

NEW TETHERING LAW: TITLE 18, SECTION 5536 – TETHERING AN UNATTENDED DOG

A new state-wide law went into effect on August 28, 2017 that defined the ways that a dog can and cannot be “tethered”, or tied outside. This does not make the act of tethering illegal, but does put some very clear limitations on the length of time a dog can be tied out, the manner in which it is tied and also outlines the expectations of what should be provided for a dog that is tied out.

You may find the details of this law by researching [Title 18, Section 5536 – Tethering of an Unattended Dog](#). This handout is to give you a brief overview of what is now permitted, what is required, and what is now restricted or prohibited.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Defining an Appropriate Tether

- The tether is the means by which you tie your dog out. This is typically a cable, rope or chain.
- The tether must be appropriate for that breed of dog. That is to say that a heavy cable or chain that may be used for a mastiff should not be used for a rat terrier.
- The tether must be either ten (10) feet or three (3) times the length of the dog’s body from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail, whichever length is longer.
- The tether must be secured in a manner that will prevent it from becoming entangled.
- The dog must be attached with a well-fitted collar or harness appropriate for that dog.
- **WHAT IS PROHIBITED:** The law clearly states that tow chains, log chains, chain collars, pinch or prong collars are all strictly prohibited.

What Must Be Provided

- Potable (clean) drinking water
- Shelter capable of protecting the dog from weather, keeping it dry and retaining its body heat.
- Along with the shelter, the dog must also have an area of shade to escape the direct rays of the sun.
- A clean area for the dog.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** The law states that the presence of sores or wounds on the dog, or an excessive amount of excrement, will be considered a “rebuttable presumption of neglect”, meaning that it will be considered illegal unless there is an extreme circumstance which the owner can prove.

Time Limits

- Dogs can be tethered without supervision for up to nine (9) hours within a twenty four (24) hour period on a normal, average day, no longer. Please note: this time is in reference to a full day. You may tie your dog out for 9 hours straight, or for any combination of times that all equal 9 hours in total for that 24 hour period.
- There are also restrictions for how long of a time a dog can be left alone outside at a time in extreme temperatures. Dogs may be tethered up to thirty (30) minutes if the temperature rises above 90* F or if the temperature drops below 32* F.



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