

### Educate the Offender Option

Citizens who receive citations for allowing pets to roam or for failure to vaccinate against rabies, purchase and display city license, or maintain sanitary conditions may opt to attend a two-hour Educate the Offender class in lieu of a court appearance or at the direction of the Municipal Court. Citizens may choose this option once within a two-year period. Classes are held monthly at the Animal Care and Control Center in English and Spanish. Cost is \$25. The public is welcome to attend at no cost.

### Holding Period for Impounded Animals

Impounded animals, including those released from quarantine, shall be kept for at least three (3) days from the day of impoundment. If the owner does not redeem the animal within the holding period, disposition will be at the discretion of the city and may include adoption, transfer or euthanasia. Prohibited animals may be redeemed, but the owner must sign an agreement to remove the animal from the city.

### Dangerous Animals

An animal, usually a dog, may be declared dangerous if the dog: a) makes an unprovoked attack on a person or other animal that causes bodily injury or death and occurs in a place other than an enclosure in which the animal was kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the animal from leaving the enclosure on its own; or b) commits unprovoked acts outside the an enclosure in which the animal was kept and those acts cause a person to reasonably believe that the animal will attack and cause bodily injury.

Dangerous animals should be reported to the Animal Care and Control Division. Citizens are asked to document the incident in writing. Owners of dangerous animals are required to:

1. Register the dangerous dog with the Animal Care and Control Division;
2. Restrain the dangerous dog at all times in a secure enclosure;
3. Further secure the animal with a muzzle in a manner that will not cause injury to the animal nor interfere with its vision or breathing but shall prevent it from biting any person or animal when the dangerous animal is taken off the property of the owner for any reason;
4. Obtain liability insurance coverage or show financial responsibility in an amount of at least \$100,000 to cover damages resulting from an attack by the dangerous animal causing bodily injury to a person;
5. Provide the dangerous animal with a fluorescent yellow collar visible at 50 feet in normal daylight so that the animal can be identified; and
6. Spay or neuter the dangerous animal.

### Fees for City Residents

1. License Fee . . . . .	\$ 7.00
2. Replacement Tag . . . . .	\$ 5.00
3. Impoundment Fees	
Owner's First Occurrence . . . . .	\$ 65.00
Owner's Second Occurrence . . . . .	\$ 85.00
Owner's Third Occurrence . . . . .	\$ 105.00
Owner's Fourth and Occurrence . . . . .	\$ 150.00
<i>(Credit is applied for current rabies vaccination, city license tag, and/or spay or neuter)</i>	
4. Daily Board Fees . . . . .	\$ 8.00
Micro Chip . . . . .	\$ 10.00
5. Adoption Fees	
Dogs . . . . .	\$ 70.00
Cats . . . . .	\$ 50.00
6. Daily Quarantine Fee . . . . .	\$ 12.00
7. Administrative Appeal Filing Fee . . . . .	\$ 10.00
8. Educate the Offender Class . . . . .	\$ 25.00

### Services

- Animal bite investigation
- Stray or lost animal pick up
- Humane traps for small animals
- Aid to injured animals
- Dangerous animal complaints
- Barking and noise complaints
- Pet license registration
- Education/outreach programs
- Administrative appeals
- Sheltering for impounded and homeless animals
- Pet adoptions

**Animal Care and Control Center**  
4900 Martin Street  
Fort Worth, Texas 76119-5200  
  
817-392-3737  
817-561-3741 (Fax)  
[www.fortworthgov.org/health](http://www.fortworthgov.org/health)



## Animal Control Laws

**FORT WORTH**  
  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**

## Fort Worth Animal Care and Control

Animal Care and Control is a division of the Fort Worth Public Health Department. Its mission is to provide safe neighborhoods for people and their pets. Each day the division strives to:

- Protect the community from the threat of rabies and other animal-transmitted diseases and from injury caused by roaming animals.
- Promote responsible pet ownership through education, enforcement and legislation.
- Provide a safe haven for lost and homeless pets; to return lost pets to their owners; and to place as many pets as possible in loving, responsible homes.

Pet owners need to be considerate of their neighbors by restricting their animals to fenced areas, controlling unnecessary noise, and maintaining their pets' health. Responsible owners do not allow their pets to become nuisances or add to the pet overpopulation problem.

## Ownership

An owner is any person who owns, keeps, shelters, maintains, feeds, harbors or has temporary or permanent custody of a domestic or prohibited animal, or who knowingly permits the animal to remain on or about the person's premises. A person is legally considered the owner if the animal is kept for three (3) or more consecutive days.

## Number of Dogs and Cats

A residence may house up to three (3) dogs and three (3) cats. A person may file an appeal with Animal Care and Control for a permit to keep more dogs and/or cats than the stated limit. Appeal forms are available at the shelter.

## Wild and Exotic Animals

Most wild and exotic animals are prohibited as pets within the city limits of Fort Worth.

## Dog Restraint Ordinance

A dog is under restraint when:

1. It is securely enclosed or confined in its owner's yard by a physical fence in a manner that will isolate the animal from the public and from other animals except for animals owned or under the control of the owner; or
2. It is accompanied by its owner at a bona fide dog show, field trial or exhibition; or
3. It is secured by a leash at least five (5) and not more than ten (10) feet in length and of sufficient strength to control the animal while the animal is being walked; or
4. A specially trained dog that is used by a blind or deaf individual to aid him/her within the city; or
5. A guard dog in the performance of duty in an enclosed building or securely fenced and locked area, which is marked on all sides with signs in four-inch letters stating "guard dog" and clearly visible to the public; or

6. A dog in a place of public assembly and effectively and securely muzzled in order to prevent the dog from biting.

## Cat Restraint Ordinance

A cat is under restraint if it remains within the boundaries of the premises of the person having charge, care or ownership of the cat. A cat does not necessarily need to be behind a fence or on a leash, although these are recommended.

## Barking/Noise Ordinance

It is a violation to keep any animal or bird that causes frequent or long-continued noise that disturbs the comfort and repose of any person of ordinary sensibilities in the immediate vicinity.

## Rabies Vaccination

Dogs and cats must receive their rabies vaccination at the age of 4 months, then a booster 12 months later. Thereafter, the animal must be vaccinated every 3 years.

## City License Tag

An *annual* city license will be issued to an owner of a dog, cat or ferret if such animal is currently vaccinated against rabies. The license fee is \$7 and may be obtained from participating veterinary clinics, at the Animal Care and Control Center or by mail. The issued tag should be displayed on the animal's collar or harness. *Failure to obtain and display a license for your pet may result in the issuance of a citation and a fine of up to \$500 for each day the violation continues.*

## Bite Incidents and Exposure to Rabies

Any person who knows of any animal that exhibits symptoms of or has been exposed to rabies, or knows of any animal that has bitten, scratched or otherwise created a condition which may have exposed or transmitted the rabies virus to any human being or animal shall immediately report the incident to Animal Care and Control. The report shall include the name and address of the victim, name of the owner of the animal (if known), and any other information he/she has relating to the incident or animal.

## Quarantine

Animals that have bitten a human being must be placed in quarantine for the ten (10) days following the bite incident. Quarantine must be in one of the following facilities:

1. Animal shelter with quarantine facilities approved by the Texas Department of Health (TDH);
2. Veterinary clinic operated by a licensed veterinarian; or
3. The home of the animal owner provided the bite victim is a member of the household, the animal is currently vaccinated against rabies, and the owner can provide a secure, isolated location to confine the animal. A veterinarian must observe the animal at least on the first and last days of the quarantine period.

The owner of the biting animal is required by state law to pay the cost of the quarantine. Regardless of the vaccination status of the animal at the time of the bite, all bite animals must be quarantined.

## Sanitary Standards

The owner of any animal must remove manure and droppings from pens, stables, yards, cages and other enclosures and handle or dispose of the animal waste in such a manner as to keep the premises free of any nuisance.

## Proper Care of Animals

Every owner or other person having care and control of any animal shall provide the following for each animal under his/her care and control:

1. Nutritious and wholesome food, served in clean containers, sufficient to maintain the animal in good health.
2. Clean and wholesome water, served in clean containers; such water to be available at all times.
3. Adequate shelter and protection from the weather at all times. This includes shade in the summer and an appropriately sized dog house in the winter.
4. Veterinary care as needed to prevent suffering. This includes vaccinations to prevent disease, parasite control and attention to any injury.

## Dead Animal Pick-Up

The Environmental Management Department will remove a dead dog, cat or other small animal within the city limits when it is placed on the curb of a residence. Owners of large dead animals, such as horses, are responsible for the proper disposal of their animals. Notify Animal Care and Control if you need a dead small animal picked up.

## Reclaiming Impounded Animals

Fort Worth ordinance requires that dogs and cats reclaimed by their owners be spayed or neutered within thirty (30) days. The following animals are exempt:

1. At the time of the animal's impoundment, it was wearing a current city license tag, valid for that animal, and had not previously been impounded for being at large.
2. The impounded animal is registered with a recognized national registry or is a sporting dog, livestock or working dog, and the owner is a member of a national breed club, local breed club, local all-breed club, or hunting club and does not sell twelve (12) or more intact animals per year.
3. The animal was at large and impounded due to force via major (natural disaster).
4. The animal was at large and impounded due to fire, criminal or negligent acts of a third party who does not reside at the animal owner's residence. Verification of the incident (police or fire report) or the sworn testimony of police or fire personnel is required.