

Do You Know the Dog Laws?

- It is illegal to have a dog on a chain or any other tether for more than three hours in any 24 hour period in Norfolk.
- You must be able to get 2 fingers between your dog's collar and its neck (otherwise the law says it's too tight)
- If your dog lives outside, you must have a dog house that meets the following requirements:
 - Must not have cracks or other failures that allow wind to blow into the house except the door
 - Must be at least 2 inches off the ground
 - Must be large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down in, but small enough that the dog can maintain body heat
 - Must have a self-closing door or protective flap
 - Must have sufficient dry bedding between Nov 1 and March 31 AND when it's colder than 45 degrees
 - Must be shaded in the summer and protected from the wind in the winter

These laws are not on the books to present you with a hardship; rather, they are written to protect our City's animals. Of course, the very best thing is for you to keep your dog INSIDE but if your dog must be outside for any period of time, you must abide by these requirements.



Actual City Code

Adequate space means sufficient space to allow each animal to (i) easily stand, sit, lie, turn about, and make all other normal body movements in a comfortable, normal position for the animal and (ii) interact safely with other animals in the enclosure. When an animal is tethered, "adequate space" means a tether that permits the above actions and is appropriate to the age, size, and health of the animal; is attached to the animal by a properly applied collar, halter, or harness configured so as to protect the animal from injury, with enough room between the collar and the dog's throat through which two (2) fingers may fit, and prevent the animal or tether from becoming entangled with other objects or animals, or from gaining access to public thoroughfares, or from extending over an object or edge that could result in the strangulation or injury of the animal; weighs not more than one-eighth of the body weight of the animal tethered; and is at least ten (10) feet in length or three (3) times the length of the animal whichever is longer, as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, except when the animal is being walked on a leash or is attached by a tether to a lead line. When freedom of movement would endanger the animal, temporarily and appropriately restricting movement of the animal according to professionally accepted standards for the species is considered provision of adequate space. Provided, however, that no animal shall be tethered for more than three (3) consecutive hours in a twenty-four-hour period.

Adequate shelter means provision of and access to shelter that is suitable for the species, age, condition, size, and type of each animal; provides adequate space for each animal; is safe and protects each animal from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, direct sunlight, the adverse effects of heat or cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health; is properly lighted; is properly cleaned; enables each animal to be clean and dry, except when detrimental to the species; and, for dogs and cats, provides a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floormat, or similar device that is large enough for the animal to lie on in a normal manner and can be maintained in a sanitary manner. Under this chapter, shelters whose wire, grid, or slat floors (i) permit the animals' feet to pass through the openings, (ii) sag under the animals' weight, or (iii) otherwise do not protect the animals' feet or toes from injury are not adequate shelter.

Adequate shelter for animals kept outdoors must comply with the following standards:

- (1) The shelter must be a well-constructed structure with a roof, enclosed sides, one of which must contain an entry way and a solid, level floor raised at least two (2) inches from the ground. The entry way openings shall not comprise an entire side of the structure.
- (2) The shelter must have no cracks or openings other than the entrance.
- (3) The shelter must be small enough to allow an animal to warm the interior of the structure and maintain body heat, but large enough to allow the animal to stand, turn and lie down.
- (4) Between November 1 and March 31 and whenever the real or effective temperature is forty-five (45) degrees Fahrenheit or lower, the entryway must be protected by a self-closing door, an offset outer door, or a flexible flap, and a sufficient amount of dry bedding material must be provided to insulate against cold and damp.
- (5) The shelter must be placed where it will be adequately shaded in hot weather and protected from the wind in cold weather.

Refer to City Code sections 6.1-2, 6.1-77 and 6.1-78