

## Questions February 11, 2015

### Animal Control Ordinance, continued

**Q. What are the requirements regarding vaccinations for pets under the Animal Control Ordinance?**

A. Any dog, cat or ferret, which is more than three months of age, must have a valid and current rabies vaccination which must be administered by a licensed veterinarian. The burden is on the owner to provide verifiable proof of vaccination to animal control officers.

**Q. What is the penalty for not having your pet vaccinated?**

A. An animal owner who is found in violation of this section regarding vaccinations will be required to comply within seven days, or the animal control officer is authorized to impound the animal and have the animal vaccinated. Any animal impounded under this section will not be released to the owner unless and until all of the requirements of this ordinance are met.

**Q. I can't afford to have my pet vaccinated. What can I do?**

A. For discounted spay/neuter you can call Logan's Run Rescue at 828-837-4944 or North Georgia SPCA at 706-745-7722. In certain cases partial scholarships may be available at a vet's office based on income and need. The most important thing is to have your pet fixed!!! In the long run it will save you money and possible aggravation.

**Q. My neighbor keeps his dog on a chain in the yard all the time. Isn't this illegal?**

A. Tethering a dog is not illegal; however, it is the policy of animal control that tethering or chaining a dog as a permanent means of confinement is an unsafe, unwise, and dangerous practice. In the event an owner uses a tether or chain to confine a dog, it should be of sufficient construction as to not constitute abuse or a danger to the dog and should allow the dog sufficient freedom to safely perform its necessary activities and functions in the judgment of animal control. Improper, inhumane, and unsafe tethering and chaining is considered animal cruelty.

**Q. What can be done about barking dogs?**

A. In the latest revision of the animal control ordinance, language was added regarding excessive barking. If you feel that the barking is excessive enough to constitute a true nuisance, not just an occasional aggravation, you can call the animal control officer who will then make the determination whether the barking is indeed excessive. If occurring late in the evening, call police dispatch at the non-emergency number (706-439-6038) to have an officer investigate the complaint and contact the owners at that time. Many times that will correct the issue.

**Q. Is there a requirement that animals have shelter available to them?**

A. Yes, an animal owner is required to provide proper housing for a domesticated animal (depending on the breed), which at a minimum for dogs and most domesticated animals must consist of three sides, a roof, and a floor, constructed in such a way as to keep an animal protected from the elements and extreme temperatures, and be of such a size that the animal can enter, exit, stand, turn around, and sleep comfortably. An owner is required to provide adequate and sanitary food and water.

**Personal Comments:**

Owning a pet is a significant responsibility and cost and should be carefully considered prior to making your decision to be a pet owner. But then on the other hand, the unconditional love displayed by a pet is sometimes hard to resist and can really add to your and the pet's happiness. I have had a pet most of my life, but after the death of our last two dogs a few years ago, I decided to purchase a concrete bulldog to place in our dog house. It serves to remind me of the pleasure of pet ownership while alleviating the pain and the work and the cost. I may venture back some day.