



# Taylor County

## Board of County Commissioners'

### Policy Manual

Policy #:	Title:	Effective Date:
2011-01	Aggressive Dogs/Dangerous Dogs	01/03/11

#### PURPOSE

To establish general guidelines for declaration of an aggressive or dangerous dog.

#### REFERENCE

Section 14-173 Taylor County Code

#### POLICY SUPERSEDED

Policy No. 2009-022, Aggressive Dogs/Dangerous Dogs 03/17/09

It shall be the policy of the Board of County Commissioners, Taylor County, Florida, that:

Policy No. 2009-22, adopted 03/17/09, is hereby repealed and superseded and a new policy is hereby adopted in its place, to wit:

#### POLICY

Any citizen wishing to file a Dangerous/Aggressive Dog Petition may do so if specific criteria are met.

**\*\*Dangerous Dog** may mean any dog that has:

- 1) Aggressively bitten, attacked or endangered, or has inflicted severe injury on a human being on public or private property;
- 2) More than once, severely injured or killed a domestic animal or livestock while off the owners' property;
- 3) Been used primarily or in part for the purpose of animal fighting, or is an animal trained for animal fighting.

**\*\*Aggressive Dog** may mean any dog that has:

- 1) Severely injured or killed a domestic animal, fowl, or livestock while off the owner's property;

- 2) When unprovoked, bitten an animal or a human, has chased or approached a person upon the streets, sidewalks or any public grounds in a menacing fashion or apparent attitude of attack , provided that such actions are attested to in a sworn statement by one or more persons and dutifully investigated by the Animal Control officer.

If a dog has met any of the above criteria, anyone wishing to file a dangerous/aggressive dog petition against the animal shall have 24hrs to have the paperwork completed, notarized and turned into the Animal Control office. During this time frame, the dog in question shall be impounded and housed at the Animal Shelter. \*\*If after the 24hr time period, the appropriate paperwork has not been filed, the dog will be released (unless on quarantine) to the owner with no further stipulations. The owner will be required to have a current rabies vaccination administered, at the owner's expense, prior to release.

If after the 24hr time frame, the Dangerous/Aggressive dog petition is filed the animal must be kept in a suitable enclosure at the owner's residence until the investigation is complete. If no suitable enclosure is available the dog must be re-impounded and housed at the Taylor County Animal Shelter. Documentation and pictures of the enclosure must be maintained in the Dangerous Dog file.

\*Suitable enclosure shall mean a secure area that prevents the entry of young children and in which the animal cannot escape over, under or through. The enclosure shall be locked at all times and display "Bad dog" signs on all four sides. It shall also provide protection from the elements.

\*\*No dog that is the subject of a dangerous or aggressive dog investigation may be relocated or ownership transferred pending the outcome of an investigation or any hearings related to the determination of a dangerous or aggressive dog classification.

After the petition has been filed, the Animal Control Coordinator or designee shall investigate the complaint. This investigation shall be conducted in an expeditious manner, usually within 3-5 business days. During the investigation process, the dog will remain in the custody of Taylor County Animal Control, at the expense of the owner, unless other arrangements have been approved by the Animal Control Coordinator. Findings of the investigation shall be turned over to Environmental Services Director who shall make an initial determination as to the classification of the dog. In the event of the absence of the Director the Animal Control Coordinator shall make the initial determination.

The Animal Control department shall provide written notification of the finding, to the owner, by registered mail or hand delivery within 3 business days. The owner may file a written request for a hearing within 7 calendar days from the date of receipt of the notification of the initial determination and, if requested, the hearing shall be held as soon as possible, but not more than 21 calendar days and no sooner than 5 days after receipt of the request from the owner. If a hearing is requested, it will be heard by the County Administrator. An owner's failure to request a hearing within 7 calendar days from the date of receipt of the notification of the initial determination will result in the finding becoming the final determination, and the dog will be classified as dangerous or aggressive.

Once a dog is classified as a dangerous or aggressive dog, the Animal Control department shall provide written notification to the owner by registered mail or certified hand delivery, and the owner may file a written request for a hearing in the county court to appeal the classification within 10 calendar days after receipt of a written determination of dangerous or aggressive dog classification and must confine the dog in an enclosure suitable for a dangerous dog pending a resolution of the appeal.

Within 14 calendar days after a dog has been classified as dangerous or aggressive by the Animal Control Department, or a dangerous or aggressive dog classification is upheld by the County Court, all requirements must be met, fees paid, and the animal claimed by the owner. On the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day, if the dog remains unclaimed or the requirements have not been met, the dog will be humanely euthanized.

Pursuant to Taylor County Code 14-171 the following requirements must be met (or followed) in order to reclaim a dog is classified as **dangerous**:

- 1) Proper confinement
- 2) Obtain liability insurance or a surety bond
- 3) Obtain a permit and tag
- 4) Spay or Neuter animal
- 5) Tattoo animal
- 6) Notify Animal Control if the dog is at large, keep current information on file, or notify Animal Control if there is to be a new owner.

In addition:

The dog must be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian, according to the manufacturer's guidelines for the vaccine administered.

Two color photographs of the dog in two different poses showing the color and size of the dog must be provided to the Animal Control Department.

\*\*The department may provide notification to appropriate neighbors and the public advising them of the presence of a declared dangerous dog. Photographs of the dog may be used in providing the public with internet access to dangerous dog information.

The following requirements must be met (or followed) in order to reclaim a dog that is classified as **aggressive**:

- 1) The dog must be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian, according to the manufacturer's guidelines for the vaccine administered.
- 2) The dog must be spayed or neutered.
- 3) Two color photos of the dog in two different poses showing the color and size of the dog.
- 4) The dog must remain in a suitable enclosure approved by Animal Control Staff\_or inside of your residence. If the dog is not inside of the enclosure or inside of the residence, it must be restrained by a substantial leash and under the physical control of a competent person.
- 5) You shall display warning signs that state "Bad Dog" that are clearly visible from all points of entry to the property where the dog is housed.
- 6) You shall immediately contact animal control if you move to another address with the aggressive dog.
- 7) You shall immediately notify animal control when the dog:
  - a. Becomes loose or unconfined;
  - b. Attacks a human or another animal; or
  - c. Dies
- 8) You shall immediately notify animal control if you plan to sell or give away the aggressive dog. Prior to the dog being sold or given away, you shall provide the name, address, and telephone number of the new owner. The new owner shall comply with all of the requirements of this order.
- 9) You shall immediately notify animal control if you believe that the dog has been stolen.
- 10) Obtain a yearly permit.

If the dog is deemed dangerous/aggressive all impound fees and boarding fees apply. If the dog is found **NOT** to be dangerous/aggressive, only daily boarding fees shall apply. **IF** an ordinance violation was noted by the responding Animal Control officer upon arrival to the scene, impound fees and boarding fees shall apply regardless of the outcome of the dangerous/aggressive petition.

An Officer may impound any dog found in violation of any of the above mentioned requirements. In the event that the dog owner is found to have violated the requirements, a citation requiring a mandatory court appearance may be issued.

An officer shall impound the dog which subsequent to its classification as an dangerous or aggressive dog, bites, wounds, attacks or kills, or assists in biting, wounding, attacking or killing any person or animal. The dog shall be placed in quarantine, if necessary, for the proper length of time, or impounded and held for ten business days, then destroyed in an expeditious and humane manner. The ten-day time period shall allow the owner to request a hearing in the County Court for any remedies that may be available. The owner will be responsible for payment of all boarding costs and other fees as may be required to humanely and safely keep the dog during legal proceedings.

**RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT**

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Environmental Services Department – Animal Control

**SUNSET DATE**

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**Sunset Date:** 03/01/2020