



# **IT'S THE LAW!**

## *Laws Protecting People and Animals in the City of L.A.*

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Over the years, the City of Los Angeles has sought to improve conditions for animals and people by creating and supporting laws that govern the care of animals and their interactions with humans. Many of these laws are found in the Los Angeles Municipal Code ("LAMC"), and some are found in State law. (Read the law for a full description, including exceptions.) Los Angeles Animal Services is responsible to enforce the laws. Here is a brief summary of the key laws affecting L.A.'s animals and their owners:

### **Animal Abuse and Cruelty**

Abusing or failing to properly care for any animal is against the law and is punishable with fines and possible jail time. This includes participation in dog and cock fighting. LA Animal Services is constantly on the lookout for evidence of abuse, and the Animal Cruelty Task Force works with the City Attorney and District Attorney to investigate and prosecute abuse and cruelty cases. You can call to report abuse and cruelty at (213) 847-1417. *Various State and local laws.*

### **Animals Left in Cars**

You may not leave an animal in any unattended motor vehicle under conditions (such as heat, cold, lack of ventilation or water) that endanger the health of the animal or may be expected to cause suffering or death. *State Penal Code 597.7.*

### **Anti-Tethering Laws**

Dog owners who tie up their animals for long periods of time or deny them the proper level of water and shade face stiff financial penalties. State law specifically sets a limit: dogs may only be tied, chained, or otherwise restrained to a stationary object because of special conditions, such as construction, outdoor party, or to complete some other short-term task. Under State law, violations could result in an infraction or misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$1,000 per dog and/or six months in jail. *LAMC Section 53.70.*

### **Barking Dogs**

You cannot allow your dog to bother your neighbors with excessive barking. Failure to control barking that unreasonably interferes with your neighbors could lead to the imposition of strict conditions by LA Animal Services, or eventually you could lose your dog and lose the right to own a dog for one year. *LAMC Section 53.63.*

### **Breeding**

If you breed your animal, whether on purpose or by accident, you must obtain a breeding permit, which costs \$100. *LAMC Section 53.15.*

### **Dangerous Dogs**

It is illegal to allow your dog to assault, menace or threaten another person or animal. Failure to control your dog could result in losing your dog and your right to own a dog for three years. *LAMC Section 53.33 and/or 53.34.*

## **Dog Poop**

Dog owners are required to clean up after their dogs when taking them out in public. Failure to do so could lead to stiff fines. Bring a bag when you take your dog for a walk! [LAMC Section 53.49.](#)

## **Keeping Animals Outdoors**

LA Animal Services sets the minimum distance that animals (except horses) may be kept from houses, schools, businesses, and other buildings. Rules for chickens are different from rules for roosters; rules for pigs are different from those for other farm animals. Rules and distances for keeping horses are set in the Land Use section of the LAMC, Section 12.00. Call your local animal care center and ask for the officer-in-charge to provide the distance requirements for your situation. [LAMC Section 53.59.](#)

## **Leash Law**

If you take or allow your dog off your property or place of residence, you must have him or her on a leash. Failure to do so could result in a stiff fine. There are a number of dog parks in the City where it is legal to let your dog off-leash, but no beaches at present. [LAMC Section 53.06.](#)

## **Licensing**

All dogs residing in the City must be licensed. Horses must also have a license, which costs \$14 per year. A license for a spayed or neutered dog costs \$15 per year, while a license for an unaltered dog costs \$100 per year. Contact LA Animal Services for information about the City's free and subsidized spay and neutering services and vouchers. [LAMC Section 53.15.](#)

## **Micro-chip**

Getting your dog micro-chipped makes identification and return of a lost pet quick and easy if he or she ends up in the possession of LA Animal Services. Also, as part of the new law requiring spay or neuter of dogs and cats, any dog or cat that is exempt from the requirement and remains intact must be micro-chipped. [LAMC Section 53.15.2.](#)

## **No Feeding Urban Wildlife**

You may not feed "non-domesticated mammalian predators" (for example, coyotes, foxes, possums, raccoons and skunks). Violating this law is a misdemeanor and can subject you to fines. [LAMC Section 53.06.05, along with State law.](#)

## **Selling Animals**

There are laws restricting the selling of animals within the City of Los Angeles on all streets, sidewalks, and other public places. Selling animals usually requires obtaining a Business Tax Registration Certificate (BTRC) from the City of Los Angeles. Pet shops and kennels must also obtain permits for public sales from LA Animal Services. [LAMC Section 53.42, and other LAMC sections.](#)

## **Spay and Neuter**

All dogs and cats residing in the City of Los Angeles must be spayed or neutered unless they meet certain medical criteria, are active show or service dogs, or are licensed for breeding purposes. Stiff fines and penalties can be assessed for persistent failure to comply. If you adopted your dog or cat from an animal shelter, state law requires that it be spayed or neutered before you will be allowed to take it home unless there is a valid medical reason for delaying the surgery. [LAMC Section 53.15.2.](#)