

Cook County Pet Laws

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Rabies Vaccination

The owner of any dog six months of age or older must have his or her dog vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. This vaccination prevents the spread of rabies and protects the dog and the public. **It is VERY important to keep your pet up to date on Rabies vaccination. It can prevent a lot of headaches, expense, sorrow and remorse.**

Dog Licenses

The owner of any dog six months of age or older must have a license for his or her dog. Please refer to sections, “[City of Chicago Dog Registration Information](#)” and “[DFA Parks, Permits and Tags](#)” for detailed information.

Leash Your Dog

Keep your dog out of danger and prevent tragedy. Even a well-trained, well-socialized dog needs supervision, instruction and boundaries. Here are some reasons why leashing your dog is important:

- It's the law! A fine of \$300 can be issued to an owner having a dog unrestrained.
- Prevents your dog from straying and getting lost.
- Protects your dog from darting into traffic to chase something exciting or run from something scary.
- Protects your dog from unseen or unknown hazards, such as things that cut, sting, bite, or cause illness.
- Protects your dog from startling unsuspecting pedestrians, cyclists or chasing/scaring other animals into traffic or harm's way.

- Reduces the chance that another person or another dog will be bitten. Whether a dog is startled, frightened, protecting, guarding or involved in other territorial activities, a dog has the potential to bite.
- Makes it easier to clean up after your dog and prevents your dog from eliminating in protected areas, where children play, or others walk.
- Eliminates the pain, suffering and guilt your family will go through should your dog be lost, hurt, or bite someone.

Responsible Pet Ownership: Removal of Waste (Why You Should Pick Up After Your Pet):

- It's the law! You can receive up to a \$500 fine.
- It's unsightly, there's a disgusting odor and stepping in it is just plain gross! Be considerate of your neighbors and clean up after your pet.
- It doesn't instantly disintegrate and it runs off into the water system.
- Dogs can spread diseases to each other through their feces and can attract rodents. **Dog feces can carry zoonotic disease, which can infect humans. Potential pathogens may include:**
 - **Salmonella:** May cause upset stomach or more severe problems
 - **Roundworm:** Potentially causes a mild rash to more serious disease to the lungs, liver, or even blindness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 10,000 cases of roundworm infection annually
 - **Hookworm:** A parasite than can be picked up by individuals that walk barefoot in contaminated areas
 - **Campylobacteriosis:** A bacterial infection that can cause diarrhea in humans.
 - **Giardiasis:** A diarrheal illness caused by a one-celled, microscopic parasite. Once an animal or person has been infected, the parasite lives in the intestine and is passed in the stool. Because the parasite is protected by an outer shell, it can survive outside the body and in the environment for long periods of time.

Dogs in Cars

No owner or person shall confine any animal in a motor vehicle in such a manner that places it in a life or health threatening situation by exposure to a prolonged period of extreme heat or cold, without proper ventilation or other protection from such heat or cold. In order to protect the health and safety of an animal, an animal control officer, law enforcement officer, or Department of Agriculture investigator who has probable cause to believe that this Section is being violated shall have authority to enter such motor vehicle by any reasonable means under the circumstances after making a reasonable effort to locate the owner or person.

Dogs at Outdoor Cafes

Dog owners who enjoy dining at outdoor cafes are permitted to bring their pet with them to restaurants that are licensed appropriately. Restaurants wishing to participate must apply for a city issued permit and are required to post a sign in a visible location stating that dogs are allowed in the outdoor dining area. Customers must have the dog's vaccination tags or proof of vaccinations. Dogs are not allowed on the table, countertop or similar surface, and employees may not touch the dog for sanitary reasons. Remember to feed your dog before you go to dine as food cannot be provided to your pet while in the outdoor dining area. In addition, your dog must be on a leash and on its best behavior.

Owner's Responsibility Where an Animal Has Bitten Another Animal or Person

If your pet bites a person or another domestic animal, local ordinances require you to take certain steps, often within 24 hours of the incident. Rabies virus is excreted in the saliva of infected dogs and cats during illness and/or for only a few days before illness or death.

Regardless of rabies vaccination status, Chicago law mandates the

owner to take the pet to a veterinarian within 24 hours to begin a 10-day observation for rabies. The veterinarian will examine the dog then mail and fax a report to Animal Care and Control.

- If the animal's rabies vaccine is current, in most instances the pet can be confined at home and brought back to the veterinarian on the 10th day. Such animals should be evaluated by a veterinarian at the first sign of illness and will be reported immediately to the local health department. The veterinarian must again file a report with Animal Care and Control certifying the completion of the observation period.
- If the rabies vaccine is not current, the animal must be confined under a veterinarian's care, at the owner's expense, for the 10-day observation period. Rabies vaccination will be performed prior to discharge. Administration of rabies vaccine to the animal is not recommended during the observation period to avoid confusing signs of rabies with rare adverse reactions.

It shall be unlawful for the owner of any animal, when notified that such animal has bitten any person to sell or give away such animal or to permit or allow such animal to be taken beyond the limits of the city.

A case of severe human injury will require emergency care and the hospital must call the police. In Chicago, in cases where the bite victim does not go to the emergency room, the victim must go to a police station to report the bite in person. The police report is automatically sent to Animal Care and Control. An officer from Animal Care and Control may visit the dog's home to explain the owner's responsibility and ask questions about the circumstances.

A dog that has caused severe injury or death will be impounded by Animal Care and Control while a "dangerous animal" investigation is completed. The owner is required to pay all costs incurred by Animal Care and Control for housing, care and treatment.

Postexposure Management to a Confirmed or Suspected Rabid

Animal

This section refers to any animal exposed to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal. **Wild mammalian carnivores (especially raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes) or bats that are not available or suitable for testing should be regarded as rabid animals.** Small mammals such as squirrels, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rabbits, and hares are almost never found to be infected with rabies and have not been known to cause rabies among humans in the United States. Bites by these animals are usually not considered a risk of rabies unless the animal was sick or behaving in any unusual manner and rabies is widespread in your area. However, from 1985 through 1994, woodchucks accounted for 86% of the 368 cases of rabies among rodents reported to CDC. Woodchucks or groundhogs are the only rodents that may be frequently submitted to state health department because of a suspicion of rabies.

1. Dogs and cats that have **never been vaccinated** and are exposed to a rabid animal should be euthanized immediately. If the owner is unwilling to have this done, the animal should be placed in strict isolation for 6 months. Isolation in this context refers to confinement in an enclosure that precludes direct contact with people and other animals (i.e. Animal Care and Control). Rabies vaccine should be administered upon entry into isolation or more commonly up to 28 days before release to comply with preexposure vaccination recommendations. There are currently no USDA licensed biologics for postexposure prophylaxis of previously unvaccinated domestic animals, and there is evidence that the use of vaccine alone will not reliably prevent the disease in these animals.
2. Animals **overdue for a booster vaccination** should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis based upon severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology to determine need for euthanasia or immediate revaccination and observation/isolation.

3. Dogs and cats that are currently vaccinated should be revaccinated immediately, kept under the owner's control, and observed for 45 days. The rationale for an observation period is based in part on the potential for: overwhelming viral challenge, incomplete vaccine efficacy and variable host immunocompetence. Isolation rules: no contact with children, only as many adults caring for the animal as necessary, pet shouldn't be boarded, taken to park, taken on vacation, no exposure to other animals, etc. Signs to monitor for include aggression, extreme lethargy, abnormal mental status and seizure. Also, drooling is common since the muscles of the throat are paralyzed and the animal cannot swallow. If any of these symptoms are observed or if you have any questions/concerns during the observation period, [Call Us: \[practice:phone\]](#) or Animal Care and Control (312-747-1406)