

**RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP IN OKLAHOMA CITY  
(LOOSE, BARKING AND POOPING DOGS)**

Published as a series in the  
Quail Creek Home Owners Association Monthly Newsletter

In:

Oklahoma City, OK (written October 12, 2008)

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QUAIL CREEK HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE:

**RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP**

**(LOOSE, BARKING AND POOPING DOGS)**

(last revised: 10-12-08)

*By Kraettli Q. Epperson, Board Member and Chairman of Architectural Committee*

Quail Creek prides itself on its neighborliness. Maintaining such quality requires owners of dogs to both learn and honor their responsibilities, under Oklahoma City's ordinances. "Ignorance of the law is no excuse!" In an effort to enlighten the residents of Quail Creek, this article seeks to answer frequently asked questions about the proper conduct concerning the control of our dogs. A complete set of the ordinances for Oklahoma concerning dog ownership and control can be found at <http://www.okc.gov/code/index.html> ; click on "Oklahoma City Municipal Code" and go to "Chapter VIII: Animals" [note: a complete copy of this ordinance is attached hereto as Appendix "A". To ask the City staff specific questions or to file a municipal complaint, call "Animal Control Dispatch" at 297-2255.

***1. Does Oklahoma City really have a "leash law" or is that just an "urban myth" made up by mean spirited dog haters?—YES, THERE IS A LEASH LAW.***

§ 8-38. Animals running at large prohibited; exceptions

It shall be unlawful for the owner ... of any dog ... to permit the same to be at large ....

§ 8-5. Definitions.

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(4) At large means the status of any dog ... that is/are ...not under the direct control of the owner....

(5) Direct control means immediate continuous physical control of a dog at all times by means of a leash, cord, rope or chain of such strength to restrain the dog, and controlled by a person capable of restraining the dog....

***2. Does Oklahoma City limit the number of dogs that a home owner can have?—YES: 4.***

§ 8-37. Number of dogs and cats permitted.

(a) No person shall harbor or keep dogs or cats totaling more than four of each over the age of six months in any household. The owner or occupant shall be held responsible for any violation of this section by any member of such household.

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3. ***Does Oklahoma City permit an owner to allow a dog to be loose in the front unfenced yard?—NO, THE DOG MUST BE IN THE HOUSE, IN A FENCED YARD, OR ON A TETHER.***

§ 8-39. Confinement of dogs required.

(a) Confinement of dogs required. It shall be unlawful for any person who owns...any dog to fail to confine such dog....

(b) Confinement required; means of confinement. Every person who owns... any dog within the City shall confine the dog to property owned or controlled by him. Confinement shall be accomplished by means of a substantial fence or similar enclosure of sufficient strength and height to prevent the dog from escaping therefrom...or by keeping the dog inside a house or other building. Dogs not confined in enclosures may be confined by a tether. ....

4. ***Does Oklahoma City prohibit barking dogs?—YES.***

§ 8-47. Prohibited acts.

(a) It shall be unlawful and an offense for any person to allow any animal to:

(1) chase vehicles, or

(2) molest passersby; or

(3) allow any animal to continuously bark, howl or otherwise disturb the peace.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to allow animal fecal matter to accumulate in a yard or a run or other enclosure so that such matter causes unsanitary or unhealthy conditions to exist.

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5. ***Does Oklahoma City require dog owners to clean up after their dogs during walks?—YES.***

§ 8-48. Defecating on sidewalks, public parks, alleys, other places open to the public or on certain private property prohibited; possession of waste removal equipment required; prohibition of similar acts.

(a) It shall be unlawful for the owner, keeper, or person having control of any animal to fail to immediately remove and dispose of in a sanitary manner any solid waste deposited by such animal upon any sidewalk, public park, alley, other place open to the public, or from private property before the owner leaves the immediate area where the solid waste was deposited.

(b) It shall be unlawful for the owner, keeper, or person having control of any animal to fail to have in his/her possession the equipment necessary to remove his/her animal's solid waste when accompanied by said animal on public property or public easement.

(c) It shall be unlawful for the owner, keeper or person having control of any animal to permit such animal to destroy or damage property of any kind or to deposit solid waste or to commit a similar prohibited act on the private property of a person or the property of the City, including its parks and playgrounds, or any property other than that of the owner of the animal.

6. ***Does Oklahoma City provide consequences if a dog either attacks or threatens to attack either a person or another dog?—YES, THE OWNER WILL BE FINED, AND THE DOG WILL BE IMPOUNDED AND THEN EITHER RETURNED WITH A REQUIRED MUZZLE OR EUTHANIZED.***

§ 8-132. Menacing behavior by dogs prohibited.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to allow any dog owned, harbored, possessed or maintained by him within the City to exhibit menacing behavior.

(b) Menacing behavior as used in this section means that a dog, while not under direct control as defined in Section 8-5 of this Chapter, causes a reasonable person to believe that an unprovoked attack on a person or on a domestic animal is imminent.

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§ 8-133. Dangerous animals prohibited.

It shall be unlawful for any person to own, harbor, possess, or maintain within the City limits any animal that is dangerous as defined in this Chapter, unless the Municipal Court orders the animal returned to the person owning, harboring, possessing or maintaining the animal under restrictions designated by the Municipal Court.

§ 8-131. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except when the context clearly indicates a different meaning.

(a) *Animal bite* means any penetration of the skin by the teeth or claws of an animal, but shall exclude scratches by the claws of dogs.

(b) *At large* means the status of any dog, livestock or domesticated fowl other than homing pigeons that is/are not confined to the property of the owner of the animal, or when the dog or livestock is not confined to the property of the owner and is not under the direct control of the owner or a person able to safely and humanely restrain the animal.

(c) *Attack* means the act by any animal of approaching a domestic animal or a person in such a manner that hostile contact with the other animal or the person occurs or an act of aggression against a person or a domestic animal that requires the person or the other animal to take evasive action to prevent injury.

(d) *Dangerous animal* means any animal:

(1) that inflicts an injury upon a human as a result of an unprovoked attack regardless if the dangerous animal is on or off the property on which it is harbored; or attempts to bite or attacks a human requiring that person to take evasive action regardless of the location; or

(2) that, when unprovoked, either kills, bites or attacks another animal off the property on which the dangerous animal is harbored; or

(3) that is owned, trained, used, or harbored, primarily or in part, for the purpose of animal fighting.

§ 8-152. Violations.

An Animal Welfare Officer shall issue a citation to the owner of a dangerous animal when said animal is found in violation of any of the provisions of this division. Each day's violation shall be a separate offense. In addition to the issuance of a citation, an Animal Welfare Officer may impound the animal.

§ 8-154. Penalty.

Any person who violates any of the provisions of Article III herein shall upon conviction thereof be guilty of a Class "a" offense. The animal determined to be in violation of this Article may also be impounded and euthanized, at the discretion of the Court.

§ 8-151. Restriction guidelines for maintaining a dangerous animal.

The court may order the owner of an animal found to be dangerous to be in compliance with any requirements imposed by the court.

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APPENDIX "A"

OKLAHOMA CITY ORDINANCES  
CONCERNING ANIMAL OWNERSHIP IN CITY LIMITS

OKLAHOMA CITY MUNICIPAL CODE

Chapter 8 ANIMALS\*

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**\*Editor's note:** Ord. No. 23145, § 1, adopted Oct. 3, 2006, repealed Ch. 8, in its entirety, which pertained to animals and fowl. Section 2 of said ordinance, enacted provisions designated as a new Ch. 8, Animals, to read as herein set out. See the Code Comparative Table for a detailed analysis of inclusion.

**Cross references:** Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2; health and sanitation generally, Ch. 23; mistreatment of dogs in police service, § 30-61; applicability of traffic ordinances to animals, § 32-4; animal noise prohibited, § 34-4(1); nuisances, Ch. 35; restrictions on fishing at city-operated reservations generally, § 38-181 et seq.; restrictions on hunting or trapping animals at City-operated reservations, § 38-211 et seq.; dogs at Atoka Reservoir Reservation, § 38-323; hunting at Atoka Reservoir Reservation, § 38-341 et seq.; fishing at Atoka Reservoir Reservation, § 38-368 et seq.; rat control, Ch. 46; animals on sidewalks, § 50-11.

**State law references:** Animals generally, 4 O.S. § 31 et seq.; general authority of municipalities to regulate animals, 11 O.S. § 22-115.

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