



SCOTLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Laws Pet Owners Should Know

RABIES LAWS:

North Carolina State Law requires all dogs and cats over **four (4) months** old be vaccinated against rabies. The first injection last **one (1) year** and must be repeated at the end of the first year and then every **three (3) years** thereafter. The law further requires that your dog must wear this tag at all times. Lost tags can be replaced from the veterinarian who gave the injection. Be sure to keep your receipt for replacement.

PET OWNERS' RESPONSIBILITY:

You are responsible for your animal's actions. If they cause real property damage (i.e., tearing up shrubbery or gardens, clothes from line, killing chickens, livestock, dog, or cat) you are responsible for those damages or to replace the dead animal. **This is a civil matter**, handled through magistrate court. It is the Magistrate's job to determine the extent of the damage and the amount of repayment. Judicial process begins in the office of the Clerk of the Court and then proceeds to the Magistrate.

ANIMAL CRUELTY:

This is a misdemeanor crime. The law says animal owners must provide potable water and food at least once each twenty-four (24) hours. Animals that are confined must have an adequate amount of space to live in and be provided with shelter from the heat, cold and bad weather. **The owner must keep dogs on their property at all times** unless the dog is restrained by a leash, and cannot be tethered more than one (1) hour a day. **This is a criminal penalty of a fine up to \$ 250 for first offence, \$ 500 for second.** Allowing a diseased or injured animal to suffer without medical attention is also considered cruelty to animals.

ABANDONMENT OF DOGS AND CATS:

This is a misdemeanor crime. Putting animals out of a motor vehicle or moving away and leaving animals or abandoning animals in a vehicle can be punishable by a fine or jail sentence.

DOG BITES:

North Carolina state law requires dog or cat bites to be reported to Animal Control within twenty-four (24) hours. Biting dogs or cats **must be confined for ten (10) days by law.** Owner may confine at home if vaccinated. Unvaccinated dogs or cats will be confined at the shelter, **at owner's expense.**

DEALER/BREEDER:

Any person who offers or sells exchanges or donates, however, that an individual who breeds and raises on his own premises more **than five (5) or more non-spayed female** dogs or cats over four (4) months old or **with a total of ten (10) or more dogs or cats four (4) months or older must register with Scotland County Animal Control as a Dealer/Breeder.**

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