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Article 10. Mandatory Sterilization of Dogs and Cats Adopted from Releasing Agencies.

§ 3.2-6574. Sterilization of adopted dogs and cats; enforcement; civil penalty.

A. Every new owner of a dog or cat adopted from a releasing agency shall cause to be sterilized the dog or cat pursuant to the agreement required by subdivision 2 of subsection B of this article.

B. A dog or cat shall not be released for adoption from a releasing agency unless:

1. The animal has already been sterilized; or
2. The individual adopting the animal signs an agreement to have the animal sterilized by a licensed veterinarian: (i) within 30 days of the adoption, if the animal is sexually mature; or (ii) within 30 days after the animal reaches six months of age, if the animal is not sexually mature at the time of adoption.

C. A releasing agency may extend for 30 days the date by which a dog or cat must be sterilized on presentation of a written report from a veterinarian stating that the life or health of the adopted animal may be jeopardized by sterilization. In cases involving extenuating circumstances, the veterinarian and the releasing agency may negotiate the terms of an extension of the date by which the animal must be sterilized.

D. Nothing in this section shall preclude the sterilization of a sexually immature dog or cat upon the written agreement of the veterinarian, the releasing agency, and the new owner.

E. Upon the petition of an animal control officer, humane investigator, the State Veterinarian or a State Veterinarian's representative to the district court of the county or city where a violation of this article occurs, the court may order the new owner to take any steps necessary to comply with the requirements of this article. This remedy shall be exclusive of and in addition to any civil penalty that may be imposed under this article.

F. Any person who violates subsection A or B of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$250.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:1; 1998, c. [817](#); 2008, c. [860](#); 2010, c. [875](#).

§ 3.2-6575. Sterilization agreement.

Any agreement used by a releasing agency pursuant to subsection B of § 3.2-6574 shall contain:

1. The date of the agreement;
2. The names, addresses, and signatures of the releasing agency and the new owner;
3. A description of the dog or cat to be adopted;
4. The date by which the dog or cat is required to be sterilized; and
5. A statement printed in conspicuous, bold print, that sterilization of the dog or cat is required under this article; that a person who violates this article is subject to a civil penalty; and that the new owner may be compelled to comply with the provisions of this article.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:2; 2008, c. 860.

§ 3.2-6576. Sterilization confirmation; civil penalty.

Each new owner who signs a sterilization agreement shall, within seven days of the sterilization, cause to be delivered or mailed to the releasing agency written confirmation signed by the veterinarian who performed the sterilization. The confirmation shall briefly describe the dog or cat; include the new owner's name and address; certify that the sterilization was performed; and specify the date of the procedure. Any person who violates this section shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$150.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:3; 1999, cc. 627, 672; 2008, c. 860.

§ 3.2-6577. Notification concerning lost, stolen or dead dogs or cats; civil penalty.

If an adopted dog or cat is lost or stolen or dies before the animal is sterilized and before the date by which the dog or cat is required to be sterilized, the new owner shall, within seven days of the animal's disappearance or death, notify the releasing agency of the animal's disappearance or death. Any person who violates this section shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$25.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:4; 2008, c. 860.

§ 3.2-6578. Exemptions.

This article shall not apply to:

1. An owner reclaiming his dog or cat from a releasing agency;
2. A releasing agency within a locality that has adopted a more stringent mandatory sterilization ordinance; and
3. A local governing body that has disposed of an animal by sale or gift to a federal agency, state-supported institution, agency of the Commonwealth, agency of another state, or licensed federal dealer having its principal place of business located within the Commonwealth.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:5; 2008, c. 860.

§ 3.2-6579. Releasing agency; fees and deposits.

A local governing body or releasing agency may charge and collect from the new owner a fee or deposit before releasing a dog or cat for adoption to ensure sterilization.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:6; 2008, c. 860.

§ 3.2-6580. Civil penalties.

Any animal control officer, humane investigator, releasing agency, the State Veterinarian or State Veterinarian's representative shall be entitled to bring a civil action for any violation of this article that is subject to a civil penalty. Any civil penalty assessed pursuant to this article shall be paid into the treasury of the city or county where such civil action is brought and used for the purpose of defraying the costs of local animal control, including efforts to promote sterilization of cats and dogs.

1993, c. 959, § 3.1-796.126:7; 1998, c. 817; 2002, c. 787; 2008, c. 860.

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