

Okaloosa County, Florida

Animal Control Director: Dee Thompson

Population: 177,000

Animal Control Field Officers: 7

Sec. 5-28. Restraint and confinement to property.

(d) Dogs or cats shall not be chained, tied, fastened or otherwise tethered to dog houses, trees, fences or other stationary objects as a means of confinement to property.

Is the law enforced?

Ms. Thompson states that the ordinance is definitely enforced. Chained dogs are found by the field service officers and by calls into the dispatch.

Do residents comply with the law?

She states that most people comply with the ordinance. They do, occasionally, have non-compliant residents, but most residents make the necessary adjustments and get the dogs off the chain. It is rare for a resident to relinquish their dog versus making the necessary changes. The field officers first educate the residents and find out why the dog is chained. They pass out brochures to help housetrain the dog. They also hand out spay neuter brochures, as well as spay neuter vouchers. Not all of the dogs come inside the house, but Okaloosa County Animal Control is also the local Humane Society and they work with the residents to help out with free doghouses and trolleys.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

The amount of time each resident is given to comply with the law varies depending on the circumstances. The field officers will first issue a citation that chaining is illegal and then, depending on the circumstances, go back and visit the home to see if the resident has complied. However, if the situation is very bad, the turn around time is only 24 hours to comply. If the resident has made accommodations, either built a pen, put up a fence or trolley or now has the dog inside, the violation is voided. If they have not, the first offense fine is \$20.00 and second offense is \$30.00. Ms. Thompson also stated that usually violators also have not vaccinated the animal or purchased a dog license, so those fines are also cited at that time.

Is the law accepted?

Ms. Thompson states that the ordinance is accepted and was easy to pass. In this case, the ban on chaining/tethering was added as sort of an addendum to an existing ordinance. She stated that educating the judges and state attorneys is important, as well.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

Yes.

Lawton, Oklahoma

Animal Control Director: Rose Wilson

Population: 85,000 (not counting military base – with base 100,000)

Animal Control Field Officers: 4

A. No person shall, at any time, fasten, chain, or tie any dog or cause such dog to be fastened, chained or tied while such dog is on the dog owner's property or on the property of the dog owner's landlord.

B. Any dogs confined within a fenced yard must have an adequate space for exercise based on a dimension of at least one hundred square feet. Provided, further that where dogs are kept or housed on property without a fenced yard, the owner of such dogs or persons having custody of such dogs shall provide an enclosure for such dogs meeting the one hundred square feet dimension. Such enclosure shall be constructed of chain link or similar type materials with all four sides enclosed. The enclosure shall be of sufficient height to prevent the dog from escaping from such enclosure. The top of such enclosure shall be covered with materials to provide the dog with shade and protection from the elements. (Ord. 90-18, 6/26/01)

Is the law enforced?

Ms. Wilson states that the ordinance is "absolutely" enforced. She states residents must take responsibility for the animal and there are "no excuses." Field officers on their routes, as well as some calls into dispatch, find and/or report chained dogs.

Do residents comply with the law?

The community is very transient due to the military base so many residents found in non-compliance are not even aware of the ordinance due to their frequent moving with the military. Ms. Wilson stated, however, they do not have any jurisdiction over residents living on the base. They do not have any problems enforcing the ordinance and most residents comply. Most of the residents that do not comply are military and she feels that this is because they are not permanent residents of Lawton.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

When the field officers find a chained dog, they issue a citation. The resident has 24 hours to comply. If they choose to fence in their yard or build a pen, they have two weeks to have it completed. The ordinance states that pens must be 10x10 feet of space per dog. Trolleys are not allowed. The fines range from \$80.00 to \$500.00 and 60 days in jail.

Is the law accepted?

Ms. Wilson says that the ordinance is accepted and they do not have a problem. Lawton Animal Control does pass out flyers on chaining and educate the residents. Ms. Thompson also suggested educating the Judges and state attorneys.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

She stated yes. While some dogs are relinquished, if they can be rehabilitated and are friendly, they are placed up for adoption. Ms. Wilson says dogs that are not adopted and ultimately euthanized, are better off because they were out of control and dangerous to the community. Lawton has seen a decrease in the number of dogs dying from heat strokes and from strangulation on chains. Ms. Wilson states that chained dogs are bad for the community because they are much more likely to bark and also more likely to bite. The chaining causes them frustration and stress

Electra, Texas

Animal Control Officer/Director: Mickie Mann

Population: 3,000

Animal Control Officers: 1

Ordinance 96-9, Section 111

Restraint: A. 2. Dogs To Be Restrained—dogs shall not be allowed to run at large. All dogs must be restrained by some physical means; however, a dog shall not be considered at large when held or controlled by some person by means of a rope, leash, or chain. Dogs may not be tethered and the tethering of any dog shall be a violation of this chapter.

Is the law enforced?

Ms. Mann states the ordinance is enforced and everyone in the city knows that it is illegal to chain dogs. Ms. Mann finds chained dogs through calls from citizens, the Electra Police Department and, herself, on routine calls.

Do residents comply with the law?

Yes residents comply with the law. Very few dogs are relinquished to animal control. She feels if the resident does not want to comply, they give the dog to someone else.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

When a chained dog is discovered, the resident is given a ticket. They have 10 days to comply, such as building a pen, putting up a fence or bringing the dog inside. If they do not comply, they are given a court date and the Judge will assign a fine to be paid.

Is the law accepted?

Ms. Mann states the ordinance has been in effect for over 15 years and it is very accepted and known today. She does provide information for residents on the effects of chaining and why it is bad. She answers a lot of questions this way and feels the Internet is a great resource.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

Ms. Mann states she feels the ordinance has been very good for the dogs in Electra. She says chained dogs end up being forgotten about and neglected.

Maumell, Arkansas

Animal Control Supervisor: Shelia Jones

Population: 12,000

Animal Control Field Officers: 2

Confinement of Animals: From and after the passage of this Ordinance any person owning animals whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, licensed or unlicensed, shall confine such animal within an adequate fence or enclosure, or within a house, garage or other building in conformance with Maumelle Bill of Assurance or its successor. Animals shall not be tied or chained to doghouses, or other stationary objects, but must be in an approved enclosure. Sterilized cats are exempt from confinement.

The ordinance also mandates that dog enclosures must provide at least one hundred and fifty square feet of space for dogs over six months of age.

Is the law enforced?

Ms. Jones confirmed that the ordinance is enforced.

Do residents comply with the law?

She states residents do comply with the law. She said most of the residents who have their dogs chained do not know about the ordinance, because they are new to the community.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

When chained dogs are found, a notice to correct is left. Residents have 10 days to comply. After those 10 days, they are then given a 48-hour warning notice. If they still do not comply, they receive the citation. The fines range from \$50.00 to \$250.00. Ms. Jones stated, however, that they do work with residents to make accommodations. The circumstances can determine the time allowed, sometimes it is 10 days, but other times it is 30 days.

Is the law accepted?

The ordinance was first enacted in the early 1990s. The residents of Maumell have accepted the ordinance and they don't have a problem with it. They don't pass out any educational literature, but they do talk to residents and explain the effects of chaining.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

Ms. Jones states the ordinance has had a positive effect on dogs in the community. It protects dogs from choking themselves and from running loose because they have broken off the chain.

New Hanover County and City of Wilmington, North Carolina

Animal Control Director: Daisy Brown

Population: 180,000

Animal Control Field Officers: 6

Sec. 3.4 (d) Restraint:

An animal is under restraint within the meaning of this chapter if it is controlled by means of a leash, or is sufficiently near the owner or handler to be under his direct control and is obedient to that person's command; or is on or within a vehicle being driven or parked; or is within a secure enclosure.

Exceptions to restraint are as follows: Organized and lawful animal functions e.g. hunting, obedience training, field and water training, law enforcement training and/or in the pursuit of working or competing in those legal endeavors. When a dog is on the property of its owner or guardian it shall be secured when not supervised by a competent person. Ropes, chains, and the like shall not constitute adequate security under this ordinance.

Is the law enforced?

Ms. Brown states the ordinance is enforced. The ordinance, which bans dogs being "tied out", was put into effect in July 2002.

Do residents comply with the law?

Prior to July 2002, they would just talk to residents and educate them about the effects of chaining and why it was bad for the dogs and the community. When the talking didn't seem to work, they made it a civil penalty in July 2002. It now works.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

When a chained dog is found, the resident is issued a citation. They have 7 days to pay the fine, which is \$250.00. They can also appeal the citation. Appeals must be in writing and submitted within 20 days. If they correct the situation and the dog is no longer chained, then the citation and fine are dismissed.

Is the law accepted?

The community has accepted the ordinance and in general everyone feels it is a good law. Residents become concerned about chained dogs choking or getting caught up in the chain. Everyone in Wilmington and New Hanover County is aware of the ordinance and educate their friends and family about the law.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

Ms. Brown said the ordinance has been “absolutely good” for the dogs in the community. Dogs that are chained without human contact and love become problems for the community.

Carthage, Missouri

Animal Control Abatement Officer: Connie Artym

Population: 12, 000

Animal Control Field Officers: 1

Sec 4-7 (a) All dogs must be confined within a fenced area, unless on a leash not longer than six feet long. At no time may any dog be tied to or leashed to inanimate objects i.e. trees, posts, etc. (b) Persons found guilty of violating this section will be liable to fines ranging from: \$25.00 - \$200.00. However, if said dog has been spayed or neutered the fines may be reduced, upon provided proof.

Is the law enforced?

Ms. Artym states the ordinance is enforced. Chained dogs are reported through calls to dispatch or she sees them personally, along with police officers.

Do residents comply with the law?

She states that most residents comply with the law. Ms. Artym said that some residents do not like the ordinance, but it has been good for the community.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

Residents are first given a warning to comply and/or contact her. She will answer questions, offer suggestions and options to the residents to get the dog off the chain. They are given a few days to contact her or comply with the law. She said sometimes the circumstances can dictate how long they have to comply, such as if they need a week or so to build a pen or fence. There is no set fine. They are given a court summons and a Judge determines the fine.

Is the law accepted?

Again, she said that some residents do not like the ordinance, but it has been good for the community. She said they receive less and less calls about chained dogs now. According to Ms. Artym, some people will give up their dog instead of making difference accommodations for the dog.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

Since the ordinance was enacted, which was around 1993, there are less dogs at large in the community and less dog bites reported. She said chained dogs are much more aggressive.

New Orleans, Louisiana

Louisiana SPCA
Chief Humane Officer: Kathryn Destreza
City Population: 485,000 + surrounding parish
Animal Control Field Officers: 6

Sec. 18-2.1. Minimum standards of care for animals (including fowl).

(b) Tethering. No animal shall be tethered as a primary means of stationary confinement; stationary confinement by tethering shall be considered cruel treatment.

(Ord. No. 20,760, § 2, 6-20-02)

Is the law enforced?

Yes. They respond mostly from phone calls. They have received an increase in the number of phone calls reporting chained dogs; however, they have had a decrease in the number of nuisance calls. She said it has “worked out.” Ms. Destreza states most of the chained dogs are pit bulls and they’ve had a problem with pit bull fighting in the area. She feels the ordinance has helped them additionally with this problem.

Do residents comply with the law?

Most of the residents comply with the law. As in other instances, it depends on how they consider their dog. Some residents have some problems due to money and financial situations. They try to “help them help themselves” as much as possible. They provide copies of the ordinance, plus education and obedience classes. They often find other problems when citing residents for a chaining violation, such as no vaccination and no license.

How long do residents have to comply and what are the fines?

It depends on the situation. Most residents have five days to comply. In some instances, where situation is severe, they are given 24 hours to comply. Fines also vary, but for cases of neglect or cruelty, the fines are \$100.00 to \$500.00 plus the charges for the time spent in animal control.

Is the law accepted?

Most of the residents were very much in favor of the ordinance. Ms. Destreza states they “love it.” In some instances, there have been animals given up due to the resident not being able to comply with the ordinance because of financial constraints.

Do you feel the law has been a good thing?

Ms. Destreza believes the ordinance has been a good in that it has helped with the pit bull fighting rings and with incidents of aggression. They felt the chaining led to aggression and a low quality of life for the dogs.