheep/pig/ miniature horse/alpaca (4 animals = 1 unit)  The number and type of animals allowed is based on zoning and lot size. <b>A minimum lot area of 2.3 acres is required (exception may include grandfathered use or a variance).</b>	<b>2.3 - 4.49 acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 1 horse may be boarded)  <b>4.5 - 8.9 acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 2 horses may be boarded)  <b>9 - 34.9 acres:</b> NO LIMIT on own livestock (Boarded horses: 2 by right; 3-8 by admin. approval; 9+ by USR)  <b>35+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT on own livestock (Boarded horses: 4 by right; 5-12 by admin. approval; 13+ by USR)  <b>80+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT on own livestock (Boarded horses: 4 by right; 12 by right with 200' setback; 13-18 by admin. approval with 200' setback; 19+ by USR; if 200' setback cannot be met, see 35+ acres limits)  <b>160+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT on own livestock (Boarded horse: 4 by right; NO LIMIT with 500' setback from adjacent resi- dential uses; if 500' setback cannot be met then see 80+ acres limits)	<b>2.3 - 4.49 acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 1 horse may be boarded)  <b>4.5 - 8.9 acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 2 horses may be boarded)  <b>9+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT on own live- stock (Boarding horses: 2 by right; 3-8 by admin. approval; 9+ by USR)	<b>2.3 - 4.49 acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 1 horse may be boarded)  <b>4.5+ acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 2 horses may be boarded)	<b>2.3+ acres:</b> 1 animal unit per 1/2 acre (of this total 1 horse may be boarded)	NO
Poultry/fowl	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^  <b>2.3-8.9 acres:</b> 30 per lot  <b>9+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT	Same as A-1	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^  <b>2.3+ acres:</b> 30 per lot	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^  <b>2.3+ acres:</b> 30 per lot	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^
Small livestock	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^  <b>2.3-8.9 acres:</b> 50 per lot  <b>9+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT	Same as A-1	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^  <b>2.3+ acres:</b> 50 per lot	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^  <b>2.3+ acres:</b> 50 per lot	<b>Less than 2.3 acres:</b> 4^
Buffalo/ostrich/emu	<b>2.3-8.9 acres:</b> prohibited  <b>9+ acres:</b> NO LIMIT	Same as A-1	NO	NO	NO
Non-domestic/exotic	USR*	USR*	NO	NO	NO
Bees	Principal use	Principal use	Accessory use	Accessory use	Accessory use/du

\* USR: Use by Special Review process; \*\* du: dwelling unit

^ Poultry/fowl are limited to female chickens (*Gallus gallus domesticus*). Slaughtering of poultry/fowl or small livestock is not permitted.

Tropical fish, gerbils/hamsters, parakeets and similar small household pets, not raised for commercial purposes and kept indoors, are permitted with no limits.

# Grazing Capacity

Grazing on fragile land in combination with the semi-arid climate may lead to a loss of vegetation, water contamination and erosion problems. This tends to be more common when maintaining horses and other livestock on smaller parcels of land. Involved stewardship of the land helps to prevent potential damage. The landowner must be sensitive to the number and type of livestock kept, amount of land that is devegetated, and proper management of manure.

The following chart is a simple representation of the amount of time livestock can be pastured without damaging vegetation on the land. Unique land characteristics may further limit grazing capacity. The chart is based on a grazing standard of 30 acres of pasture per head of livestock.

No. of Horses	LAND AREA			
	30 Acres	10 Acres	5 Acres	2.5 Acres
1	24 hrs/day	8 hrs/day	4 hrs/day	2 hrs/day
2	12 hrs/day	4 hrs/day	2 hrs/day	1 hr/day
3	8 hrs/day	2.6 hrs/day	1.3 hrs/day	40 min/day
4	6 hrs/day	2 hrs/day	1 hr/day	30 min/day
5	4.8 hrs/day	1.6 hrs/day	50 min/day	24 min/day
6	4 hrs/day	1.3 hrs/day	36 min/day	N/A
8	3 hrs/day	1 hr/day	30 min/day	N/A
10	2.4 hrs/day	50 min/day	24 min/day	N/A

For more specific information regarding successful livestock management on small parcels, please contact one of the following agencies:

**Douglas County Colorado State University Extension Office**

[www.extension.colostate.edu/douglas/](http://www.extension.colostate.edu/douglas/)

720-733-6940

**Natural Resource Conservation Service**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/)

720-544-2810

