Chaining dogs makes them more aggressive— the shorter the chain, the greater the aggression. —Dr. Nicholas H. Dodman

Professor, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine

Officials Recommend and Praise Chaining Laws as Enforceable and Effective

"The tethering ordinance in Washington, D.C. has given the Washington Humane Society Human Law Enforcement Division an excellent tool in improving the lives of dogs in the District of Columbia. . . . The anti-chaining law makes for safer neighborhoods and happier dogs all without adding burden to our enforcement division. Passing this law has reduced our work load rather than increased it. For these reasons we are strong proponents of the anti-chaining law and feel it has been a success here in the nation’s capital."

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"I encourage any city or county (hopefully states someday) to [pass] a similar ... ordinance to improve the lives of dogs and protect their citizens."

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"Wichita’s ordinance ... has been a very useful tool in our efforts to improve the lives of the dogs in our city. . . . This is a welcome and enforceable tool ... [and] has made it possible for our officers to educate pet owners about the importance of interacting with their pets, proper activity, and exercise. It has also given us the ability and ‘the teeth’ to prosecute those individuals that refuse to comply. . . . I highly recommend that other jurisdictions consider passing similar ordinances if they have issues with animal neglect, continuous chaining, and illegal dog fighting. Our ordinance has served us well."

—Dennis Graves, animal control supervisor, Wichita, Kansas

Resources

PETA stands ready to meet with and provide interested officials with further information about ways to improve the welfare of communities and animals through anti-tethering and other legislation. Please feel free to contact us for statistics, studies, expert statements, and sample ordinances.

PETA Headquarters
351 Fourth St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA
HelpingAnimals.com

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Since 2003, at least 130 Americans have been injured or killed by chained dogs. Nearly 75 percent of those victims were children, and 17 died in the attacks. Chaining dogs, or “tethering” as it is sometimes called, is a national public- and animal-welfare crisis. More than 85 American cities and counties (as well as the state of California) have recognized the dangers of chaining—both for the community and for dogs—and have passed laws or implemented policies to ban or limit it. With this publication, PETA hopes to help you keep your community safe by introducing and passing your own law.

Chaining Dogs Endangers Citizens, Especially Children

A study partly authored by two Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) physicians found that chained dogs were 2.8 times more likely to attack than those who were not chained.

Dog attacks are a serious public safety issue. In many cases, the attacking animals are chained, have broken loose from their tethers, or have generally been kept chained.

The most common victims in these attacks are young children. According to Karen Delise, author of Fatal Dog Attacks, 79 percent of the 431 people killed by dogs in the United States between 1965 and 2001 were children under the age of 12.

In 2002, chained dogs killed more American children than did fireworks accidents and falls from trees and playground equipment combined, and they killed as many kids as did gun accidents. A 1996 study partly authored by CDC officials found that of 38 children between the ages of 1 and 9 who were killed by dogs in the United States between 1989 and 1994, nearly 30 percent died after “wandering too close to a chained dog.”

Passing a law restricting or banning the continuous chaining of dogs following such tragedies helps ensure that no more lives will be claimed. In July 2005, Orange County, Florida, officials severely restricted the tethering of dogs and named the law for Myles Leakes, an Orlando boy who was fatally mauled by chained dogs the previous December. Vanessa Ruffin Wall, a spokesperson for Orange County’s Animal Services Division, explained, “We’re trying to reduce the number of people [bitten] by dogs.”

“Chaining dogs creates unsafe neighborhoods. Chaining dogs creates communities in which our children, our elderly, or anyone unlucky enough is at risk for injury or death.”

—Animal behaviorist Sue Sternberg

The Dangerous, Cruel Practice of Chaining Dogs and a Community’s Answer

“Children are the most common victims of serious dog bites.”

—The American Veterinary Medical Association

“We [passed] this ordinance for two main reasons: (1) the safety of our citizens and (2) for the humane treatment of the animals. Our records indicated that 31 percent of our dog bites were from dogs [who] were confined on chains or had been chained and had broken loose. … I observed that most of our dogs [kept] chained were receiving inhumane treatment.”

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Animal Behaviors Agree: Chaining Makes Dogs Dangerous

While animal behavioral Dr. Roger Mugford states, “Dogs are pack animals and need frequent contact with their own kind or with human beings.” According to animal behavioral Dr. Michael Fox, “Dogs are social pack animals and need frequent contact with their own kind or with human beings.” The Washington D.C. Humane Society states, “Chaining is a definition; it deprives a dog of the freedom it needs to play and to feel safe.” As undersocialized animals, tethered dogs develop behavioral problems, which often manifest as attacks. As undersocialized, Dr. Temple Grandin states in her latest book, Animals in Translation, “An animal who hasn’t been properly socialized to its peers will be dangerous only to other animals. He can be dangerous to humans, too.”

Chaining heightens dogs’ natural teritoriality. Tethers limit dogs’ space and make the boundaries of those few square feet of territory visible. After the remains of a Burleigh, New Jersey, woman’s chained dog were found in her back yard in January 2004, at least six cities in Cape May County adopted anti-tethering legislation. For example, Fairhope, Alabama, banned chaining after the city’s animal control officer rescued a chained dog who was so starved that his ribs were clearly embedded in the animals’ skin as they grow older and the collars are not enlarged. Chained dogs often choke to death or are attacked. These attacks are completely unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment.” —Elizabeth Shull, president, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

Dogs are ‘fight or flight’ animals. While confronted with a threat, a dog will either flee from the danger or confront it. Dogs are ‘fight or flight’ animals. In addition to frustration, the constant physical restraint promotes excessive territoriality, which may be manifested as aggression. These attacks are completely unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment.” —Elizabeth Shull, president, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

Chaining Dogs Is Cruelty to Animals

According to syndicated pet columnist and veterinarian Dr. Michael Fox, “Dogs are social pack animals and need frequent contact with their own kind or with human beings.” As undersocialized animals, tethered dogs develop behavioral problems, which often manifest as attacks. As undersocialized animals, tethered dogs develop behavioral problems, which often manifest as attacks. As undersocialized, Dr. Temple Grandin states in her latest book, Animals in Translation, “An animal who hasn’t been properly socialized to its peers isn’t dangerous only to other animals. He can be dangerous to humans, too.”

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prohibited during extreme weather and when the dogs are not spayed or neutered or and the maximum available exercise area, kept free of feces. Tethering should be properly fitted harness and allow dogs free access to food, water, adequate shelter, and designed for use with the specific breed of animal and the environment. These devices shall not be used to confine a dog on an owner’s property. This device must provide with a minimum length of ten feet, used to confine an animal on an owner’s property. This device shall be proportional in size, weigh no more than seven (7) feet above ground level. (b) A dog may be exclusively restrained by a chain or tether provided that (1) it is length and attached to a pole in a fully enclosed or a suitable which is above ground. (2) It is height and measured no more than seven (7) feet above ground level. (c) Any tethering system employed shall not allow the dog or puppy to become a hazard or a menace. (d) A dog shall be exclusively restrained by a chain or tether provided that it is length and attached to a pole in a fully enclosed or a suitable which is above ground. (2) It is height and measured no more than seven (7) feet above ground level. (e) Any chain or tether shall be at least eight (10) feet in length and have sides, or both. (f) Any chain or tether shall be at least eight (10) feet in length and have sides, or both. (g) Any chain or tether shall be at least eight (10) feet in length and have sides, or both.

Here are three sample ordinances:

**Orange County, Florida**

Section 53.70. Care and Maintenance of Dogs

1) For all animals except puppies and dogs, restraint shall mean on the premises of the owner, if the premises of the owner, the animal must be restrained and under the control of a responsible person.

2) All puppies and dogs, restrained shall mean on the premises of the owner, if the premises of the owner, the animal must be restrained and under the control of a responsible person.

3) The dog shall be monitored periodically.

4) The dog shall be monitored periodically.

**Los Angeles, California**

Section 91.001. Definitions. Restraint.

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**Louisville, Kentucky**

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