

FAQs About Animal Control City Codes

What are the rules on animals running loose?

City code 5-67. No animal is permitted to run at large within the City. This includes dogs, cats and other animals. There are several ordinances that apply:

The "Animal at Large" ordinance states no animal is permitted to run at large. If an animal leaves the owner or custodian's property, it must be under the control of a responsible person and wearing a city pet license.

The "leash law" covers dogs only. This ordinance states that when a dog is being walked on any city sidewalk, city street or public right-of-way, it has to be on a leash or lead at all times. Dogs being walked on a leash must also be wearing a city pet license.

Another ordinance covers livestock in agricultural areas of the city. This ordinance prohibits cows, horses, sheep, goats, and other livestock from running loose. Another ordinance covers fowl and includes chickens, turkeys, geese, etc., and prohibits them running loose.

Does the city have a "pooper-scooper" ordinance?

City code 5-16. Yes, there is an ordinance that prohibits any owner or person in control of a dog to allow the dog to urinate or defecate on public or private property. It is not constitute a violation on public property if the owner or custodian immediately removes the material defecated and disposes of it in a safe and sanitary manner.

Can I take my pet on the sand beaches or any adjacent areas?

City code 6-5. This is allowed during certain times of the year and under certain restrictions. During the "season," which is defined as the time period from 6:00 p.m. on the Friday before Memorial day through 6:00 p.m. Labor Day of each year, NO pets are allowed on the public beaches, the boardwalk or the grassy area west of the boardwalk between Rudee Inlet and 42nd Street. This restriction also covers any pet, other than a dog or cat, unless the animal is in an escape-proof container. This includes, but is not limited to, any mammal, bird, or reptile.

During this same period, pets are not allowed on any other public sand beaches except before 10:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. It is unlawful to allow any pet to defecate on any public sand beach or litter the boardwalk or grassy area west of the boardwalk. In the event a pet defecates on the sand beach, the owner or custodian must remove the material defecated and dispose of it in an airtight container or wrapper and place same in a garbage receptacle.

Additionally, during the times pets are permitted on the beaches, the owner or custodian must carry a container of sufficient size and adequate design to remove and dispose of all feces deposited by the animal.

What constitutes a "barking dog"?

City code 5-10. The "Barking Dog" ordinance states that it shall be unlawful for any person to keep a dog without exercising proper care and control of such dog to prevent it from disturbing

the peace of others by barking in a loud, continuous or untimely manner. We are aware that dogs will bark when they see something or someone. We look for a cause of the dog's barking or whether the dog is barking for no reason.

What constitutes a "nuisance animal"?

Sec. 5-9. Nuisance animals generally.(a) No owner shall fail to exercise proper care and control of his animals to prevent them from becoming a public nuisance. Molesting a passerby, attacking without seriously injuring any person without provocation on two (2) or more occasions, chasing vehicles, habitually attacking but not seriously injuring other domestic animals, trespassing upon school grounds, or trespassing upon private property in such manner as to damage property shall be deemed a nuisance. Three (3) or more violations of City Code § 5-67 in any twelve-month period shall also be deemed a nuisance.

(b) Any person owning or having in his possession or under his control any animal constituting a nuisance shall be summoned before the General District Court of the City to show cause why such animal should not be confined, disposed of or removed or the nuisance otherwise abated and, upon proof that the animal constitutes a public nuisance, the animal in question shall, by order of the General District Court of the City, either be confined, removed from the City, or the nuisance activity otherwise abated as such court shall order. It shall be unlawful and shall constitute contempt of court for any person to harbor or conceal any animal which has been ordered disposed of or removed by the General District Court, or to fail to confine or restrain an animal when such an order has been entered by the court.

(c) Any person who owns any dog, cat or other animal that has been adjudged a nuisance pursuant to this Section by the General District Court and who appeals that decision to the Circuit Court shall be responsible for the fees connected with the impounding of the animal by the Bureau of Animal Control. If on appeal the Circuit Court determines that the dog, cat or other animal is not a nuisance, no such fees for the impounding of the animal shall be imposed.

What constitutes a "dangerous or vicious animal"?

City code 5-5. *Dangerous dog* means a canine or canine crossbreed which has bitten, attacked, or inflicted injury on a person or companion animal, or killed a companion animal.

Vicious dog means a canine or canine crossbreed which has (i) killed a person; (ii) inflicted serious injury to a person, including multiple bites, serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health or serious impairment of a bodily function; or (iii) continued to exhibit the type of behavior which resulted in a previous finding by a court that it is a dangerous dog, provided that its owner has been given notice of that finding.

I've been bitten by an animal - what should I do?

City code 5-89. All animal bites must be reported, and failure to do so could result in a summons being issued. This is a matter of public health. Enforcement of these regulations is the responsibility of the Bureau of Animal Control and the Virginia Beach Health Department. Any animal that bites someone must be placed in quarantine for a 10-day period and cannot be removed from the city unless permission is granted by the Virginia Beach Health Department.

Any person bitten should seek medical attention. Animal bites must be reported within 24 hours. To do this, call Communications at 385-4444. An Animal Control Officer will respond to

complete an Animal Exposure Report. The responsibility of reporting animal bites applies to attending physicians, veterinarians, owners of the biting animals and persons bitten and any other persons who may have knowledge of such fact.

Every attempt should be made to identify the animal so the owner can be contacted and the necessary paperwork completed. If a wild animal is involved and cannot be located, you will be advised by the Department what treatment is necessary.

My animal has bitten someone - what do I do?

City code 5-89. As outlined previously, the bite should be reported by calling Communications at 385-4444. The animal must be placed in quarantine for a period of 10 days. This quarantine is required even if the animal has been vaccinated for rabies. The animal can be kept at your home if a suitable quarantine can be maintained. If you don't have a place to quarantine the animal, you can either board the animal in a private kennel or have it quarantined at the Bureau of Animal Control. Boarding fees at private kennels vary and are the responsibility of the animal owner. The fee for boarding an animal at the Bureau of Animal Control is \$10.00 per day and is also the responsibility of the animal owner.

After the animal exposure report is completed, a copy is forwarded to the [Health Department](#). The Health Department will observe the animal and release it from quarantine at the end of the quarantine period.

When do animals need licenses, and where can I get one?

City code 5-50. All dogs and cats over the age of four months need a rabies vaccination and a city pet license. The rabies vaccination is to be given by a veterinarian. An animal license may be purchased at any branch of the City Treasurer's Office (Haygood Shopping Center, 19th St. & Arctic Ave., Courthouse and Kempsville), the Virginia Beach SPCA and the Bureau of Animal Control. Remember, a lost pet cannot call home; their tag is their ticket home!

To purchase a animal license, you must present a current rabies certificate for that animal. If the animal has been spayed or neutered you must also present written proof in order to get your license at a reduced rate.

Where do I go to pay a fine for an animal violation?

Fines can be paid at the Clerk of Court's office, which is located at the Municipal Center, or they can be paid at a Magistrate's office at the police precinct closest to your location. For information on the amount of a fine you should contact the Clerk of Court's office at 385-4707 or the closest Magistrate's office.

Contact Information:

Animal Control
2665 Leroy Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA 23456
Fax: (757) 427-0199
Direct: (757) 385-4444