

DOG CONTROL

Under the Dog Control By-Law all citizens have a responsibility to see that dog owners are accountable for the actions of their dogs. In establishing this by-law, the Town of Norton recognizes that the right of dog ownership carries with it the responsibility to provide adequate control to insure that no dog is a danger or a nuisance.

1. The annual fee for every dog license shall be established by Town Meeting. All fees shall be retained by the Town Treasurer in the Reserve Appropriation for Norton Dog System established under Article 16 of the Special Town Meeting of May 21, 1986. No fee shall be charged for a license for a dog specially trained to serve a blind or deaf person provided that the division of the blind or deaf certify that such a dog is so trained and actually in the services of a blind or deaf person. No license fee or part thereof shall be refunded because of the subsequent death, loss, altering, or removal from the Commonwealth or other disposal of the dog. (Amended 6/2/03) (Approved by A.G. 9/4/03)
2. No person shall own or keep a dog in the Town which by biting, excessive barking, howling, or in any other manner disturb the quiet of the public.
3. COMPLAINT OF NUISANCE: If any person shall make a complaint in writing to the Dog Officer that any dog owned or harbored within his jurisdiction is a nuisance by reason of vicious disposition or excessive barking or other disturbance, the Dog Officer shall investigate such complaint and submit a written report to the Selectmen of his findings and recommendations, together with the written complaint. Upon receipt of such report and examination of the complaint under oath, the Selectmen may make such order concerning the restraint, muzzling, or disposal of such dog as may be deemed necessary by the Dog Officer who, after investigation, may issue an interim order such dog be restrained or muzzled for a period not to exceed 14 days to enable the Selectmen to issue their order following receipt of the report of the Dog Officer. If the Selectmen fail to act during the period of the interim order, upon expiration of the period the interim order automatically is vacated.
4. The Dog Officer may restrain or muzzle, or issue an interim order to restrain or muzzle, for a period not to exceed fourteen days, any dog for any of the following reasons:
 - A. For having bitten any person.
 - B. If found at large or unmuzzled, as the case may be, while an order for the restraint of such dog is in effect.
 - C. If found in a school, schoolyard or public recreational area.
 - D. For having killed or maimed or otherwise damaged any other domesticated animal.
 - E. For chasing any vehicle upon any public way or way open to public travel in the Town.
 - F. For any violation of Section 2.

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Upon restraining or muzzling, or issuing an interim order to restrain or muzzle, the Dog Officer shall submit in writing to the Selectmen a report of his action and the reasons thereof. Upon receipt of such report the Selectmen may make such order concerning the restraint, muzzling or disposal of such dog as may be deemed necessary. If the Selectmen fail to act upon the report during the period the dog is restrained or muzzled, upon expiration of the period, the interim order is automatically vacated.

5. APPEAL OF RESTRAINT OR MUZZLING: The owner or keeper of any dog that has been ordered to be restrained or muzzled or has been restrained under this By-Law, may file a written request with the Dog Officer that the restraining order be vacated or that the dog be released. After investigation by the Dog Officer, such officer may vacate such order or release such dog if the order or restraint was imposed by him. If the order was imposed by the Selectmen, the Dog Officer shall submit a written report of his investigation with his recommendations to the Selectmen who may vacate such order.

(APPROVED 10/29/73)
6. Any owner or keeper of a dog who shall fail to comply with any order of the Dog Officer or Selectmen issued pursuant to this By-Law shall be punished by a fine.

(APPROVED 9/19/77)
7. No owner or keeper of any dog shall cause or permit such dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, to run at large or to be a public nuisance within the Town of Norton or permitted to wander at will on public or private property other than the premises of the said owner or keeper or the premises of another person with knowledge and permission of such other person.

(AMENDED 5/88 & APPROVED 8/30/88)
8. No owner or keeper shall cause or permit any dog to run at large within the Town. While on any public way or place, dogs shall be under restraint by the owner or keeper. A dog is under restraint within the meaning of the By-Law if he is controlled by a leash or at heel beside a competent person and obedient to the commands of that person or on or within a vehicle being driven or parked on the street. Dogs running at large will be caught and confined and the owner notified. Owners or keepers in violation of this section will be liable to a fine or not less than ten dollars for each violation.

(AMENDED 1/19/11 & APPROVED 2/10/11)
9. Should any owner or keeper of a dog fail to license that dog before March 1st, that owner or keeper shall pay a late fee of five dollars plus an additional fee of one dollar per month beginning March 1, before obtaining said license, excepting a dog brought into the Town as provided in Section 138 of Chapter 140, Massachusetts General laws, this late fee shall be applicable from the 61st day after arrival of such dog. Any person maintaining a kennel in the Town of Norton, who fails to license as proscribed by this section and the Laws of the Commonwealth, shall pay a late fee of ten dollars plus an additional fee of two dollars per month beginning March 1. All late fees shall be retained by the Town Treasurer in the Reserve Appropriation for Norton Dog System established under Article 16 of the Special Town Meeting of May 21, 1986.

(APPROVED 1/19/2011)
10. The annual dog license period shall run from January 1st to December 31st, inclusive, of each calendar year.

