



Be a Responsible Dog Owner

Protect Your Pet, Yourself and Others



Know New York City laws on dog ownership.



New York City laws require that dog owners:

- **Get a dog license.** The City Health Code requires that dogs have a license tag attached to their collars when out in public. Dog licenses are valid for one to five years and must be renewed before they expire. **Register online for faster service.** Visit: nyc.gov/doglicense
- **Follow the leash law.** Dogs in public must be on a leash no more than 6 feet long. For information on parks and dog runs in the city, visit nycgovparks.org/facilities/dogruns.
- **Keep your dog vaccinated against rabies.** All dogs and cats age 4 months and older must receive a first rabies vaccination and thereafter additional rabies vaccinations. Check with your veterinarian to stay current.
- **Don't tether your dog.** Tying or chaining a dog up for longer than three hours is illegal.
- **Don't litter.** Owners must clean up after their dogs in public areas.

Dogs make great pets, but they can be dangerous to people and other pets.

When choosing a dog, make sure its personality and physical demands fit your lifestyle. If you already have a dog, you are responsible not only for your dog's well-being, but also for the safety of others.

**Violations
of these laws
will result in fines
for each incident!**

Who is bitten most often?

About **3,500 dog bites** are reported each year in New York City.

- Young children, particularly boys age 5 to 12, are at greatest risk, but anyone can be bitten.
- Children and older people are more likely to be seriously injured by a dog bite.
- People often know the dogs that have bitten them.

Responsible dog owners can PREVENT dog bites by doing the following:

- Spay or neuter your dog to help reduce aggressive and territorial behavior. A dog that is spayed or neutered is less likely to bite. Also, the cost of the license is reduced if your dog is spayed or neutered.
- Train your dog to obey simple commands like “Sit,” “Stay” and “No” by enrolling in a basic obedience class. A class can teach your dog how to better interact with you and others.
- Socialize your dog with many different people and expose it to different situations so your dog behaves appropriately.
- Be aware of other pets and people that interact with your dog at all times and never leave it unattended. If your dog appears nervous, anxious or afraid, immediately remove it from that situation.

Keep children and others safe.

- Do not allow your dog to interact with children, adults or other dogs if you think it may become aggressive. If you think your dog may bite, warn others and tell them not to approach.
- Never let anyone approach your dog while it is eating, sleeping, chewing on a toy or if it starts fighting with another dog.
- Monitor children when they are around your dog. Make sure they do not tease, pinch, hit or pull on your dog, no matter how tolerant it may be.
- Never leave an infant or young child alone with your dog, even if it is well behaved.

Protect your pet.

- Do not allow your dog to continuously bark or act threatening.
- Do not play aggressive games with your dog, like tug-of-war.
- Do not leave your dog outdoors tied up for long periods of time. Dogs are social animals that need to be around people.
- Do not allow anyone to tease your dog. In your home, remove it from areas with windows if your dog is bothered by people outside.
- If you have a yard, make sure the fence is high enough to keep your dog inside. Check that there are no holes or gaps in the fence and that the gate is locked before you put your dog in the yard so it cannot escape.



What to do when a dog bites:

- Wash wounds with soap and lots of water, and cover with a clean bandage or cloth. Seek immediate medical attention.
- Get the dog owner's name, address and phone numbers, and the same information for the person who was bitten. This will allow the Health Department to follow up with the owner on the dog's health status to rule out rabies.
- By law, the owner must observe the dog for 10 days and report its health status to the Health Department.
- Owners of biting animals must not euthanize or give their dog away while it's being observed.
- Report all animal bites. To report a bite, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health and search "report animal bite."

For additional copies of this guide, call 311 and ask for a free copy of "Be a Responsible Dog Owner."



RESOURCES

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health and search "dogs."

American Veterinary Medical Association

Dog Bite Prevention

avma.org/public/Pages/Dog-Bite-Prevention.aspx

ASPCA - The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

aspc.org