



Westford Animal Control Department

Phone: 978-692-4574

Email: animalcontrol@westfordma.gov



Recommended Steps Following Animal Bite:

1. Do not try to catch the animal
2. Document the following items (if known/possible)
 - a. Animals breed and general description
 - b. Owner's name, address, and phone number
 - c. Rabies vaccination status (if owner is known)
3. Visit healthcare provider to report animal bite (Highly recommended, but not required)
 - a. Healthcare provider is legally required to report all animal bites to the local Animal Control Officer.
4. Contact Westford Police Dispatch at 978-692-2161 to report the bite incident. The Police Dispatch will contact the Westford Animal Control Department to notify them of the incident.
5. Animal Control Officer will order a 10-day quarantine of animal upon notification of bite
6. At the completion of the 10-day quarantine, the Animal Control Officer will follow up with the bite victim to inform them of any updates on the animal being held in quarantine. If the animal is not exhibiting signs of rabies, the Animal Control Officer will lift the quarantine following the 10-day period.
7. The Animal Control Officer may be reached at 978-692-4574 or by email at animalcontrol@westfordma.gov for any questions or concerns.
8. Any complaints or issues regarding these steps may be reported to the Assistant Town Manager at 978-692-5501.

Options for Residents Concerned with Nuisance or Dangerous Dogs:

1. [Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 140, Section 157](#) allows any person to file a complaint in writing to the Town Manager's Office to request a nuisance/dangerous dog public hearing with the Board of Selectmen.
2. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Town Manager's Office shall initiate an investigation of the complaint, including researching other police reports or incidents.
3. The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to determine whether the dog in question is a nuisance or dangerous dog, as defined by state law.
4. If the Board of Selectmen deem the dog to be a nuisance or dangerous dog, the board may impose one or more of the following restrictions:
 - (i) that the dog be humanely restrained; provided, however, that no order shall provide that a dog deemed dangerous be chained, tethered or otherwise tied to an inanimate object including, but not limited to, a tree, post or building;

- (ii) that the dog be confined to the premises of the keeper of the dog; provided, however, that "confined" shall mean securely confined indoors or confined outdoors in a securely enclosed and locked pen or dog run area upon the premises of the owner or keeper; provided further, that such pen or dog run shall have a secure roof and, if such enclosure has no floor secured to the sides thereof, the sides shall be embedded into the ground for not less than 2 feet; and provided further, that within the confines of such pen or dog run, a dog house or proper shelter from the elements shall be provided to protect the dog;
- (iii) that when removed from the premises of the owner or the premises of the person keeping the dog, the dog shall be securely and humanely muzzled and restrained with a chain or other tethering device having a minimum tensile strength of 300 pounds and not exceeding 3 feet in length;
- (iv) that the owner or keeper of the dog provide proof of insurance in an amount not less than \$100,000 insuring the owner or keeper against any claim, loss, damage or injury to persons, domestic animals or property resulting from the acts, whether intentional or unintentional, of the dog or proof that reasonable efforts were made to obtain such insurance if a policy has not been issued; provided, however, that if a policy of insurance has been issued, the owner or keeper shall produce such policy upon request of the hearing authority or a justice of the district court; and provided further, that if a policy has not been issued the owner or keeper shall produce proof of efforts to obtain such insurance;
- (v) that the owner or keeper of the dog provide to the licensing authority or animal control officer or other entity identified in the order, information by which a dog may be identified, throughout its lifetime including, but not limited to, photographs, videos, veterinary examination, tattooing or microchip implantations or a combination of any such methods of identification;
- (vi) that unless an owner or keeper of the dog provides evidence that a veterinarian is of the opinion the dog is unfit for alterations because of a medical condition, the owner or keeper of the dog shall cause the dog to be altered so that the dog shall not be reproductively intact; or
- (vii) that the dog be humanely euthanized.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

Eric Heideman, Assistant Town Manager

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Westford, MA 01886

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