

[Statute/Constitution Search](#)

[Analytical Index](#)

[Alphabetical Index](#)

[Constitution Index](#)

Search

(Press Tab to search)

**Revisor's Note:** [In accordance with Section 3.090, the language of statutory sections enacted during the 2016 legislative session are available through a link to the relevant 2016 enacted bill, which will appear in the Chapter Table of Contents of the online Revised Statutes \(designated in red\) on the effective date of such enacted statutory section.](#)  
[The language contained in a 2016 enacted bill may differ from the final language of any codified statutory section based on other enactments in 2016.](#)  
[The statutory sections contained in the online Revised Statutes represent the codified statutory sections only.](#)

[Top](#)

# Missouri Revised Statutes

Chapter 273  
Dogs--Cats



[←Chapter: 272](#)

August 28, 2016

[Chapter: 274→](#)

## Dog defined.

[273.010](#). The word "dog", as used in sections [273.010](#) to [273.030](#), shall be held and construed to mean all animals of the canine species, both male and female.

(RSMo 1939 § 14537)

Prior revisions: 1929 § 12863; 1919 § 4353; 1909 § 857

## Recovery of damages for sheep killed--disposition of dog, penalty.

[273.020](#). In every case where sheep or other domestic animals are killed or maimed by dogs, the owner of such animals may recover against the owner or keeper of such dog or dogs the full amount of damages and the owner shall forthwith kill such dog or dogs; and for every day he shall refuse or neglect to do so, after notice, he shall pay and forfeit the sum of one dollar, and it shall be lawful for any person to kill such dog or dogs; provided, however, that whenever in any case the facts shall show that in the worrying or killing, maiming or wounding of any said sheep or other domestic animals that the same was done by two or more dogs belonging to different owners, then the plaintiff, the person whose animals were killed, wounded or maimed, may at his or her election, join all of the owners of said dogs as joint tort-feasors or may sue each one separately at his or her election.

(RSMo 1939 § 14535)

Prior revisions: 1929 § 12861; 1919 § 4351; 1909 § 855

**Dogs may be killed, when.**

[273.030](#). If any person shall discover any dog or dogs in the act of killing, wounding or chasing sheep in any portion of this state, or shall discover any dog or dogs under such circumstances as to satisfactorily show that such dog or dogs has or have been recently engaged in killing or chasing sheep or other domestic animal or animals, such person is authorized to immediately pursue and kill such dog or dogs; provided, however, that such dog or dogs shall not be killed in any enclosure belonging to or being in lawful possession of the owner of such dog or dogs.

(RSMo 1939 § 14536)

Prior revisions: 1929 § 12862; 1919 § 4352; 1909 § 856

**Killing or injuring a dog, reasonable apprehension of imminent harm is an absolute defense.**

[273.033](#). 1. In any action for damages or a criminal prosecution against any person for killing or injuring a dog, a showing by a preponderance of the evidence that such person was in reasonable apprehension of imminent harmful contact by the dog or was acting to prevent such imminent harmful contact against another person by the dog shall constitute an absolute defense to criminal prosecution or civil liability for the killing or injuring of such animal.

2. If a person has, on at least two occasions, complained to the county sheriff or to the appropriate animal control authority in his or her jurisdiction that a dog, not on a leash, has trespassed on property that such person owns, rents, or leases or on any property that constitutes such person's residence, and when at least one of the prior two complaints was motivated by reasonable apprehension for such person's safety or the safety of another person or apprehension of substantial damage to livestock or property, then any subsequent trespass by such dog shall constitute prima facie evidence that such person was in reasonable apprehension of imminent harmful contact. The county sheriff or animal control authority to which any complaint under this section is made shall notify the owner of the alleged trespassing dog of such complaint. Failure by a county sheriff or animal control authority to notify a dog owner under this subsection shall not invalidate or be construed in any way to limit any other provision of this subsection.

3. The court shall award attorney's fees, court costs, and all reasonable expenses incurred by the defendant in defense of any criminal prosecution or in any civil action brought by a plaintiff if the court finds that the defendant has an absolute defense as provided in subsection 1 of this section.

4. This section shall not be construed to provide an absolute defense to a person who is engaged in or attempting to engage in a criminal activity at the time of the apprehension of imminent harmful contact, or to a person for any damage or injury to any person or property other than the dog itself that may result from actions taken in an attempt to injure or kill such dog.

(L. 2009 H.B. 62)

**Owner liable, when--fine, amount.**

[273.036](#). 1. The owner or possessor of any dog that bites, without provocation, any person while such person is on public property, or lawfully on private property, including the property of the owner or possessor of the dog, is strictly liable for damages suffered by persons bitten, regardless of the former viciousness of the dog or the owner's or possessor's knowledge of such viciousness. Owners and possessors of dogs shall also be strictly liable for any damage to property or livestock proximately caused by their dogs. If it is determined that the damaged party had fault in the incident, any damages owed by the owner or possessor of the biting dog shall be reduced by the same percentage that the damaged party's fault contributed to the incident. The provisions of this section shall not apply to dogs killing or maiming sheep or other domestic animals under section [273.020](#).

2. Any person who is held liable under the provisions of subsection 1 of this section shall pay a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars. The remedies provided by this section are in addition to and cumulative with any other remedy provided by statute or common law.

(L. 2009 H.B. 62)

**Dog defined.**

[273.040](#). The word "dog", whenever used in sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#) without qualifications, is intended to mean a female as well as a male dog over six months of age.

(RSMo 1939 § 14555)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12878

#### **Dog tax, when due.**

[273.050](#). No dog shall be permitted to be and remain within the limits of the state unless the owner thereof, or someone for said owner, shall have caused such dog to be listed and the tax imposed by sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#) to be paid on or before the first day of February of each year hereafter.

(RSMo 1939 § 14546)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12872

CROSS REFERENCE:

Dogs, county commission in certain counties may require licensing, [322.090](#) to 322.145

#### **Amount of tax.**

[273.060](#). The tax on each male dog and each spayed female dog, of which the certificate of a veterinarian or the affidavit of the owner is produced, in this state shall be one dollar per year, and the tax on all other dogs in this state shall be three dollars per year, payable to the county clerk of the county in which the owner resides; provided, that any person or persons operating a licensed kennel of more than ten dogs in which all dogs kept by him or them are confined and not allowed to roam, shall pay a tax of ten dollars, which amount shall be the full amount of tax on all dogs kept by said person or persons as described above.

(RSMo 1939 § 14547)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12873

#### **Issuance of license--plate--certificate--license fees--county doglicense fund--purposes.**

[273.070](#). 1. County clerks shall issue licenses to applicants and shall deliver to the applicants a metallic plate having the number corresponding to that of the license stamped thereon and shall deliver to such party a certificate from the book furnished to him by the secretary of state, which said certificates, as well as the margin or part thereof remaining in the book after cutting out the certificate, shall contain the number of the license, the year for which the same is granted, the name and residence of the owner of the dog, and the sex, color and description of the dog for which the license is paid and the amount of the tax paid therefor.

2. Such clerk shall retain out of the money received for such license issued the sum of ten cents, which shall cover all his services under sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#), and he shall pay the balance and all other sums received by him under the provisions of sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#), less the cost of license tags, record books, blank applications and affidavits and the cost of transmitting the balance to the treasurer of the county.

3. The treasurer of the county shall set any and all sums so received apart in a separate fund to be known as a "County Dog License Fund", and such fund shall be used only for the purpose of compensating persons who have suffered loss or damage through injury or killing by dogs of any livestock or poultry owned by them and located in said county at the time of such injury or killing, in an amount not to exceed the market value thereof at the time of such injury or killing. The county commission of each county in this state is authorized to expend and draw county warrants against such fund only as herein provided; provided, that sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#) shall not be construed to prevent suits at law for damages caused to livestock or poultry by dogs.

(RSMo 1939 § 14548)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12874

#### **License fastened to dog's collar.**

[273.080](#). It shall be the duty of the owner of every listed dog to put around the neck of such dog a collar to which shall be attached with a metallic fastening the metallic plate aforesaid.

(RSMo 1939 § 14552)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12875

#### **License tags and certificates, how furnished.**

[273.090](#). The secretary of state shall annually procure such number of metallic plates as may be required, of convenient size and shape, or design to be changed each year, and having cast thereon in raised letters, "S.L.T." and the figures indicating the year for which the tax has been paid; and he shall also cause to be prepared printed blanks bound in book form, and arranged in such manner that one certificate can be cut off and a stub or duplicate thereof left in the book; and the secretary of state, on or before the first day of July in each year, or as soon thereafter as may be possible, shall deliver to the clerk of each county in the state the metallic plates and also an equal number of blank certificates with stubs or duplicates, signed by the secretary of state, and each such clerk shall remit to the division of taxation and collection of the department of revenue out of the funds collected the cost of such license tags, record books, and the expense of transmitting the same as shall be certified to such clerk by the secretary of state.

(RSMo 1939 § 14553, A. 1949 S.B. 1097)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12876

#### **Impounding of dogs--redemption--fees--penalty.**

[273.100](#). 1. Every city or town marshal of every incorporated city or town in this state, within their jurisdiction, shall take up and impound in a suitable place, the location of which place shall be given by a notice posted in some conspicuous place in his office, all dogs found running at large in their respective cities or towns without collars around their necks, marked as herein provided, and they shall keep such dogs for a period of one week, and at the expiration of such period shall put such dogs to death by humane methods.

2. The owner of any such impounded dogs, upon the payment of the tax herein provided, and a redemption fee of five dollars, may redeem such impounded dog and the city or town marshal shall be permitted to retain the sum of two dollars out of each redemption fee so paid, and shall pay over the balance of the fee on the first day of each month to the treasurer of the county in which the city or town marshal has jurisdiction, to be accounted for by the treasurers in the same manner as they are required by sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#), to account for licenses taxes.

3. Any marshal who shall fail or refuse to take up and impound any such dog shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction thereof fined not less than five dollars nor more than twenty-five dollars.

(RSMo 1939 § 14554, A. 1949 S.B. 1097)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12877

#### **Application to recover damages from fund.**

[273.110](#). 1. No owner or custodian of livestock or poultry which has been injured or killed by dogs shall be entitled to receive any portion of the county dog license fund unless within ten days after suffering such loss or damage he, with two other credible residents of the county, not kin to him by blood or marriage or not in his employ, make written application supported by affidavit to the county clerk on blanks furnished by the county clerk, stating:

(1) That he is a resident of the state of Missouri, and that he has resided in such county for more than thirty days immediately preceding the date of the injury or killing of his livestock or poultry;

(2) That he was the owner or custodian on such date of such livestock or poultry;

(3) The legal description of the premises on which such livestock or poultry was injured or killed;

(4) A complete description as to the number, weight and color of such livestock or poultry;

(5) The market value thereof on the date of such injury or killing.

2. The county clerk shall file all such applications and affidavits so received by him to be examined and passed upon by the county commission, except that no claim shall be considered or paid for the destruction of livestock or poultry by a dog or dogs belonging to the owner of such livestock or poultry.

(RSMo 1939 § 14549, A.L. 1990 H.B. 1070)

**Examination of applications, pass judgment.**

[273.120](#). The county commission shall between the first and fifteenth days of March of each year hereafter meet in session to consider and examine said applications and affidavits covering losses over a period of one year, which said year shall be from the first of March of the year prior to the meeting of said commission to the last day of February of the same year on which it meets. The commission shall examine carefully each application and affidavit which has been filed before the first day of March, and after hearing all evidence in the matter shall pass such judgment as the commission may deem equitable. Whenever the county commission meets pursuant to the provisions of sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#) each member shall receive his mileage and per diem out of the county dog license fund.

(RSMo 1939 § 14550)

**Records to be kept--warrants--funds prorated, when.**

[273.130](#). A complete record shall be kept of the commission's proceedings, including the names of the applicants and cosigners and the amount paid to each applicant, and the number of livestock or poultry injured or killed. The commission shall on or before the twentieth day of March of each year give to the applicant a warrant, drawn on the county dog license fund, covering the amount of his losses found by the commission. If there is not sufficient money in the fund to pay all allowed claims in full then said warrant shall be for his pro rata share of the money available.

(RSMo 1939 § 14551)

**Failure to pay tax--penalty--exceptions.**

[273.150](#). Every owner of a dog and every person who shall suffer or permit a dog to remain upon such premises under his immediate control without having caused such dog to be listed and the tax thereon to be paid as provided for by sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof fined not less than five dollars nor more than twenty-five dollars; provided, that none of the provisions of sections [273.040](#) to [273.180](#) shall apply to cities which now have or may hereafter have a population of three hundred thousand inhabitants or more.

(RSMo 1939 § 14557)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12880

**Assessor to list all dogs--notify owner of tax.**

[273.160](#). The assessor for taxation purposes in each county and city of this state, annually at the time of assessing property as required by law, shall make diligent inquiry as to the number of dogs owned, harbored, or kept by any person so assessed. The assessor, on or before the thirty-first day of December of each year, shall make a complete report, on a blank form furnished by the county clerk or license collector, setting forth the name of every owner of any dog or dogs, how many of each sex are by him owned, or harbored, and if a kennel is maintained by any person such fact shall also be stated. The assessor, at the time of making the assessment, shall notify the owner of such dog that he must obtain a license for such dog as herein provided; but the neglect or failure so to notify such owner shall not relieve the owner from his duty to obtain such license.

(RSMo 1939 § 14558, A. 1949 S.B. 1097)

Prior revision: 1929 § 12881

**Applicability of law--petition--election.**

[273.170](#). 1. Upon the filing of a petition signed by one hundred or more voters of any county and presented to the county commission at any regular or special session thereof the county commission shall order the question, as to whether or not there should be adopted the law creating a license tax on dogs, submitted to the voters, to be voted upon at the next election.

2. The question shall be submitted in substantially the following form:

Shall there be a license tax on dogs?

3. If the majority of the votes cast upon the question be in favor of the license tax on dogs, the county commission shall enter the result of the submission of the question upon its records and give notice thereof by publication in some newspaper printed and published in such county and such law shall become operative from the time such publication is made.

(RSMo 1939 § 14558, A. 1949 S.B. 1097, A.L. 1978 H.B. 971)

### **Repeal of license tax on dogs--procedure.**

273.180. 1. Upon the filing of a petition signed by one hundred or more voters of any county and presented to the county commission at any regular or special session thereof, it shall be the duty of the county commission to order the question, as to whether or not there should be repealed the law, creating a license tax on dogs, submitted to the voters, to be voted upon at the next election. Upon the receiving of such petition, it shall be the duty of the county commission to make an order as herein recited.

2. The question shall be submitted in substantially the following form: Shall the license tax on dogs be repealed?

3. If the majority of the votes cast upon the subject be in favor of repealing the license tax on dogs, the county commission shall spread the result of the submission of the question upon its records and give notice thereof by publication in some newspaper printed and published in such county and the law providing for a license tax on dogs shall not be operative in such county from the time such publication is made.

(L. 1941 p. 345 § 14558a, A.L. 1978 H.B. 971)

### **Citation of law--definitions.**

273.325. 1. Sections 273.325 to 273.357 shall be known as the "Animal Care Facilities Act".

2. As used in sections 273.325 to 273.357, the following terms mean:

(1) "Adequate food", the provision, at suitable intervals of not more than twelve hours, unless the dietary requirements of the species require a longer interval, of a quantity of wholesome foodstuff, suitable for the species and age, sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of nutrition in each animal, all of which foodstuff is served in a safe receptacle, dish, or container;

(2) "Adequate housing", the continuous provision of a sanitary facility, protection from the extremes of weather conditions, proper ventilation, and appropriate space depending on the species of animal, as defined by regulations of the USDA, as revised;

(3) "Adequate water", the provision, either continuously or at intervals suitable to the species, which intervals shall not exceed eight hours, of a supply of potable water in a safe receptacle, dish, or container;

(4) "Animal", any dog or cat, which is being used, or is intended for use, for research, teaching, testing, breeding, or exhibition purposes, or as a pet;

(5) "Animal shelter", a facility which is used to house or contain animals, which is owned, operated, or maintained by an incorporated humane society, animal welfare society, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or other not-for-profit organization devoted to the welfare, protection, and humane treatment of such animals, or a person whose primary purpose is to act as an animal rescue, to collect and care for unwanted animals or to offer them for adoption;

(6) "Animal welfare official", any licensed veterinarian, designated by and under the supervision of the state veterinarian, who administers or assists in the administration of the provisions of sections 273.325 to 273.357, or any appointee of the director, and shall include all deputy state veterinarians;

(7) "Boarding kennel", a place or establishment, other than a pound or animal shelter, where animals, not owned by the proprietor, are sheltered, fed, and watered in return for a consideration; however, "boarding kennel" shall not include hobby or show breeders who board intact females for a period of time for the sole purpose of breeding such intact females, and shall not include individuals who temporarily, and not in the normal course of business, board or care for animals owned by other individuals;

(8) "Commercial breeder", a person, other than a hobby or show breeder, engaged in the business of breeding animals for sale or for exchange in return for a consideration, and who harbors more than three intact females for the primary purpose of breeding animals for sale;

(9) "Commercial kennel", a kennel which performs grooming or training services for animals, and may or may not render boarding services in return for a consideration;

(10) "Contract kennel", any facility operated by any person or entity other than the state or any political subdivision of the state, for the purpose of impounding or harboring seized, stray, homeless, abandoned or unwanted animals, on behalf of and pursuant to a contract with the state or any political subdivision;

(11) "Dealer", any person who is engaged in the business of buying for resale, selling or exchanging animals, as a principal or agent, or who holds himself out to be so engaged or is otherwise classified as a dealer by the USDA as defined by regulations of the USDA;

(12) "Director", the director of the department of agriculture of the state of Missouri;

(13) "Hobby or show breeder", a noncommercial breeder who breeds dogs or cats with the primary purpose of exhibiting or showing dogs or cats, improving the breed or selling the dogs or cats, and having no more than ten intact females. Such breeder shall be classified as a hobby or show breeder if such person only sells animals to other breeders or to individuals;

(14) "Humane euthanasia", the act or practice of putting an animal to death in a humane or instantaneous manner under guidelines and procedures established by rules promulgated by the director;

(15) "Intact female", with respect to a dog, refers to a female dog between the ages of six months and ten years of age which is capable of being bred; and with respect to a cat, refers to a female cat between the ages of six months and eight years which is capable of being bred;

(16) "Pet shop", any facility where animals are bought, sold, exchanged, or offered for retail sale to the general public;

(17) "Pound" or "dog pound", a facility operated by the state or any political subdivision of the state for the purpose of impounding or harboring seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted animals;

(18) "State veterinarian", the state veterinarian as provided by chapter 267;

(19) "USDA", the United States Department of Agriculture.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 1)

**License annually required to operate animal boarding facilities, petshops, pounds, dealers and commercial breeders--fees, exemption from fees for certain licensees.**

[273.327](#). No person shall operate an animal shelter, pound or dog pound, boarding kennel, commercial kennel, contract kennel, pet shop, or exhibition facility, other than a limited show or exhibit, or act as a dealer or commercial breeder, unless such person has obtained a license for such operations from the director. An applicant shall obtain a separate license for each separate physical facility subject to sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) which is operated by the applicant. Any person exempt from the licensing requirements of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) may voluntarily apply for a license. Application for such license shall be made in the manner provided by the director. The license shall expire annually unless revoked. As provided by rules to be promulgated by the director, the license fee shall range from one hundred to two thousand five hundred dollars per year. Each licensee subject to sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) shall pay an additional annual fee of twenty-five dollars to be used by the department of agriculture for the purpose of administering operation bark alert or any successor program. Pounds or dog pounds shall be exempt from payment of the fees under this section. License fees shall be levied for each license issued or renewed on or after January 1, 1993.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsec. 1, A.L. 2010 S.B. 795, A.L. 2011 S.B. 113 & 95, A.L. 2011 S.B. 161)

Effective 4-27-11

CROSS REFERENCE:

No use of moneys collected under section [273.327](#) for operation and administration of large carnivore act, 578.625

**Director may refuse to license or may revoke licenses, grounds--operation without license, penalty.**

[273.329](#). 1. The director may refuse to issue or renew or may revoke a license on any one or more of the following grounds:

(1) Material and deliberate misstatement in the application for any original license or for any renewal license under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#);

(2) Disregard or violation of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) or of any rules promulgated pursuant thereto;

(3) Conviction of any violation of any state or federal law relating to the disposition or treatment of animals;

(4) Failure to provide adequate food, water, housing or sanitary facilities for animals under the control of an animal shelter, boarding kennel, commercial breeder, commercial kennel, contract kennel, dealer, pet shop, pound, or exhibitor as defined by regulations of the USDA.

2. The department of agriculture shall not retain, contract with, or otherwise utilize the services of the personnel of any nonprofit organization for the purpose of inspection or licensing of any animal shelter, pound or dog pound, boarding kennel, commercial kennel, contract kennel, commercial breeder, hobby or show breeder, or pet shop under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#).

3. Operation of an animal shelter, pound or dog pound, boarding kennel, commercial kennel, contract kennel, pet shop, or exhibition facility, or activity as a commercial breeder or dealer without a valid license shall constitute a class A misdemeanor.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsecs. 2, 3, A.L. 2010 S.B. 795)

**Inspection required for license--state veterinarian's duties and authority--provisional license issued until inspection--inspections required annually or on complaint.**

[273.331](#). A license shall be issued only upon inspection by the state veterinarian, his designee, or an animal welfare official. A facility subject to the provisions of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#), at the time it applies for licensure, shall be granted a provisional license which shall allow operation of the facility until the facility is inspected or until December 31, 1994, whichever earlier occurs. The state veterinarian shall have the duty and authority to inspect all facilities licensed under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#). Inspections shall be conducted a minimum of once a year, or upon a complaint to the department regarding a particular facility. The validity of the complaint will be ascertained by the state veterinarian or his designated representative.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsec. 4)

**Investigations conducted, when--violations, administrative procedure--order for remedial action by circuit courts--administrative penalties, amount--penalties, deposit in general revenue--appeals, procedure.**

[273.333](#). The state veterinarian or an animal welfare official, upon his own information or upon the complaint of any person, may institute an investigation including the inspection during normal business hours of any premises or vehicle upon which any animal is or may be found, and may determine if any violation of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) or of any rule promulgated pursuant to sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) is deemed to exist. The director, or his designee, may issue an order to the person responsible for the violation to appear at an administrative hearing. The director, or his designee, upon a finding that such a violation occurred after a hearing thereon, shall issue remedial orders enforceable in the circuit courts of this state to correct such violations, and in addition may assess an administrative penalty in an amount not to exceed one thousand dollars for each violation. In assessing the amount of penalty under sections [273.327](#) to [273.342](#), the director shall take into account the seriousness of the violation and the extent of damage to third parties and the state. All penalties collected shall be deposited to the state general revenue fund. In addition, the director may assess the reasonable costs of remedying a violation in the event that the person responsible is unwilling or unable to correct the violation within a reasonable period of time. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the director may appeal as provided in sections [536.100](#) to [536.140](#).

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsec. 5)

**Substantial ongoing risk to health and welfare of animals, temporary or permanent injunction--animals in pain or diseased taken into custody for euthanasia, when, costs to licensee.**

[273.335](#). When, in the judgment of the state veterinarian or an animal welfare official, any person has been in violation of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) so as to pose a substantial ongoing risk to the health and welfare of animals in his custody or so as to pose a substantial ongoing risk that consumers will purchase diseased animals from such person, the director may apply to the circuit court of the county in which such person resides, and such court may grant an order enjoining temporarily or permanently that person from engaging in activities described in section [273.327](#). If the animals being held in any of the facilities licensed under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) are found to be suffering unrelieved pain or distress or disease, the animals may be taken into custody for humane euthanasia at the expense of the licensee. Reasonable effort shall be made to notify the facility operator of such intent and only upon his refusal or inability to immediately correct the causative violation and provide adequate veterinary care shall such action be taken. Nothing in sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) shall be construed to interfere with scientific research as enunciated in subsection 2 of section [273.354](#).

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsec. 6)

**Failure of reinspections after original violation, penalty, amount--payment of penalty required before license renewal.**



[273.338](#). Persons and facilities which subsequently fail two consecutive reinspections for an original violation shall be charged a fee of one hundred dollars, which shall be paid before subsequent inspection and renewal of such person's or facility's license.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsec. 7)

**Dealers to purchase only from licensed or exempt persons--violation, penalties.**

[273.340](#). A dealer shall only purchase animals from persons in this state who are licensed under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#), or who are exempt from licensure. Any dealer who knowingly purchases animals in violation of this section shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor and each purchase made shall constitute a separate offense. In addition to such penalties, the director may revoke such dealer's license.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsec. 8)

**Exemption from licensing requirements, certain persons--registration required annually, content, no fee.**

[273.342](#). 1. Persons engaged in breeding dogs and cats who harbor three or less intact females shall be exempt from the provisions of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#).

2. A hobby or show breeder shall be exempt from the licensure and inspection requirements of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#). The director shall develop a form for registration of persons who meet the definition of hobby or show breeder, and any such hobby or show breeder shall register annually with the director for the purpose of establishing that such person is a hobby or show breeder, at no cost to said hobby or show breeder.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 2 subsecs. 9, 10)

**Standards and regulations for licensed persons and facilities--director to promulgate rules.**

[273.344](#). 1. Persons and facilities subject to USDA licensure shall comply with the standards and regulations as prescribed by the USDA, as revised from time to time.

2. Persons and facilities who are subject to sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#), but who are not subject to USDA licensure, shall comply with rules promulgated by the director which establish standards relating to the following:

- (1) Adequate shelter, including proper conditions of sanitation and ventilation;
- (2) Adequate food and water; and
- (3) Maintenance of records of acquisition and disposition of animals in the custody of the licensee.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 3 subsecs. 1, 2)

**Canine Cruelty Prevention Act--citation of law--purpose--required care--definitions--veterinary records--space requirements--severability clause.**

[273.345](#). 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Canine Cruelty Prevention Act".

2. The purpose of this act is to prohibit the cruel and inhumane treatment of dogs bred in large operations by requiring large-scale dog breeding operations to provide each dog under their care with basic food and water, adequate shelter from the elements, necessary veterinary care, adequate space to turn around and stretch his or her limbs, and regular exercise.

3. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person having custody or ownership of more than ten female covered dogs for the purpose of breeding those animals and selling any offspring for use as a pet shall provide each covered dog:

- (1) Sufficient food and clean water;
- (2) Necessary veterinary care;
- (3) Sufficient housing, including protection from the elements;
- (4) Sufficient space to turn and stretch freely, lie down, and fully extend his or her limbs;
- (5) Regular exercise; and
- (6) Adequate rest between breeding cycles.

4. For purposes of this section and notwithstanding the provisions of section [273.325](#), the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) "Adequate rest between breeding cycles" means, at minimum, ensuring that female dogs are not bred to produce more litters in any given period than what is recommended by a licensed veterinarian as appropriate for the species, age, and health of the dog;

(2) "Covered dog" means any individual of the species of the domestic dog, *Canis lupus familiaris*, or resultant hybrids, that is over the age of six months and has intact sexual organs;

(3) "Necessary veterinary care" means, at minimum, examination at least once yearly by a licensed veterinarian, prompt treatment of any serious illness or injury by a licensed veterinarian, and where needed, humane euthanasia by a licensed veterinarian using lawful techniques deemed acceptable by the American Veterinary Medical Association;

(4) "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, joint venture, association, limited liability company, corporation, estate, trust, receiver, or syndicate;

(5) "Pet" means any species of the domestic dog, *Canis lupus familiaris*, or resultant hybrids, normally maintained in or near the household of the owner thereof;

(6) "Regular exercise" means the type and amount of exercise sufficient to comply with an exercise plan that has been approved by a licensed veterinarian, developed in accordance with regulations regarding exercise promulgated by the Missouri department of agriculture, and where such plan affords the dog maximum opportunity for outdoor exercise as weather permits;

(7) "Retail pet store" means a person or retail establishment open to the public where dogs are bought, sold, exchanged, or offered for retail sale directly to the public to be kept as pets, but that does not engage in any breeding of dogs for the purpose of selling any offspring for use as a pet;

(8) "Sufficient food and clean water" means access to appropriate nutritious food at least twice a day sufficient to maintain good health, and continuous access to potable water that is not frozen and is generally free of debris, feces, algae, and other contaminants;

(9) "Sufficient housing, including protection from the elements" means the continuous provision of a sanitary facility, the provision of a solid surface on which to lie in a recumbent position, protection from the extremes of weather conditions, proper ventilation, and appropriate space depending on the species of animal as required by regulations of the Missouri department of agriculture and in compliance with the provisions of subsection 7 of this section. No dog shall remain inside its enclosure while the enclosure is being cleaned. Dogs housed within the same enclosure shall be compatible, in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Missouri department of agriculture;

(10) "Sufficient space to turn and stretch freely, lie down, and fully extend his or her limbs" means having:

(a) Sufficient indoor space or shelter from the elements for each dog to turn in a complete circle without any impediment (including a tether);

(b) Enough indoor space or shelter from the elements for each dog to lie down and fully extend his or her limbs and stretch freely without touching the side of an enclosure or another dog;

(c) Appropriate space depending on the species of the animal, as specified in regulations by the Missouri department of agriculture, as revised, and in compliance with the provisions of subsection 7 of this section.

5. Any person subject to the provisions of this section shall maintain all veterinary records and sales records for the most recent previous two years. These records shall be made available to the state veterinarian, a state or local animal welfare official, or a law enforcement agent upon request.

6. The provisions of this section are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other state and federal laws protecting animal welfare. This section shall not be construed to limit any state law or regulation protecting the welfare of animals, nor shall anything in this section prevent a local governing body from adopting and enforcing its own animal welfare laws and regulations in addition to this section. This section shall not be construed to place any numerical limits on the number of dogs a person may own or control when such dogs are not used for breeding those animals and selling any offspring for use as a pet. This section shall not apply to a dog during examination, testing, operation, recuperation, or other individual treatment for veterinary purposes, during lawful scientific research, during transportation, during cleaning of a dog's enclosure, during supervised outdoor exercise, or during any emergency that places a dog's life in imminent danger. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit hunting or the ability to breed, raise, sell, control, train, or possess dogs with the intention to use such dogs for hunting or other sporting purposes.

7. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the following space requirements shall apply under this section:

(1) From January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2015, for any enclosure existing prior to April 15, 2011, the minimum allowable space shall:

- (a) Be two times the space allowable under the department of agriculture's regulation that was in effect on April 15, 2011;
- (b) Except as prescribed by rule, provide constant and unfettered access to an attached outdoor run; and
- (c) Meet all other requirements set forth by rule of the Missouri department of agriculture;

(2) For any enclosure newly constructed after April 15, 2011, and for all enclosures as of January 1, 2016, the minimum allowable space shall:

- (a) Be three times the space allowable under the department of agriculture's regulation that was in effect on April 15, 2011;
- (b) Except as prescribed by rule, provide constant and unfettered access to an attached outdoor run; and
- (c) Meet all other requirements set forth by rule of the Missouri department of agriculture;

(3) For any enclosure newly constructed after April 15, 2011, and for all enclosures as of January 1, 2016, wire strand flooring shall be prohibited and all enclosures shall meet the flooring standard set forth by rule of the Missouri department of agriculture.

8. If any provision of this section, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid or unconstitutional, that invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect other provisions or applications of this section that can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

(L. 2010 Adopted by Initiative, Proposition B, November 2, 2010, A.L. 2011 S.B. 113 & 95, A.L. 2011 S.B. 161)  
Effective 4-27-11

**Director to develop rules for health and veterinary care for animals in custody and facilities of licensees—records to be kept—pounds, major construction not to be required.**

[273.346](#). 1. The director shall promulgate rules for an adequate program of health and veterinary care which shall be maintained for all animals in the custody of persons and facilities subject to licensure pursuant to sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#), except pounds or dog pounds. Records of veterinary services provided to such animals shall be maintained and made available to the state veterinarian or an animal welfare official upon request.

2. Any such rules promulgated to cover pounds or dog pounds shall not require or be applied so as to require the construction of any new buildings or major reconstruction of any physical plant beyond the scope of normal upkeep and repair.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 3 subsecs. 3, 4)

**Court action for enforcement, when—crime of canine cruelty, penalty.**

[273.347](#). 1. Whenever the state veterinarian or a state animal welfare official finds past violations of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) have occurred and have not been corrected or addressed, including operating without a valid license under section [273.327](#), the director may request the attorney general or the county prosecuting attorney or circuit attorney to bring an action in circuit court in the county where the violations have occurred for a temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction, permanent injunction, or a remedial order enforceable in a circuit court to correct such violations and, in addition, the court may assess a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed one thousand dollars for each violation. Each violation shall constitute a separate offense.

2. A person commits the crime of canine cruelty if such person repeatedly violates sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) so as to pose a substantial risk to the health and welfare of animals in such person's custody, or knowingly violates an agreed-to remedial order involving the safety and welfare of animals under this section. The crime of canine cruelty is a class C misdemeanor, unless the person has previously pled guilty or nolo contendere to or been found guilty of a violation of this subsection, in which case, each such violation is a class A misdemeanor.

3. The attorney general or the county prosecuting attorney or circuit attorney may bring an action under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) in circuit court in the county where the crime has occurred for criminal punishment.

4. No action under this section shall prevent or preclude action taken under section [578.012](#) or under subsection 3 of section [273.329](#).

(L. 2011 S.B. 113 & 95, A.L. 2011 S.B. 161)

**Facilities to be open for inspection--quarantine of animals, bystate veterinarian, when--quarantine removed, when--removal of animals under quarantine prohibited--disease treatment procedures, duties of state veterinarian--violations, penalty.**

273.348. 1. The premises of each licensee shall be open for inspection.

2. If, upon investigation, the state veterinarian or an animal welfare official finds that an animal or group of animals is suffering from any highly contagious, communicable or infectious disease or exposure thereto, against which he may think best to quarantine, he shall immediately quarantine the animal or group of animals to the premises and separate from other susceptible animals not so diseased or infected until such diseased animals are:

- (1) Recovered and no longer capable of transmitting the diseases;
- (2) Isolated;
- (3) Humanely euthanized and disposed of as provided for in the rules of the director;
- (4) Tested, vaccinated or otherwise treated; or

(5) Otherwise released by the state veterinarian. Animals under quarantine and treatment or testing may not be removed from the premises until the licensee is notified that such animals are recovered and incapable of spreading the disease and otherwise released by the state veterinarian or an animal welfare official. The method of eliminating the disease problem shall be at the discretion and in accordance with such procedures as may be outlined by the state veterinarian.

3. Violation of the provisions of sections 273.344 to 273.348 shall be a class A misdemeanor.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 3 subsecs. 5, 6, 7)

**Director to develop rules to include safety standards for motor vehicles transporting live animals--define exotic animals and their care--wildlife not to be included--shipping diseased animals, penalty.**

273.350. The director shall promulgate rules pursuant to the provisions of chapter 536 required to implement the provisions of sections 273.325 to 273.357. Such rules shall include establishing health and safety standards for motor vehicles regularly used in the commercial transportation of live animals. The director shall also by rule define the term "exotic animals", which shall generally refer to canines and felines not ordinarily kept for domestic purposes, and shall promulgate rules establishing standards for food, water, housing and health care for exotic animals and standards for determining whether a particular operation is a farming practice or is a breeder of pets; provided that the authority of the department of conservation to regulate wildlife within the state of Missouri as provided by section 252.030 shall not be deprived or diminished. Any animal welfare official shall have the authority of an animal control officer as defined by chapter 578. It shall be unlawful for any person licensed or registered pursuant to sections 273.325 to 273.357 to knowingly ship a diseased animal, and any such person who violates this provision shall be subject to a fine of not more than one hundred dollars for each diseased animal shipped. Sections 273.325 to 273.357 and the rules promulgated thereunder shall apply to all businesses, individuals and agents which transport animals in or through this state, except that such businesses, individuals and agents licensed by the USDA shall be subject to USDA standards relating to transportation of animals.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 4 subsec. 1)

**Advisory committee, appointment, qualifications--duties to assist in establishing rules--not to receive compensation or expenses--rulemaking procedure.**

273.352. 1. There is hereby established an advisory committee to assist the director in establishing rules under sections 273.350 and 273.352 and to provide ongoing review of the administration of sections 273.325 to 273.357. The members of the advisory committee shall receive no compensation or reimbursement for their expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The advisory committee shall consist of thirteen persons appointed by the director as follows:

- (1) One person who operates or supervises an animal shelter;
- (2) One person who operates or is employed by a pound or dog pound;
- (3) One person who operates a commercial kennel or a boarding kennel;
- (4) One person who operates a pet shop and who sells both dogs and cats;
- (5) One dealer;

(6) One person who operates or is employed by an animal humane society or other humane organization;

(7) One veterinarian licensed pursuant to chapter 340;

(8) One person who is a commercial animal breeder, who breeds both dogs and cats;

(9) One person representing the Missouri Animal Control Association;

(10) One person representing professional cat breeders;

(11) The state veterinarian of the department of agriculture;

(12) The state public health veterinarian of the department of health and senior services;

(13) One hobby or show breeder.

2. No rule or portion of a rule promulgated under the authority of this chapter shall become effective unless it has been promulgated pursuant to the provisions of section [536.024](#).

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 4 subsecs. 2 to 6, A.L. 1993 S.B. 52, A.L. 1995 S.B. 3)

**Laws not applicable to hospitals or boarding facility undersupervision of veterinarians or research.**

[273.354](#). 1. Sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) shall not apply to a place or establishment which operates under the immediate supervision and control of a duly licensed veterinarian as a facility where animals are hospitalized or boarded.

2. Nothing in sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) shall be construed as requiring licensing of research facilities or authorizing promulgation of rules affecting the design, outlines, guidelines, or performance of actual research or experimentation by a research facility as determined by that research facility's institution animal care and use committee.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 5)

**Animal care reserve fund created--all license fees to be deposited infund--purpose and uses--lapse to general revenue, prohibited.**

[273.357](#). All fees collected by the director from licenses issued under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) shall be used to administer the provisions of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#), and shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the "Animal Care Reserve Fund", which is hereby created. All moneys deposited in the animal care reserve fund shall be subject to appropriation for the use and benefit of the department of agriculture to administer the provisions of sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#). Notwithstanding the provisions of section [33.080](#) to the contrary, moneys in the animal care reserve fund shall not be transferred to the general revenue fund at the end of the biennium.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 6)

**Stacked cages without impervious barrier prohibited, penalty.**

[273.359](#). Any person required to have a license under sections [273.325](#) to [273.357](#) who houses animals in stacked cages without an impervious barrier between the levels of such cages, except when cleaning such cages, is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

(L. 2011 S.B. 113 & 95 § 1, A.L. 2011 S.B. 161 § 1)

Effective 4-27-11

**Definitions.**

[273.400](#). As used in sections [273.400](#) to [273.405](#), the following words mean:

(1) "Adopter", a person who is legally competent to enter into a contract and who is adopting or buying a dog or cat from a releasing agency;

(2) "Adult animal", any dog or cat that has reached the age of one hundred eighty days or six months or more;

(3) "Releasing agency", an animal pound, shelter, humane organization, or animal control agency, whether public or private, but not including an individual who occasionally renders humane assistance or shelter in his\* home to a dog or cat;

(4) "Sterilization", the surgical removal of the reproductive organs of a dog or cat in order to render the animal unable to reproduce, or the use of an approved serum which will permanently render the animal unable to reproduce.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 7)

\*Word "their" appears in original rolls.

**Sterilization of all cats and dogs adopted or purchased from animalshelters or animal control agencies, procedure.**

273.403. 1. Provisions shall be made for the sterilization of all dogs and cats sold or released for adoption or purchased from any public or private animal shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society, or by a county or city, or other political subdivision. Such provisions may be made by:

(1) Providing for sterilization by a licensed veterinarian before relinquishing custody of the animal; or

(2) Entering into a written agreement with the adopter or purchaser guaranteeing that sterilization will be performed by a licensed veterinarian, in compliance with a sterilization agreement which shall contain the following information:

(a) The date of the agreement;

(b) The name, address, and signature of the releasing agency and the adopter;

(c) A description of the animal to be adopted;

(d) A statement printed in conspicuous bold print that sterilization of the animal is required pursuant to sections 273.400 to 273.405;

(e) A sterilization completion date which shall be either:

a. The thirtieth day after the date of adoption in the case of an adult animal; or

b. The thirtieth day after a specified date estimated to be the date an adopted infant female or male puppy or kitten becomes six months of age; or

c. If the releasing agency has a written policy recommending sterilization of certain infant animals at an earlier date, the thirtieth day after the date contained in\* the written policy.

2. An adopter that signs a sterilization agreement shall have the adopted animal sterilized on or before the sterilization date stated in the agreement. If the sterilization completion date stated in the agreement falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the deadline may be extended to the first day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. The releasing agency may extend the deadline for thirty days on the presentation of a letter or telephone report from a licensed veterinarian stating that the life or health of the adopted animal may be jeopardized by sterilization. There shall be no limit to the number of extensions that may be granted for this reason.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 8)

\*Word "after" appears in original rolls.

**Animal considered sterilized when—exceptions to sterilizationrequirement—costs to be paid by adopter or purchaser.**

273.405. 1. Each releasing agency shall agree to give title, possession, and control of the animal so long as the adopter complies with the terms and conditions of the adoption agreement.

2. The releasing agency shall consider the animal sterilized upon receipt of written confirmation signed by the licensed veterinarian who performed the sterilization.

3. Exceptions to the sterilization requirements of sections 273.400 to 273.405 shall not apply to a dog or cat that is claimed from a releasing agency by a person who already owns the animal. This subsection shall not apply to a releasing agency located in a political subdivision that has in effect an ordinance providing standards for dog and cat sterilization that exceed the requirements of sections 273.400 to 273.405.

4. All costs of sterilization pursuant to sections 273.400 to 273.405 shall be paid by the prospective adopter or purchaser, unless otherwise provided.

5. The requirements of sections 273.400 to 273.405 shall not apply to canines of a breed regularly used for lawful hunting or livestock production or management, as specified by rules of the department, to be used in the practice of livestock production or management or the practice of lawful hunting. The adopter may sign a statement that states he is\* going to use the canines for such purposes in lieu of the sterilization agreement.

(L. 1992 S.B. 636 § 9)

\*Words "they are" appear in original rolls.

[Top](#)



Missouri General Assembly

Copyright © Missouri Legislature, all rights reserved.