

# KEEPING GOATS

## in the CITY OF SAN DIEGO

In January 2012 the City of San Diego amended its Municipal Code to allow residents of single family homes to keep and maintain two miniature goats. The specific regulations are located in Section 44.0307 and can be found by downloading the following: [Chap 04 Art 04 Div 03, Animals](#).



Miniature goats are herding animals and need companionship. For that reason the City requires you keep and maintain two goats and not just one. The regulations require that a goat shed be provided and located outside of all required setbacks, which are based on the zoning of your property. Generally, most single family homes in the City of San Diego would have to locate the goat

shed 5 feet from side property lines, and 13 feet from the rear property line. The regulations also require that the goats have a secured outdoor area that is at least 400 square feet.

For specific information regarding the zone setback for your property go to the following link and type in your address: [View your property by address](#). You will then receive the zone name for your property. A link to "More Info" takes you to another page that directs you to the regulations for your zone. When viewing the regulations go to the

Development Regulations Table for your zone and look up "Setback Requirements." You can also call the Development Services Department's information line at (619) 446-5000, provide your address and request the name of your zone and the zoning setback information. You will receive a return call with the information.

## BENEFITS

- Fresh milk and cheese. It is important to keep in mind that the regulations require that any goat's milk or cheeses produced be for personal consumption only.
- Milk and cheese that may be consumed by individuals who are allergic to cow's milk. The American Dairy Goat Association states that the fat globules in goats are smaller than those in cow's milk and that the curd is softer and smaller which eases digestion.
- On average two goats can provide as much as a half gallon of milk per day.
- Goat manure, unlike that of dogs, can be added to compost piles or used directly as a fertilizer when tilled into the soil.
- Many goat owners boast of the companionship and enjoyment goats provide to their owners.

## RISKS

There are certain health risks inherent in handling goats or anything in the areas they occupy. It is very important to understand that goat's milk must be pasteurized before it is consumed or used for making cheese. Consuming raw, unpasteurized, milk can cause life threatening illnesses especially in young children and those with immune impairment are especially at risk. The following provides a way to reduce the risks:

- Pasteurize all goats' milk. The National Dairy Council says to heat the strained milk to a minimum of 145°F for 30 minutes or to 161°F or more for 15 seconds, followed by rapid cooling.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after touching the goats or anything in the area where they occupy. Avoid touching your mouth before washing your hands. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.
- Do not let children younger than 5 years of age handle or touch goats without supervision.
- Adults should supervise hand washing for young children.
- Do not eat or drink in the area the goats occupy.

## SUMMARY OF REGULATIONS

- Only miniature, pygmy, or dwarf goats may be kept.
- All goats must be dehorned.
- Males must be neutered.
- Two goats must be kept, except that offspring may be kept for up to 12 weeks from birth
- The goat shed shall be no less than 10 square feet and designed to be predator proof, vented, waterproof, and easily accessed for cleaning.
- The goat shed must be located outside of all required zoning setbacks.
- The shed shall provide direct access to an outdoor enclosure that is a minimum of 400 square feet, surrounded by a 5-foot tall fence that is secured from outside of the pen, free of objects that would allow the goat to climb out of the enclosure. The enclosure must be easily accessed for cleaning.
- Goat's milk, cheeses, and similar food products are for personal consumption only. Sale of these is prohibited.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*What is a miniature goat?*

Miniature goats include dwarf and pygmy breed goats as well as miniature goats (a standard goat bred to a dwarf or pygmy goat).

*Are goats noisy?*

Goats bleat occasionally, but the average bleat is quieter than the average dog bark. Unlike dogs which tend to bark if they see or hear another animal, goats are a "prey" species that stays still and quiet in response to a perceived threat or unusual situation.

*Do goats first have to give birth before being able to provide milk?*  
Yes.



## FAQS CONTINUED...

*The regulations require male goats be neutered, so how is the goat going to give birth?*

Breeding goats has similarities to breeding dogs. There are professional goat breeders in the region that provide breeding services for a fee.

*Why do males need to be neutered?*

Unneutered male goats emit a very fowl odor and are not suitable in an urban setting.

*Why do the goats need to be dehorned?*

Goats can be very playful, even rambunctious, especially in a confined urban setting. They are required to be dehorned to protect them. With horns intact goats can get stuck in fencing and other objects and potentially injure themselves. Goats should be dehorned (disbudded) when they are young, typically within three weeks of birth.

*How do you deal with excrement?*

It makes excellent compost. In fact, goats provide a simple way of recycling vegetarian food scraps. The goats will eat any vegetable scraps.



## OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

Additional information regarding keeping and maintaining chickens can be found at the following websites.

- American Goat Society  
[www.americangoatsociety.com](http://www.americangoatsociety.com)
- American Goat Society  
[www.americangoatsociety.com](http://www.americangoatsociety.com)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – Raw Milk Questions and Answers  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- US Department of Agriculture – Sheep and Goats, I Want to Raise Dairy Goats  
[www.nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov)
- Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – Goats, Introduction to welfare and ownership  
[www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)
- San Diego County Veterinarian – Dead Animal Disposal  
[www.sdcounty.ca.gov](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov)
- Internet searches will provide many sites on how to get started and what you need to do to keep and maintain healthy goats.



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