



IT'S THE LAW!

Laws Protecting People and Animals in the City of LA

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 LA’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. L.A. 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 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 shelter face stiff financial penalties. State law specifically sets a limit: dogs may not be tied, chained, or otherwise restrained to a stationary object for more than 3 hours in a 24-hour period. 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. [Section 53.70 of the LAMC.](#)

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 three years. [Section 53.63 of the LAMC.](#)

Breeding

If you breed your animal, whether on purpose or by accident, you must obtain a breeding permit, which costs \$100. [Section 53.15 of the LAMC.](#)

Dangerous Dogs

It is illegal to allow your dog to assault, menace or threaten another person or other animal. Failure to control your dog could result in losing your dog and the right to own a dog for three years. [Section 53.34 of the LAMC.](#)

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! [Section 53.49 of the LAMC.](#)

Keeping Animals Outdoors

L.A. Animal Services sets the minimum distance that all animals (except horses) may be kept from houses, schools, businesses, and other buildings. Dogs, cats, rabbits, and farm animals must be kept 35 feet from the owner's house, and 75 feet from all other buildings. Rules and distances for keeping horses are similar, but are set in the Land Use section of the LAMC, Section 12.00. [Section 53.59 of the LAMC.](#)

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. [Section 53.06 of the LAMC.](#)

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 L.A. Animal Services for information for City free and subsidized spay and neutering services and vouchers. [Section 53.15 of the LAMC.](#)

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 L.A. 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. [Section 53.15.2 of the LAMC.](#)

No Feeding Urban Wildlife

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

Selling Animals

There are strict laws restricting the selling of animals within the City of Los Angeles. Outdoor and sidewalk sales are generally prohibited and sales of dogs and cats require special permits from L.A. Animal Services. Selling animals usually also requires obtaining a business license from the City of Los Angeles. [Section 53.42 of the LAMC, 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. [Section 53.15.2 of the LAMC.](#)