

New animal ordinances approved

Posted June 27, 2018

After more than a year of discussions and public input, the Fort Worth City Council approved a series of updated animal ordinances on June 26.

City staff periodically reviews the animal care and control ordinances to ensure compliance with associated rules and laws as well as relevant content for changing policies, development standards and cultural practices.

A partial list of revised ordinances includes microchipping, the “leash law” and intact-pet permits.

Microchipping

Microchipping will be the primary/recommended method for pet identification. Animals adopted or otherwise microchipped by the city are registered in a national database at no cost to the owner.

Pet owners who object to a microchip can get a collar-attached city license and pay a three-year (\$100), five-year (\$150) or life-of-pet fee (\$200). The fee schedule is set to keep city expenses to a minimum (fewer renewals) while maximizing savings to the resident through a life-of-pet option.

Multifamily pet requirements

Landlords will now need to verify microchip, rabies vaccination and intact-pet status or permit. Before the updated ordinance, landlords only had to verify a current pet license.

Dangerous dogs

The new ordinance defines dangerous dogs as those that attack humans. This is consistent with state law. Dogs attacking animals are addressed as aggressive dogs.

Aggressive dogs

Dogs that attack other domestic animals are now recognized as aggressive dogs and are subject to a new criminal violation for known aggressive dog attacks. This is also consistent with state law.

Quarantine of animals

In the past, a veterinary practice is where a majority of quarantines occurred. The new ordinance allows for home quarantines as is consistent with state law.

“Pooper scooper law” — pet waste pickup

Previously, pet owners were only required to “scoop poop” on the owner’s property and parks. Now, pet owners have a responsibility to clean up pet waste **in all public areas in addition to private property.**

Intact-pet fees

This is a two-tiered ordinance.

- The intact-pet permit fee remains at **\$50.**
- If an intact dog is impounded at the shelter, and the owner does not want to spay/neuter their pet, they can pay **\$500** and apply for an intact-pet permit. The permit application must be approved.

“Leash law” aka under immediate control

Currently, dogs must be kept restrained, but no leash or specific control is required. The updated ordinance requires owners to have immediate control of a dog by a leash or through voice, gesture or other means. Exceptions include residential zones where a leash would be required and at special events and parks where agreements, administrative rules and other ordinances set requirements.

The revision requires dogs to be maintained under control so they are not a nuisance to others while allowing obedient dogs to safely accompany responsible owners at outdoor activities.

Retail sale of dogs and cats

The ordinance **prohibits the retail sale of dogs and cats anywhere other than where the cat or dog was born** (for example, at the home of the breeder). An exemption applies for nonprofit organizations, rescue groups or dog shows.

The ordinance encourages adopting dogs and cats rather than purchasing through pet stores and puppy mills.

To learn more, call 817-392-1234 or visit the animal page.