
Sec. 6.030. Impoundment and redemption.

(a) *Impoundment.*

- (1) It is the duty of an animal control officer to capture and impound such animals as are running at large or which are required to be impounded pursuant to other laws or ordinances or to protect public health or safety. Any officer or citizen of the city is authorized to take up and deliver in a humane manner to the animal services facility any animal that may be found running at large in the city, with the exception of visually healthy cats which pose no apparent danger to public health or safety. A cat without an ear tip or means of identification may be considered a community cat and impounded for the purposes of trap, neuter, and return (TNR).
- (2) The animal control officer shall impound and quarantine all dogs, cats and other animals exposed to, suspected to be exposed to, or infected with rabies, whether the dog, cat or other animal to be impounded is at large, on a leash, or confined to its owner's premises or whether it is currently vaccinated. Any animal which a licensed veterinarian suspects of having rabies shall be humanely euthanized. Any animal exposed to a rabid animal shall be humanely euthanized or quarantined at the owner's expense for a period mandated by the Texas Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control Division, not less than ten days from the date of last known exposure.
- (3) The animal control officer shall impound an animal at the request of a peace officer when the owner of the animal has been arrested, hospitalized, is missing, or has died, and there is no person present, 18 years of age or older, who will assume the legal responsibility of providing food, water and shelter for such animal.

(b) *Identification of impounded animals.*

- (1) The city enforcement agent, or his deputies, upon receiving an animal for impoundment, shall make a complete registry, including the species, breed, color and sex of such animal, whether it has traceable identification, and the time and place of taking custody. All animals impounded shall be scanned with a microchip reader. If an animal has traceable identification, all known information shall be entered, including the name and address of the veterinary clinic, year, the number of the registration tag, and any other pertinent information.
- (2) If, by identification tag or microchip, the owner of an impounded animal can be identified, the city animal control officer or staff member shall, as soon as possible, notify the owner by telephone, electronic message, or mail; however, it is the responsibility of the owner to visit the shelter before the expiration of the designated holding period to reclaim a lost pet.

(c) *Retention of impounded animals.*

- (1) Impounded animals three months of age or older with no means of traceable identification shall be kept for not less than three days that the shelter is open for reclaim, unless earlier reclaimed by the owner under acceptable conditions or earlier euthanized as allowed by this chapter. It is the responsibility of the owner to visit the shelter before the expiration of the designated holding period to reclaim a lost pet.
- (2) Impounded animals three months of age or older with any type of traceable identification shall be kept for not less than five days that the shelter is open for reclaim, or not less than three days from the time confirmed contact is made with the owner informing them their animal is impounded at the shelter, whichever is the shorter time period, unless earlier reclaimed by the owner under acceptable conditions or earlier euthanized as allowed by this chapter. If an animal has a tag that does not list the owner's phone number or address, and the person or business that is in possession of the owner's contact information will not release it to the animal control officer, then for the purposes of this

section it shall be the responsibility of that person or business to notify the owner of the animal being impounded, and the animal shall be held for three days after the animal control officer contacts the person or business in possession of the owner's contact information. It is the responsibility of the owner to visit the shelter before the expiration of the designated holding period to reclaim lost pets.

- (3) An animal impounded at the request of a peace officer as required by this chapter shall be kept for not less than five business days unless earlier reclaimed by the owner, or someone authorized by the owner, under acceptable conditions, or earlier euthanized as allowed by the chapter. It is the responsibility of the owner, or person authorized, to visit the shelter before the expiration of the designated holding period to reclaim impounded pets.
- (4) The following animals are not subject to a stray hold period, become the property of the city immediately upon impoundment, and may be dispositioned according to section 6.031:
 - a. Animals less than three months of age with or without traceable identification.
 - b. Animals voluntarily surrendered by their owner to the shelter or an animal control officer.
 - c. Community cats without an ear tip or means of identification, for purposes of trap, neuter, and return (TNR).
- (5) Transfer of ownership to the city occurs immediately upon completion of any required hold period, and the animal becomes the property of the city.

(d) *Redemption or reclaim of impounded animals.*

- (1) Any owner of an animal that has been impounded under this chapter must reclaim the animal by personally visiting the animal services facility where it is impounded. Facility staff shall return the animal if the owner can provide sufficient proof of being the animal's owner and if such release will not impair the safety of the public or the animal. The owner of the animal must pay any and all fees assessed in accordance with the city's fee schedule, and must agree to abide by all of the requirements of this chapter. It is the responsibility of the owner to visit the shelter before the expiration of the designated holding period to reclaim a lost pet.
- (2) Any person whose pet has been impounded for abuse or neglect or has been impounded more than two times for running at large will be required to attend the animal service's responsible owner program, if available, before the animal is returned. Completion of the responsible owner program may be used as a requirement to have a citation for violation of this chapter dismissed by deferred adjudication.
- (3) If an animal that requires a permit is impounded by an animal control officer for violating this chapter and the owner cannot prove that he is in possession of all required permit(s), the owner must meet all requirements of the required permit(s) and must purchase said permit(s) before the animal may be released from the animal services facility.
- (4) If an animal that requires a rabies vaccination is impounded by the animal control officer for violating this chapter and the owner cannot prove that the animal has a current rabies vaccination, a citation for failing to vaccinate will be issued. A person commits an offense if he or she does not provide proof of their animal obtaining a current rabies vaccination and shall be cited again for violation of this chapter. Each subsequent day that passes after the five-day period shall be considered a separate offense. For the purposes of this section, a rabies tag alone is not sufficient proof of an animal's current rabies vaccination.
- (5) If an animal is impounded by an animal control officer for violating this chapter and the animal does not already have a registered microchip implanted, then the city will implant and register a microchip, and add it to the owner's fees, before releasing the animal from the animal services facility. The

identification number provided by the microchip, shall be maintained on file at the animal services center or with a nationally recognized registry, for future identification purposes.

- (6) If an animal is impounded for running at large, for a second time, and the animal has not already been sterilized, the owner must complete and sign a sterilization agreement to have the animal sterilized within 30 days as a further requirement for return. A person who signs a sterilization agreement commits an offense if he or she fails to have the animal sterilized on or before the date required in the agreement.
 - a. The owner of an animal required by subsection (a) to be sterilized shall submit verification documentation to animal services within 10 days following the animal's sterilization procedure.
 - b. If an owner no longer has the animal on the date required in the sterilization agreement, the owner must provide a written statement or documentation that the animal was lost, stolen, transferred to a new owner, or died.
- (7) An owner whose animal is impounded for violating this chapter shall remain liable for all fees whether the owner reclaims the animal or surrenders the animal to the shelter.
- (8) A person who has been notified that their animal is impounded at the shelter commits an offense if he or she fails to either reclaim their animal or surrender their animal to the city within five business days of said notification.
- (9) There is no fee or fine for reclaiming or returning community cats.

(Ord. No. 2008-62, § 4, 12-18-08; Ord. No. 2010-10, § 1, 3-2-10; Ord. No. 2022-96 , § 1(Exh. A), 3-21-23)