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SECTION 174E

GENERAL LAWS

Chapter

Section

GO

Section 174E: Chaining or tethering dog to stationary object; confinement; restrictions; penalty

[Subsection (a) effective until November 17, 2016. For text effective November 17, 2016, see below.]

Section 174E. (a) No person owning or keeping a dog shall chain or tether a dog to a stationary object including, but not limited to, a structure, dog house, pole or tree for longer than 24 consecutive hours. A tethering employed shall not allow the dog to leave the owner's, guardian's or keeper's property. The tether shall be designed for dogs and no logging chains or other lines or devices not designed for tethering dogs shall be used. No chain or tether shall weigh more than 1/8 of the dog's body weight. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a person from walking a dog on a hand-held leash. No dog under the age of 6 months shall be tethered outside for any length of time.

[Subsection (a) as amended by 2016, 248, Sec. 1 effective November 17, 2016. For text effective until November 17, 2016, see above.]

(a) No person owning or keeping a dog shall chain or tether a dog for longer than 5 hours in a 24-hour period and outside from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., unless the tethering is for not more than 15 minutes and the dog is not left unattended by the owner, guardian or keeper. A tethering employed shall not allow the dog to leave the owner's, guardian's or keeper's property. The tether shall be designed for dogs and no logging chains or other lines or devices not designed for tethering dogs shall be used. No chain or tether shall weigh more than 1/8 of the dog's body weight. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a person from walking a dog on a hand-held leash. No dog under the age of 6 months shall be tethered outside for any length of time.

(b) A person owning or keeping a dog may confine such dog outside, subject to the restrictions in this section, through the use of any of the following methods:

(1) inside a pen or secure enclosure, if the following conditions are met:

(i) the pen or secure enclosure shall have adequate space for exercise with a dimension of at least 100 square feet; provided, however, that commercial dog kennels with pens intended for the temporary boarding of dogs shall be exempt from this requirement;

(ii) the pen or secure enclosure is constructed with chain link or other similar material as determined by the Building Inspector, with all 4 sides enclosed; and

(iii) the minimum height of the fence shall be adequate to successfully confine the dog;

(2) a fully fenced, electronically fenced or otherwise securely enclosed yard, wherein a dog has the ability to run but is unable to leave the enclosed yard; or

(3) a trolley system or a tether attached to a pulley in a cable run, if the following conditions are met:

(i) only 1 dog shall be tethered to each cable run;

(ii) the tether shall be attached to a properly fitting collar or harness worn by the dog, with enough room between the collar and the dog's throat through which 2 adult fingers may fit; provided, however, that a choke collar and a pinch collar shall not be used to tether a dog to a cable run;

(iii) there shall be a swivel on at least 1 end of the tether to minimize tangling of the tether;

(iv) the tether and cable run must each be at least 10 feet in length. The cable must be mounted at least 4 feet but not more than 7 feet above ground level; and

(v) the length of the tether from the cable run to the dog's collar or harness shall allow continuous access to clean water and appropriate shelter at all times as described in subsection (c); provided, however, that a trolley system or tether shall be of appropriate configuration to confine the dog to the owner's, guardian's or keeper's property, to prevent the trolley system or tether from extending over an object to an edge that could result in injury to or strangulation of the dog and to prevent the trolley system or tether from becoming tangled with other object or animals.

(c) A person owning or keeping a dog confined outside in accordance with subsection (b) shall provide the dog with access to clean water and appropriate dog shelter. The dog shelter shall allow the dog to remain dry and protected from the elements and shall be fully enclosed on at least 3 sides, roofed and have a solid floor. The entrance to the shelter shall be flexible to allow the dog's entry and exit, and sturdy enough to block entry of weather elements. The shelter shall contain clean bedding and shall be small enough to retain the dog's body heat and large enough to allow the dog to stand, lie down and turn comfortably. The enclosure shall be structurally sound and in good repair. Suitable drainage shall be provided so that water, ice or waste is not standing in or around the shelter.

[Subsection (d) effective until November 17, 2016. For text effective November 17, 2016, see below.]

(d) No person owning or keeping a dog shall leave a dog chained or tethered outside for longer than 24 consecutive hours.

[Subsection (d) as amended by 2016, 248, Sec. 2 effective November 17, 2016. For text effective until November 17, 2016, see above.]

(d) A person shall not leave a dog outside when a weather advisory, warning or watch is issued by a local, state or federal authority or when outside environmental conditions including, but not limited to, extreme heat, cold, wind, rain, snow or hail pose an adverse risk to the health or safety of the dog based on the dog's breed, age or physical condition, unless the tethering is for not more than 15 minutes.

[Subsection (e) effective until November 17, 2016. For text effective November 17, 2016, see below.]

(e) Exceptions to the above restrictions on outdoor confinement shall be made for dogs actively engaged in conduct directly related to the business of shepherding or herding cattle or other livestock or engaged in conduct that is directly related to the business of cultivating agricultural products, if the restraint is reasonably necessary for the safety of the dog.

[Subsection (e) as amended by 2016, 248, Sec. 3 effective November 17, 2016. For text effective until November 17, 2016, see above.]

(e) An exception to a restriction on outdoor confinement under this section that is reasonably necessary for the safety of a dog shall be made for a dog that is: (i) present in a camping or recreational area pursuant to the policy of the camping or recreational area; or (ii) actively engaged in conduct that is directly related to the business of shepherding or herding cattle or other livestock or engaged in conduct that is directly related to the business of cultivating agricultural products.

(f) No person owning or keeping a dog shall subject the dog to cruel conditions or inhumane chaining or the tethering at any time. For the purposes of this subsection, "cruel conditions and inhumane chaining or tethering" shall include, but not be limited to, the following conditions:

(1) filthy and dirty confinement conditions including, but not limited to, exposure to excessive animal waste, garbage, dirty water, noxious odors, dangerous objects that could injure or kill a dog upon contact or other circumstances that could cause harm to a dog's physical or emotional health;

(2) taunting, prodding, hitting, harassing, threatening or otherwise harming a tethered or confined dog; and

(3) subjecting a dog to dangerous conditions, including attacks by other animals.

[Subsection (g) effective until November 17, 2016. For text effective November 17, 2016, see below.]

(g) A person who violates this section shall, for a first offense, be issued a written warning or punished by a fine of not more than \$50, for a second offense, be punished by a fine of not more than \$100 and for a third or subsequent offense, be punished by a fine of not more than \$300, and be subject to impoundment of the dog in a local shelter at the owner's or guardian's expense pending compliance with this section, or loss of ownership of the dog.

[Subsection (g) as amended by 2016, 248, Secs. 4 to 6 effective November 17, 2016. For text effective until November 17, 2016, see above.]

(g) A person who violates this section shall, for a first offense, be issued a written warning or punished by a fine of not more than \$50, for a second offense, be punished by a fine of not more than \$200 and for a third or subsequent offense, be punished by a fine of not more than \$500, and be subject to impoundment of the dog in a local shelter at the owner's, keeper's or guardian's expense pending compliance with this section, or loss of ownership of the dog.

[Subsection (h) added by 2016, 248, Sec. 7 effective November 17, 2016.]

(h) A special police officer appointed by the colonel of the state police at the request of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Rescue League of Boston under section 57 of chapter 22C may enforce this section following the same procedures relating to notice and court procedure in section 21D of chapter 40 for the non-criminal disposition of a violation, if an animal control officer contacted by either of these agencies in response to a violation of this section is unresponsive or unavailable.

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