

KAUFMAN COUNTY, TEXAS

ANIMAL CONTROL ORDER



ADOPTED June 23rd, 2009

LAST UPDATED March 28th, 2023

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Pursuant to the authority of Title 10 (entitled Health and Safety of Animals) of the Texas Health and Safety Code, the Kaufman County Commissioners Court adopts and enforces the following Order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare in the unincorporated areas of Kaufman County.

SECTION 1. General Provisions

- 1.1 Animal Control Authority, hereinafter “ACA,” means any peace officer of the State of Texas, animal control officer, or other entity that the Commissioners Court considers appropriate. Among other duties, the Kaufman County Sheriff’s Department shall enforce the provisions of this order by investigating complaints as to animal nuisances; issuing citations when deemed appropriate; and shall impound animals when appropriate.
- 1.2 Local Rabies Control Authority, hereinafter LRCA, means the Kaufman County Sheriff’s Department, or designee, who will receive reports of animal bites and potential rabies exposures; investigate bite reports; ensure quarantine of possible rabid animals or include laboratory testing of possible rabid animals; issue citations for failure to restrain; and otherwise carry out provisions of Texas Law and local regulations pertaining to control and eradication of rabies.
- 1.3 Under these rules, the ACA is also designated as the LRCA with both positions being referred to herein as the Animal Control Authority, or ACA (reference Texas Health and Safety Code 826.017).

SECTION 2. Definitions

- 2.1 “Abandon” shall mean to leave or drop off a pet animal without provision for food, water, or shelter such that the animal’s health is endangered or causes the animal to suffer (reference Texas Penal Code 42.092, Cruelty to Animals, reference Texas Health and Safety Code 821.021)
- 2.2 “Cat” shall mean any member of the domestic cat family, excluding hybrids.

- 2.3 “Currently Vaccinated” (reference Texas Administrative Code 169.22) shall mean vaccinated and satisfying the following criteria:
1. The animal must have been vaccinated against rabies according to the label recommendations of a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved vaccine.
 2. At least 30 days have elapsed since the initial vaccination.
 3. The time elapsed since the most recent vaccination has not exceeded the label recommendations of the vaccine.
- 2.4 “Dangerous Dog” shall mean any dog that (reference Texas Health and Safety Code 822.0421):
1. Makes an unprovoked attack on a person that causes bodily injury and occurs in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and such enclosure was reasonably certain to the ordinary person to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own; or
 2. Commits unprovoked acts in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and such enclosure was reasonably certain to the ordinary person to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own and those acts cause a person to reasonably believe that the dog will attack and cause bodily injury to that person.
- 2.5 “Dog” shall mean any member of the canine familiaris family.
- 2.6 “Domestic Animal” shall include all species of animals commonly and universally accepted as being domesticated.
- 2.7 “Harboring” shall mean the act of keeping and caring for an animal or providing a premise to which the animal returns for food, shelter, or care for a period of four (4) consecutive days.
- 2.8 “Nuisance Animal” shall be considered any pet animal that causes any uncontrolled, sustained noise; or is considered a stray or running at large; or commits any other activity or offense that disturbs the peace, comfort, and sensibilities of the inhabitants of the area.
- 2.9 “Owner/Custodian” shall mean any person, firm or corporation who has right or property in an animal or who harbors an animal or allows an animal to remain about his premises for a period of at least four (4) consecutive days.
- 2.10 “Pet Animal” shall include dogs, cats, rabbits, rodents, birds, reptiles, and any other species of animal which is sold or retained as a household pet but shall not include skunks, raccoons, non-human primates, wolves or wolfdog hybrids, and any other species of wild, exotic or carnivorous animal that may be further restricted by law.

- 2.11 "Secure" shall refer to a restraint or enclosure that is reasonably designed to confine a pet animal taking into account the size, strength, agility, age, and history of the pet animal.
- 2.12 "Shelter" shall refer to a structure that is large enough to allow the animal to stand up and turn around in; has a floor, at least three (3) sides, and a roof; and provides protection from the extreme weather elements.
- 2.13 "Stray", or "Running at Large" shall mean an unsupervised pet animal(s) that roam(s) beyond its owner's/custodian's premises or property under the owner's/custodian's lease or control and is/are roaming without any physical restraints, or that is/are not controlled with visual or verbal commands. Any dog(s) under direct owner/custodian supervision within the owner's/custodian's private property or property under the owner's/custodian's lease or control shall not be considered stray or running at large.
- 2.14 "Tethering" shall mean to use a chain, rope, tether, cable, or other chain-like restraint allowing the animal a radius of movement that will not cause the animal to become entangled with the chain of any other animal or object. The animal shall be affixed rope by means of a well-fitted, non-choke collar (well-fitted meaning that a person can fit two (2) finger widths between the collar and the animal's neck). The chain or rope must not measure less than ten (10) feet in length and shall allow the animal convenient access to food, water, and shelter adequate to protect the animal from the elements. (See Health and Safety Code 821.102)
- 2.15 "Vicious Animal" shall mean any individual animal or any species that has on one previous occasion made an unprovoked attack or bitten any person or other animal which the ACA has reason to believe has a dangerous disposition, or any species of animal which the ACA has reason to believe has a dangerous disposition likely to be harmful to humans or other animals.
- 2.16 "Vaccinated" shall mean properly injected with a rabies vaccine licensed for use in that species by the US Department of Agriculture and administered by a veterinarian licensed to practice in the State of Texas.
- 2.17 "Wild Animal" shall include all species of animals that commonly exist in a natural unconfined state and are usually not domesticated including wolves or wolfdog hybrids. This shall apply regardless of state or duration of captivity.

SECTION 3. Rabies Control

- 3.1 VACCINATIONS: Every owner/custodian of a dog or cat four (4) months of age or older shall have such animals vaccinated against rabies, by or under the direct

supervision of a veterinarian with rabies vaccine licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture for that species at or after the minimum age requirement and using the recommended route of administration for the vaccine. If a previously vaccinated animal is overdue for a booster, once revaccinated, the animal will be considered currently vaccinated; the animal should be placed on a vaccination schedule according to the maximum labeled duration of immunity for the most recently administered vaccine. The attending veterinarian has discretion as to when the subsequent vaccination will be scheduled as long as the revaccination due date does not exceed the recommended interval for booster vaccination as established by the manufacturer or vaccination requirements instituted by local ordinance. Any person moving into Kaufman County from a location outside of Kaufman County shall comply with this order within thirty (30) days after having moved into Kaufman County.

- 3.2 BITE REPORTING: If a dog or cat has inflicted a bite on any person or another animal, the owner/custodian of such dog or cat shall report the bite to the LRCA or County Health Authority, and no rabies vaccine shall be administered until after a ten-day observation period. (Reference Texas Administrative Code 169.25)
- 3.3 CERTIFICATE OF VACCINATION: Upon Vaccination, a veterinarian shall execute and furnish to the owner/custodian of a dog or cat as evidence of vaccination, a certificate upon a form furnished by the veterinarian as specified by the Rabies Control Act. The veterinarian shall retain a duplicate copy of such certificate for 1 year beyond the length of time the animal is due to be revaccinated per this Court Order.
- 3.4 RABIES TAGS: Concurrent with the issuance and delivery of the certificate of vaccination referred to in Section III, Subsection 3.3, a veterinarian shall issue a metal tag serially numbered to correspond with the vaccination certificate number, and bearing the year of issuance and the name of the issuing veterinarian and the veterinarian's address. The owner/custodian shall affix a collar or harness with the attached metal vaccination tag to the vaccinated dog at all times.
- 3.5 REPLACEMENT TAGS: In the event of loss or destruction of the original tag provided in Section III, Subsection 3.3 of this order, the owner/custodian of a dog or cat shall obtain replacement tags. Vaccination certificates and tags shall be valid only for the dog or cat for which it was originally issued.
- 3.6 FURNISHING PROOF OF VACCINATION: It shall be a violation of this order for any person who owns or harbors a vaccinated dog or cat to fail or refuse to exhibit his

or her copy of the certificate of vaccination upon demand to any peace officer charged to enforce this order.

- 3.7 HARBORING A NOT CURRENTLY VACCINATED PET ANIMAL: It shall be a violation of this order for any person to harbor any pet animal that has not been currently vaccinated against rabies, as provided herein, or that cannot be identified as having a current vaccination certificate.
- 3.8 ANIMALS EXPOSED TO RABIES: Any person having knowledge of the existence of any animal known to have been, or suspected of being exposed to rabies must immediately report such knowledge to the ACA, giving any information that may be required. For any animal known to have been, or suspected of being exposed to rabies, the following rules apply. (Reference Texas Administrative Code 169.30, Texas Health and Safety Code 826.041)
1. Animals having a current rabies vaccination must be revaccinated immediately and confined according to the method prescribed by the LRCA for a period of forty-five (45) days.
 2. Animals not having a current rabies vaccination should be humanely destroyed. However, if the owner/custodian of such an animal elects, he or she may, and the owner's/custodian's expense and in the manner prescribed by the LRCA, confine said animal. Such animal must be vaccinated immediately following exposure and quarantined for not less than three (3) months. A revaccination shall be done at the third and eighth weeks of isolation.
 3. Each day an owner/custodian of an animal described in Section III, Subsection 3.8(1) and (2) above fails to abide by those sections constitutes a separate offense.

SECTION 4. IMPOUNDMENT OF PET ANIMALS

- 4.1 IMPOUNDMENT: Animals owned or harbored in violation of this order or any other order of law of the State of Texas may be taken into custody by the ACA and impounded. Stray or animals considered running at large may be similarly impounded.
- 4.2 ANIMAL SHELTER: An animal shelter shall be utilized for the purpose of boarding and caring for any animal impounded under the provision of this order. In lieu of an animal shelter, the County may contract with any licensed veterinarian or other licensed facility to provide this service at a fee mutually agreed upon and having a suitable facility that has been approved by the Texas Department of Health.

- 4.3 RIGHT TO ENTER: The ACA/LRCA is hereby authorized to enter upon any lot, tract, or parcel of land for the purpose of seizing and impounding any animal found thereon in violation of this order.
- 4.4 REGISTRY OF ANIMAL: Immediately upon impounding any animal, the ACA/LRCA shall make a complete registry of the animal, entering breed, color, and gender of such animal and the place and time of taking custody.
- 4.5 REMOVAL OF ANIMALS FROM ANIMAL SHELTER: It shall be unlawful for any person to remove any impounded animal from the animal shelter without the consent of the ACA/LRCA or other impoundment official or agency. The impoundment official or animal shelter shall not release any animal to an owner/custodian without proof of rabies vaccination.
- 4.6 REMOVAL OF BITING PET ANIMALS FROM CONFINEMENT: The impoundment of pet animals that have inflicted bites on humans shall be for a period of ten (10) days for observation and shall not be terminated until consent from the proper officer or agency is secured.
- 4.7 DISPOSITION OF IMPOUNDED ANIMALS: As soon as practicable after impoundment, if the owner/custodian of the impounded animal is known, immediate notice shall be given to owner/custodian. Any impounded animal may be reclaimed upon payment of impoundment fee, care, and feeding charges, veterinary charges, rabies vaccination charges and such other costs as set by the Commissioner's Court. If such animal is not wearing a current rabies tag and is not redeemed within three (3) business days, it shall be deemed abandoned. Said animal may then be placed for adoption, or the impoundment officer may humanely euthanize said animal.
- 4.8 DISPOSITION OF IMPOUNDED ANIMAL BEING HELD ON COMPLAINT: If a complaint has been filed in a Justice Court of the County of Kaufman against the owner/custodian of an impounded animal for violation of this order, the animal shall not be released except on the order of the court which may also direct the owner/custodian to pay any penalties for violation of this order in addition to fair impoundment fees. The Court may order said animal to be euthanized in a humane manner upon making a finding that such animal is a dangerous or vicious animal or that it represents a clear and present danger or nuisance to the citizens or other animals in the community. Surrender of an animal by the owner/custodian thereof to the Peace Officer does not relieve or render the owner/custodian immune from the decision of the Court, nor to the fees and fines that may result from a violation of this order.
- 4.9 DISPOSITION OF DISEASED ANIMALS: Any animal taken into custody by the animal control officer, except those animals which have inflicted bites on humans during

the preceding ten (10) days and that are visibly affected with any sign of communicable disease other than rabies which are being held at the impounding facility, may, instead, of being impounded, be humanely destroyed provided that:

1. Any animal that has inflicted any bite on a human or animal during the preceding ten (10) days have its head removed and submitted to the laboratory for rabies examination:
2. Any animal exhibiting symptoms of rabies must be handled in a manner prescribed by the LRCA.

SECTION 5. It Is Ordered That

- 5.1 Each stray dog is declared a nuisance unless a current rabies vaccination tag is attached to the dog.
- 5.2 Each dog must be controlled by its owner/custodian. A dog shall be considered "controlled" if:
 1. The dog remains on the premises of its owner/custodian; or,
 2. The dog is under the control of the owner/custodian by means of a leash or is under the verbal or visual command of its owner/custodian; or,
 3. The dog is secure within its owner's/custodian's vehicle.
- 5.3 Each uncontrolled dog may be detained or impounded by the ACA. At its option, the ACA may elect to issue a citation to a person who violates this order without detaining or impounding the dog if the ACA deems the public health safety and welfare is no longer in eminent danger.
- 5.4 A person commits an offense if the person fails or refuses to restrain a dog or cat owned by the person that is required to be restrained under this order. An offense under this order is a Class C Misdemeanor under Texas Health and Safety Code Section 826.034.
- 5.5 All citation fees collected shall be deposited in the treasury of the county and may be used only to defray the cost of administering these regulations.
- 5.6 An owner/custodian of an animal found in violation of this order will be charged not only an impoundment fee, but also a boarding fee and/or adoption fee. These fees will be made payable to the animal shelter/humane society that is impounding said animal(s).
- 5.7 Each time a pet animal runs at large/strays in violation of this order constitutes a separate offense.
- 5.8 The owner/custodian of a dangerous or vicious pet animal shall obtain liability insurance coverage of show financial responsibility in the following amounts to

cover damages resulting from an attack by the animal on any person, livestock, domestic animal or fowl, and provide proof of such to the ACA on an annual basis:

1. For acts against a person.....\$100,000
2. For acts against livestock, domestic animal or fowl.....\$100,000

- 5.9 To keep a dangerous dog as a pet animal, owner's/custodians must:
1. Keep all shots up to date; and
 2. Keep the dog in a secure, locked location; and
 3. Post warning signs of a dangerous dog on the property; and
 5. Muzzle the dog when it leaves the owner's/custodian's property; and
 6. Have the dog altered.
- 5.10 Notwithstanding the above, a dangerous dog or a dog that is a danger to other animals must be restrained at all times by a secure leash or be kept in a secure enclosure.
- 5.11 Improper tethering shall be considered a Class C Misdemeanor, except that the offense is a Class B misdemeanor if the person has previously been convicted under Texas Health and Safety Code Section 821.102.
- 5.12 A Peace Officer may order any owner/custodian or person having care, control, or custody of any dangerous or vicious pet animal to take such animal permanently from the County. This animal must be removed immediately following receipt of such order even if an appeal is initiated. This order may be appealed in writing within fifteen (15) day after the date the owner/custodian is notified to a justice or county court. An owner/custodian may appeal the decision of the justice or county court in the same manner as appeal for other cases from the justice or county court.
- 5.13 If the owner/custodian or person having care, custody, or control of a vicious pet animal fails to remove such animal as provided for in Section V, Subsection 5.12 of this section, such animal may be impounded or humanely destroyed.
- 5.14 The owner/custodian or person having care, custody, or control of a vicious pet animal must report the disposition such animal to the ACA in writing within ten (10) days after the removal date for such animal from the County. Each day thereafter such information is not provided shall constitute a separate offense.
- 5.15 The ACA shall be authorized to obtain a search and seizure warrant if there is reason to believe that a pet animal ordered removed from the county for being vicious has not been so removed.
- 5.16 It shall be unlawful for any pet animal to be brought into this county that has been declared vicious or dangerous by any other county shall result in a separate offense.

- 5.17 If an owner, custodian, keeper or person in control of a pet animal allows the pet animal to run at large and cause undue stress to, or kill domestic animals, fowl, or livestock, he/she may be subject to a fine.
- 5.18 If an owner, custodian, keeper or person in control of a pet animal allows the pet animal to be “running at large”, “abandons” the animal, fails to provide “shelter” for the animal, “tether” the animal improperly, and/or allows the animal to be a “nuisance animal” as defined in Section II, Subsections 2.10, 2.11, 2.15, 2.16, & 2.17; he/she may be subject to a fine or criminal charges.
- 5.19 An owner, custodian, keeper, or person in control of a pet animal shall adhere to Section III, Subsection 3.4 and failure to have the metal rabies vaccination tag attached to the pet animal, may make he/she subject to a fine.
- 5.20 If an owner, custodian, keeper, or person in control of a pet animal is found to be in violation of Section III, Subsection 3.7, he/she may be subject to a fine.
- 5.21 An owner, custodian, keeper, or person in control of a pet animal, may be subject to a fine if he/she is in violation of Section V, Subsections 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and/or 5.7.
- 5.22 An owner, custodian, keeper, or person in control of a pet animal may be subject to a fine if the pet animal is more than four months of age and does not have a current rabies tag attached to it, and a veterinarian certificate issued for the pet animal cannot be presented to the ACA.
- 5.23 An owner, custodian, keeper, or person in control of a pet animal may be subject to a fine or criminal charges if the pet animal is not provided food and fresh water daily.

SECTION 6. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

- 6.1 If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this order is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this order.
- 6.2 The Commissioner’s Court of Kaufman County hereby finds, determines, and declares that this order is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety.
- 6.3 The promulgation and establishment of these regulations by the Kaufman County Commissioner’s Court shall not prevent or jeopardize a corporate municipality within the county from establishing any rules and regulations to prevent the introduction and spread of rabies and the control of animals within their corporate limits, and such orders established by the said corporate municipalities shall supersede the County order within the municipality so that dual enforcement will not occur.

6.4 Nothing in this order shall be construed to allow or otherwise condone the possession or ownership of any wild or exotic animal within Kaufman County.

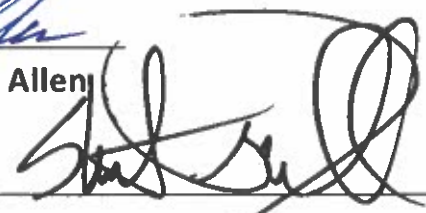
Adopted this 28th day of March, 2023.



County Judge, Jackie Allen




Commissioner Pct.1



Commissioner Pct.2



Commissioner Pct.3



Commissioner Pct.4

ATTEST: 

County Clerk, Laura Hughes

