

Sample Leash Law

The county commissioners are authorized and empowered by rule, regulation or resolution to provide that owners of dogs in the county shall not permit the dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, to run at large off the premises of the owner, except when it is under the control of the owner or an authorized agent of the owner by leash, cord or chain, provided that the following dogs may be permitted to run at large when accompanied by the owner or an authorized agent and when kept within sight or calling distance:

- 1) Dogs proven to be obedient, in accordance with any regulation or resolution of the county commissioners;
- 2) Dogs being trained or used for hunting or tracking;
- 3) Dogs being trained or used for control of livestock;
- 4) Dogs while being exhibited or trained at a field trial or similar event;
- 5) Dogs used for law enforcement; and
- 6) Dogs being accompanied by the owner on horseback.

(a) The county commissioners by rule, regulation or resolution may provide for investigation of reports of violations of paragraph (1) and for enforcement of the provisions of this subsection.

(b) Any owner failing to comply with the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be subject to a fine of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for first offense; fifty dollars (\$50.00) for second offense; one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for subsequent offenses.

Why are leash laws important?

Leash laws should be viewed as preventive measures, designed to minimize risk for dogs, humans, and other animals. Free roaming dogs are at risk of being poisoned, hit by cars, or injured by property owners who have no patience for the dog trespassing. Additionally, as they wander dogs pass and contract parasites and disease from fecal matter. Roaming dogs can be attacked, killed or injured by other dogs or animals.

The absence of leash laws makes an unsafe community. Reasonable and enforceable laws or ordinances are required for control of unrestrained or free roaming animals. Sensible laws should ensure that owned animals are confined to their property or kept on a leash without punishing responsible owners who have control over their dogs in public areas while training, hunting, or working.

Leash laws are also an important part of dog bite prevention. Although most dog bites occur on the property where the dog lives, unrestrained or free-roaming dogs pose a threat to the public. Control of unrestrained and free-roaming animal populations requires an adequately staffed, trained, and funded animal control agency.