



# IT'S THE LAW!

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

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The City of Los Angeles improves conditions for animals and people through 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, or 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.*

### 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 the right to own a dog for a year. *LAMC Section 53.63.*

### Breeding

If you breed your dog or cat, whether on purpose or by accident, you must obtain a breeding permit, which costs \$120. *LAMC Section 53.15.*

### Care of Pets and Anti-Tethering Laws

Pets must be provided in all cases with enough food and water, along with attention and shelter. 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 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. *LAMC Section 53.70 and State law.*

### 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 your right to own a dog for three years. *LAMC Section 53.34.*

### Declawing Cats

Veterinarians are prohibited from declawing a cat in the City. *LAMC Section 53.72.*

### 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. Dogs, cats, rabbits, and farm animals must be kept 35 feet from the owner's house, and 75 feet from all other buildings. Roosters must be kept 100 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. [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 and be vaccinated for rabies to protect public health. 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. You can only keep your dog unaltered if you meet specific exemption requirements. [LAMC Section 53.15.](#)

### **Limit on Number of Animals**

You may keep up to 3 dogs and/or 3 cats on your property if they are over four months old. If you have more than 3 dogs and/or 3 cats, your property must qualify as kennel and have a kennel permit. You may only have 1 rooster on your property. [LAMC Section 53.00 and 53.71.](#)

### **Lost and Found Pets**

If you lose a pet, go to your local animal care center to ask about pets turned in, or use our “Find a Lost Pet” search feature on our website. Licensed and micro-chipped pets almost always get back to their owners quickly. If you find a lost or stray pet, take it to your closest animal care center to turn it in so his or her owner can find the pet. [LAMC Section 53.09.](#)

### **Micro-chip**

Getting your dog micro-chipped makes identification and return of a lost pet easier. 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) outdoors. 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 strict laws about 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 LA Animal Services. Selling animals usually also requires obtaining a Business Tax Registration Certificate (BTRC) from the City of Los Angeles. [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. Contact LA Animal Services for information about the City's free and subsidized spay and neuter programs. 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.](#)