

TOWN OF CHELSEA



ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE

Adopted June 16, 2026

(1) TITLE:

This ordinance shall be known and cited as the Animal Control Ordinance of the Town of Chelsea, Maine, and is referred to herein as “this ordinance”.

(2) AUTHORITY:

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the enabling provisions of Title 30-A, MRSA § 3001 (Home Rule).

(3) RELATION TO OTHER ORDINANCES:

This ordinance repeals and replaces the “Animal Control Ordinance” which was enacted June 15, 2017.

(4) PURPOSE:

The purpose of this ordinance is to require that all animals in the Town of Chelsea be kept

under the control of their owners at all times so that they will not injure persons, damage property or create a nuisance and to prevent the spread of contagious disease and viruses in relation to domesticated and undomesticated animals.

The provisions which apply to the owners of an animal apply equally to any person having its custody or possession.

(5) DEFINITIONS:

1. Owner: Any person owning, keeping or harboring a dog or other animal.

2. At Large: Any animal off the premises of the owner and not under the control of any person whose personal presence and attention would reasonably control the conduct of the animal.

3. Dangerous Dog: Any dog which has bitten a person who was not a trespasser on the owner’s premises at the time of the incident or a dog which causes a reasonable person, acting in a peaceable manner outside the owner’s premises, to be put in apprehension of imminent bodily harm.

4, Municipality: A city, town or plantation.

5. Nuisance: The causing of unreasonable noise, offensive odor, litter and other property damage; the chasing of automobiles, motorcycles and bicycles or other vehicles.

6. Leash: A handheld device no longer than 10 feet in length.

7. Pack: A dog in the company of three or more other dogs.

8. Animal: Includes all domesticated and undomesticated animals,

9. Rabies: A viral disease of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) .

10. Confirmed Rabid Animal: An animal that has been confirmed by the health and Testing Laboratory using the direct fluorescent antibody (DFA) test of nervous tissue.

11. Quarantine: Term used to describe the period of time that a domestic animal is to remain separate and apart from other animals and humans after having bitten or otherwise potentially exposed another domestic animal or human to rabies.

12. Currently Vaccinated: Domesticated animals are considered currently vaccinated for rabies if at least thirty days have elapsed since the initial vaccination and duration of vaccination has not exceeded the time period recommendation for that species based upon the type of vaccine used. A Maine “Certificate of Rabies Vaccination” or a form approved by the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources is proof of immunization.

13. Suspected Rabid Animal:

- a. Any mammal, undomesticated or domesticated, showing signs of rabies.
- b. Any undomesticated mammal which has potentially exposed, through bite or non-bite exposure, a human or domesticated animal to rabies.
- c. Any domesticated mammal which has bitten a human or domesticated animal.

14. Undomesticated Animal: A mammal considered to be wild by nature by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

15. Domesticated Animal: A mammal accustomed to home life and tamed for man’s use. A typical household pet to include, but not be limited to: dogs, cats, ferrets, wildlife hybrids and livestock.

16. Unvaccinated Animal: An animal with no previous rabies vaccination, an animal whose first vaccination was given within the last thirty days, an animal whose last vaccination has expired (per vaccine manufacturer’s recommendation) or an animal for which no approved vaccine exists.

17. Wildlife Hybrid: The offspring of a breeding between a domesticated animal and a wild counterpart. This would include but is not limited to: coydog, wild/domesticated cat hybrid and wolf/dog hybrids. These animals are considered domesticated but have no established quarantine or isolation period for the incubation of the rabies virus.

18. Control: To limit by reasonable means all unnecessary exposure for the suspected rabid animal to humans or to other animals.

19. Shelter: Any facility, structure, or place where animals are housed, impounded, confined, or cared for, whether publicly or privately operated, including but not limited to animal control facilities, animal shelters, rescue organizations, veterinary facilities, and temporary or emergency holding locations.

20. Henhouse: A house or shelter for fowl.

21. Chicken Pen: An outdoor fenced in area connected to a henhouse for the purpose of allowing chickens to leave the henhouse while remaining in an enclosed, predator-safe environment.

22. Enclosure: The combined area of a henhouse and chicken pen.

23. Offensive Odor: Is a smell detected beyond the boundary of a property line which over a period of 48 hours unreasonably interferes with the enjoyment of life or the use of a property by another person.

(6) ANIMALS CREATING A NUISANCE BY NOISE:

Notwithstanding 7 M.R.S. § 3950 (1), anyone owning, possessing or harboring any animal which barks, howls or makes other sounds common to its species continuously for twenty minutes or intermittently for one hour or more shall be deemed to constitute a nuisance. EXCEPTIONS: Dogs barking at trespassers or threatening trespasser on private property on which dog is situated or any legitimate cause for provocation.

(7) RUNNING AT LARGE:

It is unlawful for any animal, licensed or unlicensed, to run at large except when used for hunting. Any stray or abandoned animal roaming at large shall be impounded by the Animal control Officer (ACO) and taken to a shelter. Any dog leaving the property of its owner or custodian must be on a leash of suitable strength or must be under the supervision and verbal control of its owner or custodian. Any animal in violation may be impounded by the ACO. Any animal so impounded shall be subject to Article XII (b)below or the ACO or his or her designee may take the animal to its owner, if known.

However, the offender will be subject to a charge set by the fee schedule established by the Town of Chelsea Selectboard for services rendered, payable to the Town of Chelsea.

(8) ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER (ACO):

A suitable person shall be employed by the Town of Chelsea who shall be known as and perform the duties of Animal Control Officer. The ACO shall have the powers given to them by this ordinance. They shall be under the supervision and direction of the Town Manager. The ACO shall hold their office for such time as the Town Manager may direct and shall receive as compensation an amount as may from time to time be authorized at Town Meeting. The ACO shall be responsible for the control, regulation and enforcement of all laws related to dogs, cats, domesticated and undomesticated animals in accordance with Title 7 MRSA Chapter 725.

(9) LICENSE REQUIRED:

All dogs kept, harbored or maintained by their respective owners in the Town of Chelsea shall be licensed and tagged in accordance with the appropriate laws of the State of Maine. (7 MRSA Section 3921, as amended)

(10) LICENSING TIMING:

All dogs over the age of six months must be licensed in the Town of Chelsea by registering the dog(s) at the Town Clerk's office. Proof of a rabies vaccination must be shown to obtain a license.

(11) REGISTRY AND NOTIFICATION OF IMPOUNDMENT:

(a) When impounding any animal, the ACO or other law enforcement officer shall at the time of such impoundment, list number and description of violation(s), make a complete registry of the date of impoundment, breed, color, sex and general condition of the animal as can be reasonably ascertained, and if licensed or unlicensed, and the name of the owner or keeper if known, on a registry form. A copy of this form shall be furnished to the shelter together with written instruction setting forth the conditions under which the animal may be released.

(b) When any animal is impounded under the provisions of this Article or Article ~~VII~~(7), the person who has control of the shelter shall, when possible, contact the owner within forty-eight hours and report to the Town Clerk a description of the animal and its place of

impoundment. If the owner does not claim the animal within six (6) days of impoundment, or within such time period as required under applicable State law, the shelter may dispose of the animal by adoption or otherwise in a proper and humane manner consistent with State law.

(12) IMPOUNDMENT FEES:

Any owner may reclaim an impounded animal upon compliance with all applicable licensing requirements and payment of all required fees and costs.

All impoundment fees, penalties, and related costs shall be established and may be amended from time to time by the Select Board through an adopted fee schedule. Such fees may include, but are not limited to, impoundment fees, daily boarding fees, administrative fees, and any additional costs incurred for the care of the animal.

All fees and penalties shall be paid to the Town of Chelsea prior to the release of any animal.

The owner shall also be responsible for any additional costs incurred for the care, treatment, or housing of the animal while impounded.

No animal shall be released until all applicable fees, penalties, and costs have been paid in full.

(13) DISPOSITION OF ANIMALS WHICH HAVE BITTEN HUMANS AND/OR HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE OR VIRAL DISEASE:

The owner or keeper of an animal which has bitten a human or may have been exposed to a contagious or viral disease shall be served a quarantine notice. The owner or keeper shall confine and control the animal for at least ten days, forty-five days or six months or as ordered. The owner or keeper must observe and obey all written instructions and procedures included in the quarantine notice. Failure to comply with this section may result in fines or penalties described in the section entitled "Violations". Further, failure to comply with this section may result in a court ordered seizure of the animal to be placed in a state licensed facility that houses such animals. All related expenses shall be paid by the owner or keeper.

(14) ANIMALS CREATING A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT:

The municipal health officer or their designee shall order suppression and removal of animals and conditions posing a public health threat when there is a reasonable cause to

suspect the presence of a communicable disease or viral disease and the owner or keeper has failed to comply with the properly served quarantine notice.

(15) KEEPING OF ANIMALS NOT DOGS OR CATS

(15)(1): Livestock

Livestock may include, but is not limited to, horses, donkeys, cattle, oxen, goats, sheep, llamas, pigs, emu, ostrich, turkey, duck and geese.

- a. Require a minimum of 60,000 square feet of land
- b. Livestock may be kept on lots of sufficient size to provide adequate space for humane care, manure management, and buffering from adjacent properties. As a general standard, lots less than 60,000 square feet shall be presumed inadequate for livestock unless the applicant demonstrates compliance with setback, sanitation, and nuisance standards.

All livestock shall be kept in accordance with Maine animal welfare standards as set forth in 7 M.R.S.A. §3901 et seq.

15(2): Chickens

- a. The keeping of chickens for personal use is permitted as an accessory residential use. There shall be no maximum number of chickens permitted, provided the conditions of this section are met.
- b. Henhouses and chicken enclosures shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from any property line.
- c. Chickens shall be kept in clean and secure enclosures at all times and shall be secured within a henhouse during non-daylight hours. The henhouse shall be well maintained.
- d. Free Ranging: Chickens may be allowed to free range on the owner's property, provided they remain under reasonable control and do not trespass onto adjacent properties or public ways. Free ranging shall not create a nuisance as defined in this section. If chickens are found repeatedly off the owner's property, the Code Enforcement Officer or Animal Control Officer may require that the chickens be confined to an enclosure.
- e. A nuisance shall be deemed to exist where any of the following conditions are observed:
 1. Noise attributable to chickens that is audible beyond the property line for more than twenty (20) continuous minutes or intermittently for more than one (1) hour within a twenty-four (24) hour period.

2. Offensive odor attributable to chickens that is detectable at or beyond the property line for a period exceeding forty-eight (48) consecutive hours.

3. Attraction of rodents, flies, or other pests due to improper storage of feed, manure, or waste.

f. Upon receipt of a written complaint or observation by the Code Enforcement Officer or Animal Control Officer, the Town may inspect the premises to determine compliance.

g. If a violation is found, the owner shall be provided written notice and up to thirty (30) days to bring the situation into compliance.

h. Failure to achieve compliance may result in enforcement action pursuant to Section 17 of this Ordinance.

(16) VIOLATIONS:

Any person found in violation of any provision of this Ordinance shall be subject to penalties and fines as provided under applicable State law, including but not limited to 30-A M.R.S. § 4452, as amended.

In addition, any fees, penalties, or costs associated with violations of this Ordinance shall be established and may be amended from time to time by the Town of Chelsea Select Board through an adopted fee schedule.

Any fine, fee, or penalty collected shall inure to the benefit of the Town of Chelsea.

In addition to any civil penalties, a person found in violation of this Ordinance shall be responsible for all costs of enforcement, including reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the Town.

The Town may also seek injunctive relief or other appropriate legal or equitable remedies in a court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of this Ordinance.

(17) SEVERABILITY CLAUSE:

If any part of this ordinance shall be held invalid, such part shall be deemed severable, and the invalidity thereof shall not affect the remaining parts of this ordinance.

Phone: 582-4802

560 Togus Road
Chelsea, ME 04330



TOWN OF CHELSEA


*Office of Selectmen, Assessors, Town Manager, Town Clerk,
Tax Collector, and Treasurer*

Certification of Ordinance by Municipal Officers

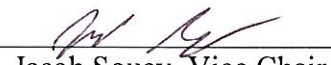
This certifies to the municipal clerk of Chelsea, Maine, that the within proposed amendments is a true copy of ordinance entitled "Animal Control Ordinance" and to be acted upon by the voters at a town meeting to be held on June 16, 2026.

Dated May 20, 2026

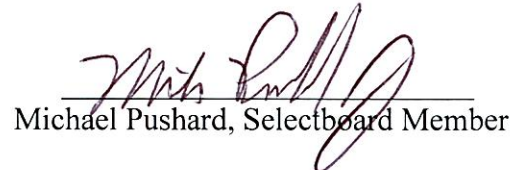
Municipal Officers of Chelsea, Maine.



Sheri Truman, Chair



Jacob Soucy, Vice Chair



Michael Pushard, Selectboard Member