



Pet Licensing & Animal Control v. 2023_05_18



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The following selections from the North Liberty Code of Ordinances on pets and animal control are paraphrased versions of the full text for the sole purpose of making the City's expectations and responsibilities of pet owners more accessible and transparent.

This summary document is not intended to replace or augment existing Code language and does not include all sections/text of the Code pertaining to pets and other animals. PLEASE REFERENCE THE FULL NORTH LIBERTY CODE OF ORDINANCES ONLINE AT [HTTPS://CODELIBRARY.AMLEGAL.COM/CODES/NORTHLIBERTY/LATEST/OVERVIEW](https://code.library.amlegal.com/codes/northliberty/latest/overview) OR IN PERSON AT CITY HALL.

Additionally, take note of the date on this document next to the heading, as this will be updated when the Code is amended. When comparing documents, the one with the most recent date is considered to be the current version.

PURPOSE

It is the public policy of the City to secure and maintain such levels of animal control within the City limits as will protect human health and safety and, to the greatest degree practicable, to prevent damage to property. It is also the policy of the City to prevent the inhumane treatment of animals and to provide for the humane use, care, and treatment of animals to the end that cruelty to such animals will be reduced or eliminated.

CHAPTER 55 "ANIMAL CONTROL"

55.03

The owner of a pet animal shall be responsible for obtaining a **license** for the care and control of such animal. The owner will be responsible for any violation of the City Code by their animal.

55.04

The following **nuisances** are prohibited. Pet owners shall not allow an animal to:

- Habitually bay, bark, screech, yell, or make a sound of any kind or nature for prolonged periods in such manner as to unreasonably disturb the peace and quiet of the vicinity.
- Damage or defile public or private property.
- Molest any person on public or private property when such person has a legitimate reason to be on the property.
- Molest or kill wildlife, birds, or animals on public or private property.

55.05

No pet animal shall be allowed or permitted on **private property** without the permission of the property owner.

No pet animal shall be allowed in any **store, restaurant, or bar** where food or food products are sold, prepared, or dispensed to people (does not apply to food sales in stands or under a shelter, like an outdoor market or carnival, when the owner of the grounds allows animals on premises).

No person shall **restrain** any pet animal to a dog house, tree, fence, or any other stationary object without supervision or in any manner that is hazardous or deprives the animal of adequate water or shelter. Restraint system should not allow for the pet to be within 20 feet of a dwelling, other than the custodian's dwelling.

No person shall **restrain** any pet animal to a utility pole, parking meter, building, structure, fence, sign, tree, shrub, bush, or other object on **public property**.

A pet's **restraint device** shall be a harness or collar; it cannot 1) be ill-fitting or constructed of any material other than leather or nylon; 2) exceed 25% of the body weight of the animal; 3) be a choke collar, pinch collar, or head halter-type device.

Any person who walks a pet animal on public or private property will provide for the disposal of the animal's **solid waste** by immediate removal of the waste.

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55.06

The owner of a **cat** is expected to control their cat and is strictly liable for the actions of their cat.

A cat owner shall:

- Prevent their female cat from being accessible to other cats while in **heat** (except for controlled breeding).
- Prevent their cat from **running at large** when the cat has not been neutered or spayed (if over four months old).
- Have a current **license** for their cat and be able to provide proof of license.
- Have the cat inoculated for **rabies** and be able to provide current proof (if over four months old).
- Not keep a cat known to have a **contagious disease** unless it is under the treatment of a licensed veterinarian and appropriately isolated to protect the public and other animals.
- Prevent their cat from being on **private property** without the permission of the property owner.
- Not keep a cat that constitutes a **danger** to persons, animals, or property.
- Prevent their cat from entering any place where **food** is stored, prepared, served, or sold to the public or any public building (except trained service cats).

55.07

The owner or custodian of a **dog** is strictly liable to control such dog. This means that the penalty for violation of these regulations is imposed without regard to any wrongful intention of the violator.

A dog owner shall:

- Prevent their dog from **running at large** in the City (except walking a leashed dog or taking the dog to a designated off-leash area, provided the dog has a valid and current membership).
- Prevent their dog from entering any place where **food** is stored, prepared, served, or sold to the public, or any public building (except trained service dogs).
- Prevent their dog from being accessible to other animals while in **heat** (except for controlled breeding).
- Prevent their dog from **chasing, running after, or jumping at vehicles** on public streets and alleys.
- Prevent their dog from snapping, growling, snarling, barking in a threatening manner, jumping upon, chasing, or otherwise **threatening persons or animals**.
- Not keep a dog that constitutes a **danger** to persons, animals, or property.
- Prevent their dog from howling, yelling, whining or barking or making other noises in such a manner as to **disturb** any person or groups of persons to an unreasonable degree.
- Not keep a dog known to have a **contagious disease**, unless it is under the treatment of a licensed veterinarian and appropriately isolated to protect the public and other animals.
- Prevent their dog from running in a **pack** ("pack" means dogs in a group of three or more).
- Have a **license** for their dog and be able to provide proof of such license.
- Have the dog currently inoculated for **rabies** and be able to provide proof (if over four months old).
- Prevent their dog from **running at large** when the dog has not been neutered or spayed (if over four months old).

If the dog has been **declared potentially dangerous**, then the dog owner must prevent their dog from running at large or off owner's property, unless it is on a leash and under physical restraint of a responsible person.

If the dog has been **declared dangerous**, then the dog owner must prevent their dog from running at large or being outside a proper enclosure, unless the dog is muzzled and restrained by a substantial chain or leash and under physical restraint of a responsible person. The muzzle shall not cause injury to the dog or interfere with its vision or respiration, but shall prevent it from biting any person or animal.

55.08

Dogs may be allowed to run at large only in designated off-leash areas, provided the dog has a valid and current membership.

While in a designated off-leash area, a dog owner or dog handler (must be over 16 years old):

- Is liable for damage or injury inflicted by the dog and is subject to all applicable State and City laws regulating dogs.
- Must maintain control of the dog at all times.
- Is not allowed to have more than two dogs at any one time.
- Must leash the dog when it is outside the off-leash area and must carry a leash for each dog while inside the off-leash area.
- Must clean up feces after the dog.

If a dog has been declared potentially dangerous, declared dangerous, is exhibiting dangerous or aggressive behavior, is wearing a pronged, pinch, or choke collar, or is a female dog in heat, then it is **not allowed into an off-leash area**.

Alcohol, glass containers, bicycles, skateboards and other wheeled devices [except wheelchairs, other wheeled medical assistance devices, and strollers] are prohibited inside an off-leash area.

55.09

No person, except the owner, shall open any door or gate on any private or public premises for the purpose of **enticing** or enabling any such animal to leave the premises. No person shall molest, tease, provoke, or mistreat a pet animal.

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55.10

When animal control impounds a pet animal which appears to be suffering from **rabies**, then that pet will be confined to a designated facility or a veterinary hospital for a period of not less than ten days or may be euthanized. Such animal shall be subject to veterinary tests, as the City determines, at the expense of the owner.

55.11

To assist in the prevention of rabies and classification of potentially dangerous pet animals:

- North Liberty **physicians** are expected to report the name and address of persons treated for bites inflicted by animals to the City.
- North Liberty **veterinarians** are expected to report any diagnosis of rabies in an animal to the City.
- North Liberty **owners** of animals
 - which are known to be rabid or which have been bitten by a rabid animal are expected to report them to the City. The animal will be placed in isolation and quarantine at the expense of the owner.
 - which bite a person are expected to report them to the City. The animal will be quarantined for a period of ten days, per instructions given to owner as determined by the City. This will be done at the owner's expense.

55.12

The City will quarantine and isolate any animal for ten days that:

- Has been **suspected of rabies** (or other disease communicable to humans) or
- Has **bitten** or caused a skin abrasion upon any person.

Animals not vaccinated for rabies will quarantine and isolate at the City's contracted pound or veterinary hospital.

Animals proven to be vaccinated for rabies will quarantine and isolate at their owner's house.

The pet owner will cover all costs borne from this process.

55.13

Whenever it becomes necessary to safeguard the public from the dangers of rabies, the Mayor may issue a proclamation ordering every pet animal be confined to the owner's premises for a necessary amount of time.

55.14

All dogs and cats four months of age or older shall be vaccinated against **rabies**. The pet owner shall provide the City with proof and expiration date of the vaccination against rabies.

55.15

Any person who strikes a pet animal with their **vehicle** needs to stop and assist the animal as best they can, then immediately report such injury or death to the animal's owner or to the City (if the owner cannot be located). This does not imply financial responsibility for pet animal injury or death.

55.16

No pet animal shall be **at large** within the City at any time, except within designated off-leash areas, provided the dog has a valid and current membership.

A pet is not considered to be at large if it is:

- On the premises of the owner,
- On the premises of other private property with permission of the owner, or
- Under the control of a person competent to restrain the animal (either by leash, in a vehicle, or in an enclosed area).

A pet is considered at large if it is:

- Attacking persons or animals,
- Destroying property,
- On public property and not under control of a competent person, or
- A female in heat that is not properly contained.

55.17

Any pet animal may be **impounded** by the City if:

- Found in violation of the rules;
- Believed to be a "threatened animal" (abused, neglected, or tortured) per Iowa Code 717B.1;
- Found in danger, sick, injured, or dead; or
- The owner is taken into custody and no other person can be found to provide care (owner will be properly notified).

First, animal control will create a report for each impounded animal. Then, the pet animal will be held temporarily on City property until transferred to Cedar Valley Humane Society for impoundment to wait for retrieval.

If the pet animal has a current North Liberty Pet License on file, then the owner will be contacted within two days with instructions on how and where to retrieve their pet and pay the redemption fees. The period of impoundment will last for three calendar days after the owner has been notified by email (considered "received" after 24 hours) or U.S. mail (considered "received" four days after postmarked date). After the impoundment time period expires, the animal may be adopted out or humanely euthanized.

If the pet animal does not have a current North Liberty Pet License on file, then the owner is considered unknown and the period of impoundment will be three days. After the impoundment time period expires, the animal may be adopted out or humanely euthanized.



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The Police Chief may humanely euthanize any unlicensed impounded animal if the animal is feral and/or dangerous to the safety of humans or other animals, if the animal is suffering from serious injury or disease, or if Cedar Valley Humane Society is at capacity.

Animals impounded due to suspected neglect or mistreatment will not be redeemed to their caretakers without dispositional proceedings.

During rabies quarantine, any cat or dog running at large will be immediately impounded for the remainder of the quarantine at the owner's expense.

55.18

The owner of any impounded animal may redeem such animal upon proof of current license and rabies vaccination, payment of redemption fees, and payment of costs incurred by the City and Cedar Valley Humane Society for impoundment.

Impounded dogs and cats will be microchipped if traceable identification is not found. If the animal is over four months of age and does not have a current rabies vaccination, one will be required prior to release.

Fees are set by resolution and per the contract with Cedar Valley Humane Society.

55.21

It is unlawful for a person to fail to supply a confined animal with sufficient food or water, fail to provide adequate shelter, or to torture, deprive, mutilate, beat, or kill an animal by any means which causes unjustified pain, distress or suffering.

55.22

A pet owner is not allowed to **abandon** their cat or dog. They must deliver the cat or dog to another person who will accept ownership or to an animal shelter.

55.25

Making harmful or **poisonous** substances available to an animal is not allowed.

55.26

Offering a live animal as a **gift or prize** for any contest or other competition is not allowed.

55.29

Community cats shall be allowed to free roam, if the cat is not owned by anyone and has undergone all of the following:

- Assessed by a veterinarian and deemed healthy;
- Spayed or neutered;
- Vaccinated for rabies, feline rhinotracheitis, calcivirus, and panleukopenia, and reasonable attempts have been made to revaccinate the cat in accordance with the direction of a veterinarian; and
- Ear-tipped by a veterinarian.

Community cats that create a nuisance (i.e. the cat interferes with the enjoyment of life or property and people have complained) may be captured and impounded at the discretion of the City.

A community cat is always to be returned to the area where it was captured, unless the cat is sick or injured (let the City know if you suspect sickness or injury).

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CHAPTER 56 "CAT AND DOG LICENSES"

56.01

All cats and dogs four months of age or older which are kept in the City shall be **licensed**. A license must be purchased within thirty (30) days after a cat or dog is first acquired by a person residing in the City. Licenses must be renewed no later than January for that calendar year. Pet owners are responsible for complying with licensing requirements.

56.02

Annual license fees are set by the City Council. Licensing fees are waived for:

- One neutered or spayed pet of a person 62 years old or older.
- The service animal of a blind, hearing impaired person, or physically disabled person.

Any person who, for the reason of securing a pet license, falsely represents whether the cat or dog is spayed or neutered shall be in violation of this section.

56.03

Upon payment of the license fee, the City will mail a license and metallic tag to the owner of the licensed cat or dog. The metallic tag will be embossed with a serial number corresponding with the number of the license, which should be attached to the pet's collar. The fee to replace a lost tag is \$2.00.

56.04

Do not use a license tag on any cat or dog other than the one for which it was issued. If there is a change of ownership of a licensed cat or dog, the new owner must apply for and obtain a new license.

Do not use the license tag to conceal the ownership of the cat or dog or remove the license tag from any cat or dog with the intent to deprive the owner of their pet.

Do not falsely represent that a dog or cat is spayed or neutered when it is not.

56.05

The number of animals allowed to live in individual homes is limited to an appropriate amount in accordance with federal, State of Iowa, Johnson County and City laws and regulations, so that all animals are properly cared for and the home is safe and sanitary for all human occupants.

56.06

The penalty is two hundred dollars (\$200) per violation of this "Cat and Dog Licenses" chapter; however, district court may allow for a reduction if a license is obtained or renewed within ten (10) calendar days of the issuance of a citation.

56.07

A valid North Liberty Dog Park Membership for each dog is required for admission to any North Liberty dog park facility or off-leash area. Memberships are non-transferable and the dog handler is responsible for providing proof of such membership upon request by City staff.

56.08

Dog Park fees are established the City Council. The City Administrator or designee will establish and publish rules of conduct as deemed necessary to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the public.

56.09

All applicants and members shall:

- Pay annual membership fees;
- Provide proof of a current rabies vaccination for each dog;
- Demonstrate and maintain compliance to North Liberty Code Chapters 47, 55, 56, and 57; and
- Comply with all rules of conduct.

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CHAPTER 57 “DANGEROUS ANIMALS”

57.03

The Police Chief may **classify a dog as “potentially dangerous” or “dangerous”** after receiving a complaint by an individual and completing an investigation. The Police Chief will formally notify the pet owner about the basis for the decision. It will also describe the confinement requirements for the dog’s classification.

57.04

A dog **will not be deemed potentially dangerous or dangerous** if it bites, attacks, or menaces a person or animal if the dog is:

- Defending its owner or another person from an attack.
- Protecting itself, its young, or another animal.
- Defending itself against a person or animal that has tormented, assaulted, or abused it.
- Defending its owner’s property against trespass.

The majority of Chapter 57 was left out of this document because it details the designation process and requirements for pet owners who harbor a “potentially dangerous” or “dangerous” dog and were not deemed necessary for this summary review, because that information will be determined and shared with the pet owner throughout the process.

LOST/STRAY PETS, COMMUNITY CATS, WILD ANIMALS

If your pet is **lost** or if you find a **stray**, please call City Hall at (319) 626-5700 and the Joint Communications Center non-emergency line at (319) 356-6800. Leave a message if it is outside of normal business hours. They will need to know owner information, contact information, and description of animal. Persons with lost pets can also call the Cedar Valley Humane Society at (319) 362-6288 or send an email to info@cvhumane.org.

As summarized in this document, North Liberty allows for free-roaming cats cared for by residents in their immediate area, or “**community cats**,” through a trap/neuter/return, or TNR, program. This policy stabilizes the community cat populations by stopping the breeding cycle and disruptive mating behaviors and saves public money by reducing shelter intake, shelter euthanasia, and calls of concern to animal control. Community Cats are identifiable because one of their ears will be tipped. Community cats in need of sterilization should be caught in a live humane trap, covered with a sheet and brought to a veterinarian. The Iowa Humane Alliance Regional Clinic is a low-cost option (319) 363-1225).

City staff will respond if a **wild animal** is an **immediate hazard** to the public, such as a bite or other emergent need. Call the Joint Communications Center at (319) 356-6800 and an officer will be dispatched. Contact a private pest control company for all other wild animal requests (i.e. sick, hurt, and/or nuisance animal).

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