

Questions and Answers about Chained Dogs

1. What is meant by dog chaining or dog tethering?

Chaining or *tethering* refers to the practice of keeping a dog continually tied to a stationary object.

2. What problems are associated with dog tethering?

Chaining is inhumane and unsafe for dogs.

Dogs are, by nature, social beings who thrive on interaction with people and other animals. A dog kept chained in one spot for months or years suffers immense psychological damage. A continuously chained dog usually becomes neurotic, anxious, and aggressive.

In many cases, the necks of chained dogs become raw and infected from too-tight collars. Dog tethers can easily become entangled with other objects, choking or strangling the dogs. Chained dogs cannot escape threats such as floods, storms, or attacking animals.

Chaining is a safety hazard for people.

Dogs naturally feel protective of their territory. When confronted with a perceived threat, they respond according to their *fight-or-flight* instinct. A chained dog, unable to take flight, often feels forced to fight. A study by the Centers for Disease Control found that chained dogs are 2.8 times more likely to bite. The dogs most likely to bite are male, unneutered and chained. Tragically, the victims of chained dog attacks are usually children.

Dogs shouldn't be allowed to run loose either. Dogs should be socialized and kept inside the home or in fenced yards.

3. Are tethered dogs otherwise treated well?

Unfortunately, tethered dogs rarely receive sufficient care. They suffer from sporadic feedings, overturned water bowls, inadequate veterinary care, lack of exercise, and extreme temperatures. They must eat, sleep, urinate, and defecate in a single confined area. Grass is usually beaten into hard-packed dirt by the dog's continual pacing. Chained dogs are rarely given minimal affection and are easily ignored by their owners.

4. Should chaining ever be allowed?

To become well-adjusted companion animals, dogs should interact with people daily and receive regular exercise. Placing an animal on a restraint for short periods for exercise or fresh air is acceptable. Animals kept temporarily tethered should be safely secured so the tether can't become entangled with other objects. Collars should be properly fitted.

Using a pulley or trolley run is preferable to fixed-point chaining. However, dogs still get choked and tangled on trolleys. The best way to confine dogs is to bring them inside or provide them with a fenced area.

5. Who says chaining is inhumane?

The **United States Department of Agriculture** has stated, "Our experience in enforcing the Animal Welfare Act has led us to conclude that continuous confinement of dogs by a tether is inhumane. A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury."



In 1997, the USDA ruled that people and organizations regulated by the Animal Welfare Act cannot keep dogs continuously chained.



The **American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)** has also come out publicly against dog tethering. In a press release for Dog Bite Prevention Week, the AVMA stated, "Never tether or chain your dog because this can contribute to aggressive behavior."

6. Don't chained dogs make good guard dogs?

No, the opposite is true. Chained dogs are unable to stop intruders. All they can do is bark. Since most chained dogs are unsocialized, they are unable to distinguish a real threat from a family friend or neighborhood child.

The best guard dogs are those who live inside the home and are treated as part of the family, which is how K9 police dogs are raised.

7. Why should we pass a law to ban the continuous chaining of dogs?

Local animal control advocates receive hundreds calls every year from citizens concerned about chained and neglected animals. Because chaining is legal, there is little officers can do to help the dog. By the time it becomes a clear-cut case of animal cruelty under current legal standards, it is often too late to save the dog.

Prohibiting chaining makes a community safer by reducing the number of dog attacks and dog bites. Also, a chaining law gives officers a tool to crack down on illegal dog fighting, since most fighting dogs are kept chained.

8. Are there laws regulating dog chaining in other states or communities?

Yes, 19 states and over 140 U.S. cities and counties have laws banning or carefully regulating chaining. Visit unchainyourdog.org/laws to read more.

9. Would passage of a chaining law cost lots of money?

No. Animal control officers are already spending time and resources responding to reports of chained, neglected, and abused dogs. A ban would allow animal control officers to fine individuals who are constantly tethering their dogs. This would be a source of additional revenue.

10. Who would be impacted by a law to ban dog tethering?

This bill would not apply to situations where a dog is temporarily tied on public property, such as outside a store or restaurant. It would also not apply to situations where dogs are temporarily tethered per government regulation, such as at state parks or camping areas. People who keep their dogs continually chained would be affected by this law.

11. What about people who can't afford a fence?

You don't have to have a fence to have a dog! Apartment-dwellers don't have private yards; their dogs can be perfectly happy living inside the home with the family and going on regular walks. There are many resources available to help people train their dogs to be well-behaved members of the family.

12. Where can I learn more?

Visit unchainyourdog.org or dogsdesevbetter.org for articles, statistics, photos, ordinance language, and other information about chaining.

