

Dog Ordinance

Adopted Town Meeting 3/16/2024

- 1: Every owner or keeper of a dog 4 months old or over shall annually cause it to be licensed by the Town Clerk, and shall cause it to wear a collar and metal tag showing the Town's name, year of license, and its registered number. The license shall be effective from May 1 to April 30.
In order to obtain a license, the owner or keeper of a dog shall show verification to the Clerk from a licensed veterinarian that the dog has been vaccinated against rabies in accordance with the provisions of RSA 436. A group license under RSA 466:6 also requires the same verification. If a valid rabies certificate is on file with the Clerk in accordance with RSA 436:102, the owner shall not be required to produce such verification at time of licensure.
- 2: No dog shall be allowed to be at large within the Town of Stratford at any time. Any dog found at large shall be considered a nuisance or dangerous dog.

1, Definition of terms as used in this ordinance, unless the context otherwise indicates.

- I Dog: Males, females, and neutered animals.
- II Enforcement Officer: Any police officer, State Fish & Game Officer, or any person designated by the Selectboard to enforce this ordinance.
- III Immediate, active, and effective control: Secure confinement in an enclosure, or on a leash not exceeding 2 m (7 ft) in length, or must reliably heel on command within 15 seconds in the presence of other people, or within 3 minutes if used as a working animal.
- IV Owner: Any person or persons, singularly or collectively, owning, claiming ownership, keeping, feeding, supervising, or harboring a dog.
- V At large: Any dog not under the immediate, active, and effective control of an owner.

2, Nuisance and dangerous dogs:

- I Dogs shall be deemed a nuisance under any, all, but not limited to, the following conditions:
 - (a) If it is at large.
 - (b) If it barks for sustained periods of more than 1/2 hour, or during the night hours so as to disturb the peace and quiet of a neighborhood or area, not including a dog which is guarding, working, or herding livestock, as defined in RSA 21:34-a, II(a)(4).
 - (c) If it digs, scratches, or excretes, or causes waste or garbage to become a persistent and unreasonable annoyance to another property;
 - (d) If it runs after or chases motor vehicles;
- II Dogs shall be deemed dangerous, vicious, or a menace to persons or to

property if it growls, snaps at, runs after or chases, bites, or otherwise attacks any domestic animal, or any person not on the premises of the dog's owner.

- (a) If a dog punctures the skin of a person, and the attack is reported to the Town, the Town shall notify the injured person, or person's family, whether, according to town records, the dog has been appropriately immunized against rabies.

III Any person who fails to effectively restrain a nuisance or dangerous dog, or who otherwise fails to comply with any provisions of this ordinance after being so ordered, shall suffer the dog being impounded by an enforcement officer and such disposition made of the dog as the court may order.

3, Fines:

- I Any owner found violating any of the provisions of section :2, I(a) shall be guilty of a civil forfeiture paid to the Town of Stratford. First offense of owning a dog at large \$25, second and subsequent offense(s) within 12 months \$100.
- II Any owner found violating any of the provisions of section :2, I(b), (c), or (d) shall be guilty of a civil forfeiture paid to the Town of Stratford. First offense \$50, second and subsequent offense(s) within 12 months \$200.
- III Any owner found violating any of the provisions of section :3, II shall be guilty of a civil forfeiture paid to the Town of Stratford. First offense \$100, second and subsequent offense(s) within 12 months \$400.
- IV If an enforcement officer does not witness the nuisance or dangerous behavior, the name of the complainant shall be released as public information before any fine shall be levied.

4, An Enforcement Officer may take into custody and impound:

- I Any dog found at large.
- II Any dog, off or on the premises of any owner, that is not licensed and rabies vaccinated as required by New Hampshire law.
- III Any dog, off or on the premises of any owner, that is not effectively restrained after the owner has been ordered to do so, and such disposition made of the dog as the court may order,
- IV Impounded dogs shall be transported to a shelter as soon as possible.
- V If an impounded dog carries the name or address of the owner, or if such name or address is otherwise known, then the enforcement officer shall notify the owner within 24 hours. Otherwise, the enforcement officer shall attempt to locate said owner and notice of the impoundment shall also be posted on the Town's website and at the Town Office.
- VI Should the owner claim one or more dogs, the owner shall be responsible for all shelter fees, plus a \$100 impoundment service fee per dog payable to the Town of Stratford. All fees shall be paid in full prior to the release of the dogs from the shelter.