

[Give us your feedback!](#)[General Laws](#) » [Part IV](#) » [Title I](#) » [Chapter 272](#) »

SECTION 801/2

GENERAL LAWS

Chapter

Section

GO

Print Page

Prev

Next

Section 801/2: Devocalization of dogs or cats; definitions; penalty; exceptions; records

Section 801/2. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following meanings:?

"Board", the board of registration in veterinary medicine.

"Devocalization", a procedure on the larynx or vocal cords of an animal which causes the reduction or elimination of vocal sounds produced by that animal.

(b) Whoever performs, or causes to be performed, the surgical devocalization of a dog or cat shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 5 years or imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 2 1/2 years, or by a fine of not more than \$2,500 or by both such fine and imprisonment. In addition to this penalty, the court may order that any person who violates this section shall successfully complete a course of instruction relative to the humane treatment of animals or be barred from owning or keeping a dog or cat or sharing a residence with another who owns or keeps a dog or cat for a period of time as determined by said court.

(c) Subsection (b) shall not apply if:

(1) the person performing such devocalization is licensed under section 55 of chapter 112; and

(2) surgical devocalization of a dog or cat is medically necessary to treat or relieve an illness, disease or injury or to correct a congenital abnormality that is causing or may cause the animal physical pain or harm; or

(3) the person who causes a devocalization procedure to be performed is relying upon the opinion of a person licensed under section 55 of chapter 112 that surgical devocalization of the dog or cat is medically necessary to treat or relieve an illness, disease or injury or to correct a congenital abnormality that is causing or may cause the animal physical pain or harm.

(d) A veterinarian who performs a surgical devocalization procedure on a dog or cat shall keep a record of the procedure for a period of 4 years after the last contact with the animal. This record shall include: the name and address of the animal's owner; the name and address of the person from whom payment is received for the procedure; a description of the animal, including its name, species, breed, date of birth, sex, color, markings and current weight; the license number and municipality that issued the license for the animal; the date and time of the procedure; the reason the procedure was performed; and any diagnostic opinion, analysis or test results to support the diagnosis. These records shall be subject to audit by the board.

Any person who performs a devocalization procedure on a dog or cat shall report the number of all such procedures to the board annually on or before March 30. The board shall maintain all notices received under this subsection for 4 years

from the date of receipt.

Records maintained under this subsection shall not be considered a public record, as defined in clause twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4 or section 10 of chapter 66, and these records shall not be publicly disseminated.

(e) The board shall, annually on or before March 1, report to the joint committee on the environment, natural resources and agriculture the number of animals that were the subject of devocalization notices received under subsection (d).

(f) Whoever being licensed under section 55 of chapter 112 violates any provision of this section shall be subject to the suspension or revocation of such license under section 59 of said chapter 112 and 256 CMR 7.00.

Helpful Massachusetts Links

[Mass.gov](#)

[Commonwealth Employment Opportunities](#)

[Secretary of the Commonwealth](#)

[Mass DOT](#)

[Boards & Commissions](#)

[Non-Profits & Charities](#)

[Libraries](#)

Quick Links

[Accessibility](#)

[MyLegislature](#)

[Massachusetts General Laws](#)

[Find My Legislator](#)

[Visit the State House](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Contact the Webmaster](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms And Conditions](#)

Copyright © 2016 The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts