A DOG’S LIFE
Chaining and Your Community

Sample Tethering Ordinances

These ordinances represent a cross-section of dog-tethering regulations from across the country. Every community has different needs and will require different standards and different wording. While no ordinance is universally perfect, these samples can be a good starting point for writing new ordinances.

Maumelle, AR: Tethering is prohibited; first such law in U.S.
Live Oak, TX: Tethering is prohibited; enclosure definition.
Tucson, AZ: Tethering is prohibited; not limited to dogs.
Laurinburg, NC: 1-hour limit on tethering; no specific standards for tethering
Orange County, FL: Prohibits tethering 9am-5pm & during extreme weather
Virginia Beach, VA: Sets 3-hour limit on tethering; standards
Baton Rouge, LA: No time limit; sets standards for tethering and yard upkeep
San Francisco, CA: No tethering time limit; tethering and shelter standards
Los Angeles, CA: No tethering unless dog must be restrained while owner performs task

Maumelle, Arkansas
Sec. 10-90. Confinement of animals.
(a) Any person owning animals, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, licensed or unlicensed, shall confine such animal within an adequate fence or enclosure, or within a house, garage or other building. Animals shall not be tied or chained to doghouses or other stationary objects but must be in an approved enclosure.

Live Oak, Texas
SECTION 10: Animal Restraint is Required.
(a) It shall be unlawful for any person owning, harboring or in possession of any animal to permit it to be free of restraint either inside or outside such person’s premises.
(b) Any animal permitted to be kept within the City shall not be chained, tied, fastened or otherwise tethered to any stationary object as a means of confinement and restraint to property. First time violators of this provision may be given one (1) to two (2) days grace without penalty to correct a violation of this provision. Exception from penalty shall not be given in any case where the violation of this provision causes or contributes to the bodily injury of a person or animal. An animal chained; not having food; not having water; not having shelter shall be considered separate offenses under this provision and each violation shall carry a separate penalty.
(c) All animals permitted to be kept within the City must be restrained at all times within the owner’s premise, by a secure fence, or on a leash or lead.
(d) Any dogs confined within a fenced yard must have an adequate space for exercise based on a dimension of at least one hundred (100) square feet. Provided further that where dogs are kept or housed on property without a fenced yard, the owner of such dogs or persons having custody of such dogs shall provide an enclosure for such dogs meeting the one hundred (100) square feet dimension. Such enclosure shall be constructed of chain link or similar type materials with all four sides enclosed. The enclosure shall be of sufficient height to prevent the dog from escaping from such enclosure. The top of such enclosure shall be covered with materials to provide the dog with shade and protection from the elements.

(e) An animal shall not be considered enclosed by a fence or restrained when and if the animal can pass through, under or over the fence, or the gate of the fence is not securely latched.

(f) A dog that can snap or bite a person through a fence shall not be considered enclosed by the fence or restrained.

(g) An electronic fence shall not be considered to be a fence, and an electronic leash shall not be considered to be a leash.

(h) A dog will be considered to be leashed only when the leash is six (6) feet or less in length or is a retractable leash, and is being grasped by an adult, provided that if the dog is less than twenty (20) pounds then the leash may be grasped by a person who is competent to handle the dog and is over twelve (12) years of age.

Tucson, Arizona

1. Sec. 4-3(2). Neglect. The purpose of this subsection is to guarantee that animals under human custody or control are housed in healthy environments and are provided with proper food, water, shelter, medical care, exercise space and ventilation. Any person owning or having care, control or custody of any animal shall provide:

   (a) That the animal receives daily, food that is free from contamination and is of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain the animal in good health.

   (b) That potable water is accessible to the animal at all times, either free-flowing or in a clean receptacle.

   (c) That, except for livestock, all animals have convenient access to natural or artificial shelter throughout the year. Any such artificial shelter shall be structurally sound and maintained in good repair to protect the animal from injury and from the elements, and of sufficient size to permit the animal to enter, stand, turn around and lie down in a natural manner. Any shelter which does not protect the animal from temperature extremes or precipitation, or which does not provide adequate ventilation or drainage, shall not comply with this section. Any shelter, all bedding and any spaces accessible to the animal shall be maintained in a manner which minimizes the risk of the animal contracting disease, being injured, or becoming infested with parasites.

   (d) That the animal receives care and medical treatment for debilitating injuries, parasites and diseases, sufficient to maintain the animal in good health and minimize suffering.

   (e) That the animal is given adequate exercise space as follows:

       (1) Within an enclosure that shall be constructed of material, and in a manner, to minimize the risk of injury to the animal, and shall encompass sufficient usable space to keep the animal in good condition;
(2) Tieouts are prohibited.
(3) Temporary tethering for horses is exempt from the provisions of Tucson Code, subsection 4-3(2)(e)(2).

(f) That the animal has access to adequate ventilation and is protected from temperature extremes at all times. In this connection, it is unlawful for any person to keep any animal in a vehicle or other enclosed space in which the temperature is either so high or so low, or the ventilation is so inadequate, as to endanger the animal’s life or health. Any peace officer or county animal control officer is authorized to use whatever force is reasonable and necessary to remove any animal from a vehicle or other enclosed space whenever it appears that the animal’s life or health is endangered by extreme temperatures or lack of ventilation within the vehicle or other enclosed space.

No peace officer or county animal control officer shall be liable for damages to property caused by the use of reasonable force to remove an animal from such a vehicle or other enclosed space under such circumstances.

Laurinburg, North Carolina
Sec. 4-19. Restraint of dogs.
(a) When a dog is on the property of its owner or keeper and is not within a secure enclosure, it shall be under the direct control of, and obedient to, the owner or keeper. At all other times when a dog is on the property of its owner or keeper, it shall be kept within a secure enclosure, including a fenced in area or electronic fence, house or other building, of sufficient strength and height to prevent the dog from escaping from such enclosure, provided, the owner or keeper may, for a period not to exceed one hour every 24 hours, allow the dog to be tethered or chained to a stationary object or pole as long as the dog is provided with sufficient water and nourishment. All dogs off of the property of its owner or keeper shall be controlled by means of a leash and under the direct control of, and obedient to, the owner’s or keeper’s command.
(b) Noncompliance with any of the provisions of subsection (a) of this section may result in the impoundment of the animal at any time, or may result in a fine of $100.00, or both.

Orange County, Florida
Sec. 5-29. Definitions
Restraining device shall mean a chain, cord, or cable, with a minimum length of ten (10) feet, used to confine an animal on an owner’s property. This device must provide for humane, unrestrained range of movement for the animal to insure that the animal is not exposed to hazard or injury and shall not prevent the animal from having food, water, shelter, adequate ventilation, protection from the elements or other care generally considered to be normal and usual. This device shall be proportional in size, weigh no more than one-eighth (1/8) of the dog or puppy’s body weight, and designed for use with the specific breed of animal with an appropriate collar. These devices shall not be used to confine a dog on an owner’s property between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., three hundred sixty-five (365) days a year and during times of extreme weather, e.g., hurricanes, below freezing conditions.
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Sec. 5-19. Adequate space for animals; time restriction on tethering dogs.
(a) It shall be unlawful to fail to provide any animal with adequate space. "adequate space" means sufficient space to allow each animal to (i) easily stand, sit, lie, turn about, and make all other normal body movements in a comfortable, normal position for the animal and (ii) interact safely with other animals in the enclosure.
(b) When a dog is tethered, "adequate space" means a tether that permits the above actions and is appropriate to the age and size of the dog. The tether must be attached to the dog by a properly applied collar, halter, or harness configured so as to protect the dog from injury and prevent the dog or the tether from becoming entangled with other objects or dogs, or from extending over an object or edge that could result in the strangulation or injury of the dog. Furthermore, the tether must be at least three (3) times the length of the dog, as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, except when the dog is being walked on a leash or is attached by a tether to a lead line. When freedom of movement would endanger the dog, temporarily and appropriately restricting movement of the dog according to professionally accepted standards is considered to be provision of adequate space.
(c) It shall be unlawful for any dog to be tethered for more than three (3) hours, cumulatively in any twenty-four-hour period.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Sec. 14:203. Minimum requirements for dog and cat pens and yards
b) Minimum Requirements for Dog and Cat Yards:
(1) It shall be unlawful for any person keeping or harboring animals to fail to keep the premises or dog or cat yard where such animals are kept, free from offensive odors to the extent that such odors are disturbing to any person residing within reasonable proximity of said premises.
(2) It shall be unlawful to allow the premises or dog or cat yards where animals are kept to become unclean and a threat to the public health or comfort by failing to diligently and systematically remove all animal waste and fecal material from the premises.
(3) It shall be unlawful to allow dogs or cats or premises where dogs or cats are kept to become infested with ticks, fleas, flies or other animal-related parasites, by failing to diligently and systematically apply accepted methods of insect/parasite control as indicated.

(6) Tethers used to restrict the animal to the confines of its owner's property shall be minimum length of five (5) times the length of the animal, as measured from the nostrils to the base of the tail. Tethers shall restrict the animal to its owner's property. The area shall be kept free of obstructions to prevent entanglement. No tethered animal shall be allowed to endanger the health, safety or welfare of others.
(7) The animal control center shall be empowered to order all animals removed from the affected premises and dog and cat yards until the owner comes into compliance with this section. The animal control center shall be entitled to charge a reasonable boarding fee for animals so held.

San Francisco, California
SEC. 41.12. DUTIES OF OWNERS OR GUARDIANS.
(c) The owner or guardian of any animal shall provide proper and adequate food, water, shelter, care, exercise and attention for such animals.
1. SHELTER REQUIREMENTS
No person, except those persons who, due to financial hardship, are unable to provide shelter for themselves, shall keep, use, or maintain a dog on any premises unless the dog is provided full access to an enclosed building, dog house, or similar shelter at all times. The dog must have equal space outside its shelter to move around and relieve itself away from its confinement. Said shelter shall:

A. Have five sides, including a top, a bottom and three sides.
B. Have a floor raised off the ground, free of cracks, depressions and rough areas where insects, rodents or eggs from internal parasites may lodge. An effective program for the control of insects, ectoparasites, and other pests shall be established and maintained.
C. Be cleaned and maintained in a manner designed to insure the best possible sanitary conditions. Excreta shall be removed from the shelter as often as necessary. Rugs, blankets or other bedding material shall be kept clean and dry.
D. Be of adequate size to allow the dog to stand up and turn about freely, stand easily, sit and lie in a comfortable normal position.
E. Have a floor constructed so as to protect the dog’s feet and legs from injury.
F. Allow dogs kept outdoors to remain dry during rain.
G. Have sufficient clean bedding material or other means of protection from the weather elements provided when the ambient temperature falls below that temperature to which the dog is acclimated.
H. Provide sufficient shade to allow the dogs kept outdoors to protect themselves from the direct rays of the sun, when sunlight is likely to cause overheating or discomfort.
I. Be structurally sound and maintained in good repair to protect the dog from injury.
J. Be constructed and maintained so that the dog contained therein has convenient access to clean food and water.

2. WATER REQUIREMENTS
No person shall keep, use or maintain any dog on any premises unless the dog has access to clean and fresh water at all times. Clean potable water shall be available to the dog unless restricted for veterinary care, and;
A. If the water is kept in a container, this container shall be designed sufficiently to prevent tipping and spilling of the water contained therein. If necessary to accomplish this, the container shall be secured to a solid structure or secured in the ground.
Watering containers shall be kept clean, kept out of sun, and must be emptied and refilled with fresh water at least once a day; or
B. If the water is provided by an automatic or demand device, the water supply connected to the device must function 24 hours a day.

3. FEEDING REQUIREMENTS
No person shall keep, use or maintain any dog on any premises unless the dog is provided sufficient food daily to maintain proper body weight and good health.
A. The dog shall be provided food, which shall be free from contamination, wholesome, palatable, and sufficient quantity and nutritive value to meet the normal daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.
B. Food receptacles shall be accessible to the dog and shall be located so as to minimize contamination by excreta and/or insects. Feeding pans shall be durable and kept clean. Disposable food receptacles may be used but must be discarded after each feeding. Self-feeders may be used for the feeding of dry food, and they shall be sanitized regularly to prevent molding, deterioration or caking of feed. Spoiled or contaminated food shall be disposed of in a sanitary manner.

4. CONFINEMENT REQUIREMENTS
Though highly discouraged, tethering is only acceptable if:
A. The tether is attached to a stake in the ground with a pulley like system.
B. The tether is attached to the dog by a non-choke type collar or body harness at least 10 feet in length which would allow the dog access to food, water and shelter, but free of obstructions.

Los Angeles, California

D. Tethering. It shall be unlawful for any person to tether, fasten, chain, tie, restrain or cause a dog to be fastened, chained, tied or restrained to houses, trees, fences, garages or other stationary or highly immobile objects by means of a rope, chain, strap or other physical restraint for the purpose of confinement, except in circumstances where all of the following requirements are met:

(1) The tethering shall not be for more time than is necessary for the dog owner or custodian to complete a temporary task that requires the dog to be physically restrained for a reasonable period.

(2) The dog must be tethered by a non-choke type collar or a body harness to a tether that is at least three (3) times the body length of the dog, measured from the dog’s nose to the back of the hindquarters and which tether is free from entanglement.

(3) The dog must have access to food, water and shelter as described above.

(4) The dog shall be monitored periodically.