TOWNSHIPS TODAY

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR TOWNSHIP

Share the Love: Make Sure Your Dog is Licensed

Dogs have often been referred to as man's best friend.

They are the first ones to greet you at the door and are happy to sit next to you while you read or catch up on the daily news. They are more than companions. They become members of our families.

That unconditional love is something they always give, and one way we can show that same love in return is by having them licensed.

The state Department of Agriculture and its Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement reminds Pennsylvanians that the best way to protect their dog is by ensuring that he has a current license. In fact, a license increases the likelihood that, if separated, you'll be reunited.

Therefore, licensing is not only the right thing to do, but it's also the law.

Pennsylvania's Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement says that a current license, worn all the time, is the best way to protect your dog. In fact, a license increases the likelihood that, if separated, you'll be reunited.

Licensing makes sense

The dog license application is simple to complete and only requires owner contact information and details about the dog being licensed, such as name, age, breed, and color. County treasurers, state dog wardens, animal control officers, and shelters use this information primarily to identify lost dogs and get them home safely.

Some counties in Pennsylvania do not have a shelter where lost dogs can stay, which means that these pets are transported several counties away, a situation that makes it even more difficult to reunite the dog and owner. While county treasurers can share lots of happy stories about reuniting licensed dogs with their families, it's disheartening to think that a number of dogs can't make their way back home simply because their owners haven't taken this important step.

Throughout the spring and early summer months, dog wardens complete compliance checks by visiting homes to check for your dog's current license and rabies vaccinations. Some may wonder why these checks include the vaccination check. The reason is simple: Rabies is a fatal viral infection of the central nervous system that infected animals can spread. The virus can also be spread from animal to human.

Dogs can easily come into contact with such rabies carriers as raccoons, bats, cats, skunks, and foxes. Therefore, all dogs and nonferal cats *(three months of age and older)* in Pennsylvania must be vaccinated against rabies. These vaccinations must be administered periodically to maintain lifelong immunity.

Licensing requirements

Under Pennsylvania law, all dogs three months or older must be licensed by January 1 of each year and should wear their license on their collar at all times.

The licensing fee is $6.50 for each spayed or neutered dog and $8.50 for other dogs. Older adults and people with disabilities may purchase a license for $4.50 for spayed or neutered dogs and $6.50 for others.

When you purchase a dog license, you're helping dogs throughout the state by supporting the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement. The bureau enforces regulations, including licensing individual dogs and licensing and inspecting kennels, managing dogs that are running at large or classified as dangerous, and processing claims for livestock damage that has been caused by dogs and coyotes. Part of your licensing fee also is returned to your county.

Violators can be cited with a maximum fine of $300 per violation plus court costs.

Licenses may be purchased through your county treasurer or a registered issuing agent. For more information, visit **www.licenseyourdogPA.com,** a consumer-focused website that provides contact information for county treasurers and dog wardens and inspection data for kennels and shelters.

Remember: Licensing your dog is the right thing to do — it's the right thing for your pet, and it's the law.

When you purchase a dog license, you're helping dogs throughout the state by supporting the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.

What are Pennsylvania's dog licensing requirements?

- All dogs, three months or older, must be licensed by January 1 of each year. Licenses go on sale December 1 for the upcoming license year.
- An annual license is $8.50 and a lifetime license is $51.50. If the dog is spayed or neutered, the annual fee is $6.50 and lifetime is $31.50. Prior to obtaining a lifetime license, a dog must have a microchip or tattoo. Discount licenses are available to older adults and people with disabilities.
- All dogs and nonferal cats, three months of age and older, must be vaccinated against rabies.
- Violators can be cited with a maximum fine of $300 per violation plus court costs.
- Licenses may be purchased through your county treasurer.

Why get your dog licensed?

- If your dog gets lost, a current license is the fastest way for your dog to be reunited with you.
- Stray dogs without current licenses can be taken to shelters far from their homes and adopted after 48 hours if no owner is identified.

General Dog Law information

- The Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement is responsible for ensuring the welfare of all dogs and puppies in kennels, regulating dogs classified as "dangerous," and overseeing annual licensure and rabies vaccinations for dogs.
- Complaints or tips may be submitted to the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement at **www.licenseyourdogPA.com** or by contacting your local dog warden.