

TITLE 10

ANIMAL CONTROL¹

CHAPTER

1. IN GENERAL.
2. DOGS AND CATS.
3. PIT BULLS.
4. VICIOUS DOGS.

CHAPTER 1

IN GENERAL

SECTION

- 10-101. Running at large prohibited.
- 10-102. Keeping near a residence or business restricted.
- 10-103. Pen or enclosure to be kept clean.
- 10-104. Adequate food, water, and shelter, etc., to be provided.
- 10-105. Keeping in such manner as to become a nuisance prohibited.
- 10-106. Seizure and disposition of animals.
- 10-107. Restraint.
- 10-108. Violations and penalty.

10-101. Running at large prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any person owning or being in charge of any cows, swine, sheep, horses, mules, goats, or any chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, or other domestic fowl, cattle, or livestock, knowingly or negligently to permit any of them to run at large in any street, alley, or unenclosed lot within the Town of Alamo. (1965 Code, § 3-101)

10-102. Keeping near a residence or business restricted. No person shall keep any animal or fowl enumerated in the preceding section except as allowed by the Alamo Zoning Ordinance. (1965 Code, § 3-102, modified)

10-103. Pen or enclosure to be kept clean. When animals or fowls are kept within the corporate limits, the building, structure, corral, pen, or enclosure in which they are kept shall at all times be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. (1965 Code, § 3-103)

10-104. Adequate food, water, and shelter, etc., to be provided. No animal or fowl shall be kept or confined in any place where the food, water,

¹Wherever this title mentions dogs it pertains to dog and cats.

shelter, and ventilation are not adequate and sufficient for the preservation of its health, safe condition, and wholesomeness for food if so intended. (1965 Code, § 3-104)

10-105. Keeping in such manner as to become a nuisance prohibited. No animal or fowl shall be kept in such a place or condition as to become a nuisance because of either noise, odor, contagious disease, or other reason. (1965 Code, § 3-105)

10-106. Seizure and disposition of animals. Any animal or fowl found running at large or otherwise being kept in violation of this chapter may be seized by the health officer or by any police officer and confined in a pound provided or designated by the board of mayor and aldermen. If the owner is known he shall be given notice in person, by telephone, or by a postcard addressed to his last known mailing address, and the animal or fowl will be humanely destroyed or sold if not claimed within five (5) days. If the owner is not known, a notice describing the impounded animal or fowl will be posted in at least three (3) public places within the corporate limits. The notice shall state that the impounded animal or fowl must be claimed within five (5) days by paying the pound costs or the same will be humanely destroyed or sold. If not claimed by the owner, within the specified period, the animal or fowl shall be sold, humanely destroyed, or otherwise disposed of as authorized by the board of mayor and aldermen. (1965 Code, § 3-107)

10-107. Restraint. Every person owning or having possession, charge, care, custody, or control of any dog shall keep such animal exclusively upon his own premises; provided, however, that such animal may be off such premises if it is under the control of a competent person and restrained by a chain, leash, or other means of visible control. (Ord. #07-08-2008, July 2008)

10-108. Violations and penalty. Any violation of any section of this chapter shall subject the offender to a penalty under the general penalty provision of this code. Each day the violation shall continue shall constitute a separate offense.

CHAPTER 2

DOGS AND CATS

SECTION

10-201. Rabies vaccination and registration required.

10-202. Dogs to wear tags.

10-203. Running at large prohibited.

10-204. Noisy dogs prohibited.

10-205. Seizure and disposition of dogs.

10-206. Violations and penalty.

10-201. Rabies vaccination and registration required. It shall be unlawful for any person to own, keep, or harbor any dog or cat without having the same duly vaccinated against rabies and registered in accordance with the provisions of the Tennessee Anti-Rabies Law (*Tennessee Code Annotated*, §§ 68-8-101 to 68-8-113) or other applicable law. (1965 Code, § 3-201, modified)

10-202. Dogs to wear tags. It shall be unlawful for any person to own, keep, or harbor any dog which does not wear a tag evidencing the vaccination and registration required by the preceding section. (1965 Code, § 3-202)

10-203. Running at large prohibited.¹ It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to permit any dog owned by him or under his control to run at large within the Town of Alamo. (1965 Code, § 3-203)

10-204. Noisy dogs prohibited. No person shall own, keep, or harbor any dog which, by loud and frequent barking, whining, or howling, annoys, or disturbs the peace and quiet of any neighborhood. (1965 Code, § 3-205)

10-205. Seizure and disposition of dogs. The provisions of § 10-107 shall apply to any dog running at large or otherwise being kept in violation of this chapter. (1965 Code, § 3-206, modified)

10-206. Violations and penalty. Any violation of this chapter shall constitute a civil offense and shall, upon conviction, be punishable under the general penalty provision of this code. Each day a violation shall be allowed to continue shall constitute a separate offense.

¹State law reference

Tennessee Code Annotated, §§ 68-8-107.

CHAPTER 3

PIT BULLS

SECTION

- 10-301. Definitions.
- 10-302. Pit bull restrictions.
- 10-303. Standards and requirements for pit bulls.
- 10-304. Sale or transfer of ownership prohibited.
- 10-305. Animals born of registered dogs.
- 10-306. Rebuttable presumptions.
- 10-307. Impoundment.
- 10-308. Court proceedings against the owner.
- 10-309. Court findings.
- 10-310. Violations and penalty.

10-301. Definitions. The words, terms, and phrases, and their derivations as used in this chapter, except where the context clearly indicates otherwise, shall have the following meanings.

(1) "Confined" means to be securely kept indoors, within an automobile or other vehicle, or kept in a securely enclosed and locked pen or structure upon the premises of the owner or keeper of such dog.

(2) "Impoundment" means the taking or picking up and confining of an animal by any police officer, animal control officer or any other public officer under the provisions of this chapter.

(3) "Muzzle" means a device constructed of strong, soft material or of metal, designed to fasten over the mouth of an animal to prevent the animal from biting any person or other animal.

(4) "Owner" means any person, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity owning, harboring, or possessing a pit bull or any other dog regardless of breed determined to be vicious, or in the case of a person under the age of eighteen (18), that person's parent or legal guardian. Such dog shall be deemed to be harbored if it is fed or sheltered for three (3) or more consecutive days. This definition shall not apply to any veterinary clinic or boarding kennel.

(5) "Physical restraint" means a muzzle and a leash not to exceed four feet (4') in length.

(6) "Pit bull" means and includes any of the following dogs:

- (a) The bull terrier breed of dog;
- (b) The Staffordshire bull terrier breed of dog;
- (c) The American pit bull terrier breed of dog;
- (d) The American Staffordshire breed of dog;
- (e) Dogs of mixed breed or of other breeds than above listed which breed or mixed breed is known as pit bull, pit bull dogs, or pit bull terriers; and

(f) Any dog which has the appearance and characteristics of being predominantly of the breeds of dogs known as bull terrier, Staffordshire bull terrier, American pit bull terrier, American Staffordshire terrier, and any other breed commonly known as pit bulls, pit bull dogs or pit bull terriers; or a combination of any of these breeds.

(7) "Predominately" means knowledge through identification procedures or otherwise, or admission by owner, keeper, or harbinger that a dog is more than fifty percent (50%) pit bull. Predominately also means that the dog exhibits the physical characteristics of a pit bull more than that of any other breed of dog.

(8) "Sanitary condition" means a condition of good order and cleanliness to minimize the possibility of disease transmission.

(9) "Securely enclosed and locked pen or structure" means a fenced-in area that shall be a minimum of ten feet (10') wide, ten feet (10') long, and six feet (6') in height above grade, and with a horizontal top covering said area, all to be at least nine (9) gauge chain link fencing with necessary steel supporting posts. The floor shall be at least three inches (3") of poured concrete with the bottom edge of the fencing embedded in the concrete or extending at least two feet (2') below grade. The gate must be of the same materials as the fencing, fit securely, and be kept securely locked. The owner shall post the enclosure with a clearly visible warning sign, including a warning symbol to inform children, that there is a dangerous dog on the property. The enclosure shall contain and provide shelter and protection from the elements, adequate exercise room, be adequately lighted and ventilated, and kept in a sanitary condition.

(10) "Under restraint" means that the dog is secured by a leash, led under the control of a person who is at least eighteen (18) years of age and physically capable of restraining the dog, and that the dog is obedient to that person's commands. A dog kept within a securely enclosed and locked pen or structure shall also be considered to be under restraint. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-302. Pit bull restrictions. It shall be unlawful to keep, harbor, own, or in any way possess a pit bull dog within the corporate limits of Alamo; provided, however, that persons owning such dogs at the time this chapter is adopted shall be allowed to keep them, provided that they comply with all of the provisions of this chapter, including § 10-303, within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this chapter. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-303. Standards and requirements for pit bulls. The following standards and requirements shall apply to pit bull dogs located within the corporate limits of Alamo.

(1) Permit required. Each owner, keeper, harbinger, or possessor of a pit bull dog shall annually obtain a pit bull permit from the Alamo Town Recorder. Such pit bull permit shall cost fifty dollars (\$50.00) per year and the

pit bull's owner shall make a personal appearance at the Alamo Town Recorder's office when submitting an application for a permit. The fifty dollar (\$50.00) annual permit fee shall be non-refundable and shall be paid prior to any consideration of the permit application or issuance of the permit.

(2) Physical restraint. No person having charge, custody, control, or possession of a pit bull shall permit the dog to go outside its kennel, pen, or other securely enclosed and locked pen or structure unless such dog is under restraint. No person shall permit a pit bull dog to be kept on a chain, rope, or other type of leash shorter than four feet (4') in length outside its kennel or pen unless such person is of at least eighteen inches (18") of age and is in physical control of the leash. Such dogs shall not be leashed to inanimate objects such as trees, posts, buildings, or structures.

(3) Muzzle. It is unlawful for any owner or keeper of a pit bull to allow the dog to be outside its kennel, pen, or other securely enclosed and locked pen or structure unless it is necessary for the dog to receive veterinary care. In such cases, the dog must wear a properly fitted muzzle sufficient to prevent the dog from biting persons or other animals. Such muzzle shall not interfere with the dog's breathing or vision.

(4) Outdoor confinement. Except when leashed and muzzled as provided in this chapter, all pit bull dogs shall be securely confined as defined in § 10-301 of this chapter. All structures used to confine pit bull dogs must be locked with a key or combination lock when such animals are within the structure. All structures erected to house pit bull dogs must comply with zoning and building ordinances and regulations of the Town of Alamo.

(5) Indoor confinement. No pit bull dog shall be kept on a porch, patio, or in any part of a dwelling or structure that would allow the dog to exit such building on its own volition.

In addition, no such dog may be kept in a dwelling or structure when the windows are open or when screen windows or screen doors are the only obstacles preventing the dog from exiting the structure.

(6) Signs. All owners, keepers, harborers, or possessors of pit bull dogs shall display in a prominent place on their premises a sign easily readable by the public using the words "Beware of Dog" and including a warning symbol to inform children that there is a dangerous dog on the property. All such signs shall be displayed within twenty-four (24) hours of the issuance of a pit bull permit by the Town of Alamo.

(7) Insurance. Prior to the issuance of a pit bull permit by the Town of Alamo, all owners, keepers, harborers, or possessors of pit bull dogs shall provide a certificate of insurance to the Alamo Town Recorder as evidence that they have personal liability insurance in a single incident amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) for bodily injury to or death of any person or persons or for damage to property owned by any persons which may result from owning, possessing, keeping, or maintaining such animal. Such insurance policy shall provide that no cancellation of the policy will be made

unless ten (10) days' advance written notice is first given to the Alamo Town Recorder. Failure to maintain such liability insurance or any other lapse in such coverage shall be grounds for the immediate revocation of the pit bull permit issued by the Town of Alamo.

(8) **Identification photographs.** Prior to the issuance of a pit bull permit by the Town of Alamo, all owners, keepers, possessors, or harborers of pit bull dogs shall provide to the town recorder two (2) color photographs of the dog clearly showing the color and approximate size of the animal.

(9) **Reporting requirements.** All owners, keepers, possessors, or harborers of pit bull dogs shall within ten (10) days of the incident report the following information in writing to the Alamo Town Recorder as required hereinafter:

- (a) The removal from the town or death of a pit bull dog;
- (b) The birth of offspring of a pit bull dog; and
- (c) The new address of a pit bull dog owner, keeper, possessor, or harborer should such owner, keeper, possessor, or harborer move his residence within the corporate limits of the Town of Alamo. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-304. Sale or transfer of ownership prohibited. No person shall sell, barter, or in any other way transfer possession of a pit bull dog to any person within the Town of Alamo unless the recipient person resides permanently in the same household and on the same premises as the owner of such dog; provided that the owner of a pit bull dog may sell or otherwise dispose of a pit bull dog or the offspring of such dog to persons who do not reside within the Town of Alamo. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-305. Animals born of registered dogs. All offspring born of pit bull dogs within the Town of Alamo shall be removed from the Town of Alamo within six (6) weeks of the birth of such animal. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-306. Rebuttable presumptions. There shall be a rebuttable presumption that any dog registered with the Town of Alamo as a pit bull dog or any of those breeds defined by § 10-301 is in fact a dog subject to the requirements of this chapter. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-307. Impoundment. Any pit bull dog, not kept in compliance with the provisions of this chapter, may be taken into custody by the appropriate authorities of the Town of Alamo or agents acting on its behalf, and impounded. The dog's owner shall be solely responsible for payment of all boarding fees associated with the impounding of the dog, in addition to any punitive fines to be paid. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-308. Court proceedings against the owner. If any pit bull dog is impounded, the Town of Alamo may institute proceedings in municipal court charging the owner with violation of this chapter. Nothing in this section, however, shall be construed as preventing the town or any citizen from instituting a proceeding for violation of this chapter where there has been no impoundment. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-309. Court findings. If a complaint has been filed in municipal court against the owner of a dog for violation of this chapter, the dog shall not be released from impoundment or disposed of except on order of the court and payment of all charges and costs incurred under this chapter, including penalties for violating this chapter. The court may, at its discretion, order the dog to be destroyed in a humane manner. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-310. Violations and penalty. Any person found violating the provisions of this chapter upon conviction shall be fined fifty dollars (\$50.00) and each day of violation shall be deemed a separate violation. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

CHAPTER 4

VICIOUS DOGS

SECTION

- 10-401. Definitions.
- 10-402. Vicious dogs prohibited.
- 10-403. Procedure for determining that a dog is vicious.
- 10-404. Impoundment of vicious dogs.
- 10-405. Standards and requirements for keeping vicious dogs.
- 10-406. Sale or transfer of ownership prohibited.
- 10-407. Court proceedings against the owner.
- 10-408. Court findings.
- 10-409. Guard dogs.
- 10-410. Violations and penalty.

10-401. Definitions. (1) The definitions included in chapter 3 of this title, excluding those of "pit bull" and "predominately," shall apply to this chapter.

(2) Additionally, the following words, terms, and phrases, and their derivations as used in this chapter, except where the context clearly indicates otherwise, shall have the following meanings.

(3) "Vicious dog" means a dog of any breed other than a pit bull which:

(a) Approaches any person in an aggressive, menacing or terrorizing manner or in an apparent attitude of attack if such person is upon any public ways, including streets and sidewalks, or any public or private property;

(b) Has a known propensity, tendency, or disposition to attack, inflict injury to or to otherwise endanger the safety of persons or domestic animals;

(c) Without provocation, bites or inflicts injury or otherwise attacks or endangers the safety of any person or domestic animal; or

(d) Is trained for dog fighting or which is owned or kept primarily or in part for the purpose of dog fighting. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-402. Vicious dogs prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any person to own, keep, harbor, or possess a vicious dog within the corporate limits of the Town of Alamo unless such dog is confined in compliance with this chapter. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-403. Procedure for determining that a dog is vicious. (1) Upon his own complaint alleging a dog to be vicious, or upon the receipt of such complaint signed by one (1) or more residents of Alamo, the Alamo Town

Recorder or his designee shall hold a hearing within five (5) days of serving notice to the dog owner. The purpose of the hearing shall be to determine whether such dog is, in fact, vicious. The dog owner shall be notified by a certified letter of the date, time, place, and purpose of the hearing and may attend and have an opportunity to be heard.

(2) In making the determination as to whether a dog is vicious, the town recorder or his designee shall consider, but is not limited to, the following criteria:

- (a) Provocation;
- (b) Severity of attack or injury;
- (c) Previous aggressive history of the dog;
- (d) Observable behavior of the dog;
- (e) Site and circumstances of the incident giving rise to the complaint;
- (f) Age of the victim;
- (g) Statements from witnesses and other interested parties;
- (h) Reasonable enclosures already in place; and
- (i) Height and weight of the dog.

(3) Within five (5) days of the hearing, the town recorder or his designee shall determine whether to declare the dog vicious and shall within five (5) days after such determination notify the dog's owner by certified mail of the dog's designation as a vicious dog and the specific restrictions and conditions for keeping the dog. If the dog is declared vicious, its owner shall confine the dog with a securely enclosed and locked pen or structure, and whenever the dog is removed from such secure enclosure it shall be physically restrained and under restraint as defined in this chapter. The owner of the vicious dog shall notify residents of all abutting properties, including those across the street, of such findings. This notice to occupants of abutting properties shall be by certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall be at the owner's sole expense. The town recorder may: vary the minimum requirements of a secure enclosure if the owner's residence cannot accommodate a secure enclosure as defined in this chapter; or permit an alternate method of enclosure provided that, in the sole discretion of the town recorder, such alternate method fulfills the objectives as a secure enclosure.

(4) No dog shall be declared vicious if the threat, injury, or damage was sustained by a person who:

- (a) Was committing a crime or willful trespass or other tort upon the premises occupied by the owner of the dog;
- (b) Was teasing, tormenting, abusing, or provoking the dog; or
- (c) Was committing or attempting to commit a crime.

No dog shall be declared vicious as the result of protecting or defending a human being, any other animal, or itself against an unjustified attack or assault. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-404. Impoundment of vicious dogs. Any vicious dog, not in compliance with the provisions of this chapter, may be taken into custody by the appropriate authorities of the Town of Alamo or agents acting on behalf of the town, and impounded. The dog's owner shall be solely responsible for payment of all boarding fees associated with such impoundment in addition to any punitive fines to be paid. No dog which has been declared vicious pursuant to this chapter shall be released from impoundment unless and until the standards and requirements for keeping vicious dogs, as specified in § 10-405 have been met. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-405. Standards and requirements for keeping vicious dogs. The following standards and requirements shall apply to the keeping of vicious dogs located within the corporate limits of Alamo.

(1) **Registration.** Within ten (10) days of a dog being declared vicious pursuant to this chapter, the owner, keeper, harborer, or possessor of such dog shall register dog with the Alamo Town Recorder.

(2) **Physical restraint.** No person having charge, custody, control, or possession of a vicious dog shall permit the dog to go outside its kennel, pen, or other securely enclosed and locked pen or structure unless such dog is under restraint. No person shall permit a vicious dog to be kept on a chain, rope, or other type of leash outside its kennel or pen unless a person of suitable age and discretion is in physical control of the leash. Such dogs shall not be leashed to inanimate objects such as trees, posts, buildings, or structures.

(3) **Muzzle.** It is unlawful for any owner or keeper of a vicious dog to allow the dog to be outside its kennel, pen, or other securely enclosed and locked pen or structure unless it is necessary for the dog to receive veterinary care. In such cases, the dog must wear a properly fitted muzzle sufficient to prevent the dog from biting persons or other animals. Such muzzle shall not interfere with the dog's breathing or vision.

(4) **Outdoor confinement.** Except when leashed and muzzled as provided in this chapter, all vicious dogs shall be securely confined as described in § 10-303(4) of this chapter. All structures used to confine vicious dogs must be locked with a key or combination lock when such animals are within the structure. All outdoor structures erected to house vicious dogs must comply with zoning and building ordinances and regulations of the Town of Alamo and construction of such structures shall be completed within thirty (30) days of the owner's dog being declared vicious.

(5) **Indoor confinement.** No vicious dog shall be kept on a porch, patio, or in any part of a dwelling or structure that would allow the dog to exit such building on its own volition. In addition, no such dog may be kept in a dwelling or structure when the windows are open or when screen windows or screen doors are the only obstacles preventing the dog from exiting the structure.

(6) **Signs.** All owners, keepers, harborers, or possessors of pit bull dogs shall display in a prominent place on their premises a sign easily readable by

the public using the words "Beware of Dog" and including a warning symbol to inform children that there is a dangerous dog on the property. All such signs required by this chapter shall be installed and in place within fourteen (14) days of an owner's dog being declared vicious.

(7) Insurance. Within fourteen (14) days of being declared vicious, all owners, keepers, harborers, or possessors of vicious dogs shall provide proof to the town recorder of public liability insurance in a single incident amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) for bodily injury to or death of any person or persons or for damage to property owned by any persons which may result from owning, possessing, keeping, or maintaining such animal. Such insurance policy shall provide that no cancellation of the policy will be made unless ten (10) days' advance written notice is first given to the Alamo Town Recorder.

(8) Identification photographs. Within fourteen (14) days of being declared vicious, all owners, keepers, possessors, or harborers of vicious dogs shall provide to the Alamo Town Recorder two (2) color photographs of the dog clearly showing the color and approximate size of the animal.

(9) Reporting requirements. All owners, keepers, possessors, or harborers of pit bull dogs shall within ten (10) days of the incident report the following information in writing to the Alamo Town Recorder as required hereinafter:

- (a) The removal from the town or death of a vicious dog;
- (b) The birth of offspring of a vicious dog; and
- (c) The new address of a vicious dog owner, keeper, possessor, or harborer should such owner, keeper, possessor, or harborer move his residence within the corporate limits of the Town of Alamo. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-406. Sale or transfer of ownership prohibited. No person shall sell, barter, or in any other way transfer possession of a vicious dog to any person within the Town of Alamo unless the recipient person resides permanently in the same household and on the same premises as the owner of such dog; provided that the owner of a vicious dog may sell or otherwise dispose of a vicious dog or the offspring of such dog to persons who do not reside within the Town of Alamo. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-407. Court proceedings against the owner. If any vicious dog is impounded, the Town of Alamo may institute proceedings in municipal court charging the owner with violation of this chapter. Nothing in this section, however, shall be construed as preventing the town or any citizen from instituting a proceeding for violation of this chapter where there has been no impoundment. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-408. Court findings. If a complaint has been filed in municipal court against the owner of a dog for violation of this chapter, the dog shall not be released from impoundment or disposed of except on order of the court and payment of all charges and costs incurred under this chapter, including penalties for violating this chapter. The court may, upon a finding that the dog is vicious pursuant to this chapter, order the dog to be destroyed in a humane manner. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-409. Guard dogs. It shall be unlawful for any person to place or maintain guard dogs in any area of the Town of Alamo for the protection of persons or property unless the following provisions are met:

- (1) The guard dog shall be confined; or
- (2) The guard dog shall be under the direct and absolute control of a handler at all times when not confined; and
- (3) The owner or other persons in control of the premises upon which a guard dog is maintained shall post warning signs stating that such a dog is on the premises. At least one (1) such sign shall be posted at each driveway or entranceway to said premises. Such signs shall be in lettering clearly visible from either the curb line or a distance of fifty feet (50'), whichever is lesser and shall contain a telephone number where some person responsible for controlling the guard dog can be reached twenty-four (24) hours a day. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)

10-410. Violations and penalty. Any person found violating the provisions of this chapter upon conviction shall be fined fifty dollars (\$50.00) and each day of violation shall be deemed a separate violation. (Ord. #2017-13, Sept. 2010)