

## MUNICIPAL BYLAW AND ENFORCEMENT SECTION

**BYLAW 3183 (DOG BYLAW)****Effective 1 March 2000**

On March 1, 2000 the City of Medicine Hat will have a new Dog Bylaw come into effect. Although most of the responsibilities of a dog owner will not change, there are several new and very important changes that you as a current dog owner or a prospective dog owner should be aware of.

**LICENSING REQUIREMENTS:**

Every dog over three (3) months of age must be licensed. Licenses are valid for one year from the date of purchase and are available at the SPCA, City Hall or the Police Service. The yearly fees for licensing a dog are:

Puppy (under 6 months of age)	\$ 15.00
Dogs that are spayed or neutered:	\$ 15.00
Dogs that are not spayed or neutered:	\$ 30.00
Dogs declared a Nuisance:	\$ 100.00
Dogs declared Vicious:	\$500.00

*Effective March 1, 2000 the fine for not licensing a dog is \$250.00.*

**LEASH REQUIREMENTS:**

Every dog while off the property of the Owner, or person having responsibility for the dog, must be securely restrained by a Leash held by a person capable of properly restraining the dog. The City of Medicine Hat has designated several areas where dogs may be exercised while not restrained by a leash. Maps of these areas will be made available in early 2000.

**NUISANCE ACTIVITIES:**

A dog that does any of the following nuisance activities is in violation of the Bylaw:

- Bites or chases a person or other animal.
- Bites, barks at or chases any motor vehicle or bicycle
- Barks or howls in such a fashion that it disturbs any person.
- Causes a person to fear for their physical safety.
- Causes any damage to property or any injury to a person or other animal.
- Enters a floral bed of any Park, or disturbs or destroys any vegetation or animal habitat.
- Enters swimming pool, wading pool, water park, or body of water located in or flowing through any Park.
- Enters any Cemetery property in the City.
- Upsets any waste receptacle or scatters the contents.

**DOGS IN VEHICLES:**

No person may leave a dog unattended in a motor vehicle unless the dog is restrained so as to prevent the dog from coming into contact with any person or other animal outside the motor vehicle. This means dogs may not be left in the open boxes of trucks unless they are secured in some manner. Any person leaving a dog unattended in a motor vehicle must ensure that suitable ventilation is provided for the dog.

**NUISANCE DOGS:**

Any dog that contravenes one or more sections of this bylaw twice, may be declared a Nuisance Dog. Once a dog is declared a Nuisance, the owner will be directed in writing to take such actions as may be deemed necessary to ensure the Bylaw is not further contravened.

*A Nuisance Dog is subject to an increased yearly license fee, and may not be in any designated off leash area.*

**VICIOUS DOGS:**

Any dog that has chased, injured or bitten any person or other animal, damaged or destroyed any property, or threatened a person or other animal, may be seized and impounded until a hearing can be held before a Judge to determine if the dog should be declared a Vicious Dog.

A dog declared Vicious must be kept indoors or in a pen, cage or other structure having:

- Secure sides and a secure top.
- A bottom secured to the sides or the sides embedded in the ground to a minimum depth of thirty (30) centimetres.
- Minimum dimensions of 1.5 metres by 3.0 metres, and a minimum height of 1.5 metres.

While off the Owners Property, a Vicious Dog must be muzzled and secured on a Leash not longer than one (1) metre, by a person at least eighteen (18) years of age.

*A Vicious Dog is subject to an increased yearly license fee, and may not be in any designated off leash area.*

**CLEANING UP AFTER YOUR DOG:**

An Owner of a dog which defecates on property other than the owners, must immediately remove and properly dispose of the defecation in a proper waste receptacle.

An owner must keep the property where the dog is kept in a clean and tidy condition.

**RABIES SHOTS:**

Every dog must have an up to date Rabies vaccination, and the owner must be able to provide proof of the vaccination.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM A VICTIM OF A DOG BITE?**

Seek medical attention immediately to avoid the risk of infection. All dog bites are to be reported immediately to Municipal Bylaw & Enforcement Section of the Police Service by calling 529-8400. Be prepared, if possible to provide the following information:

- Your name, address, home and business numbers.
- The offending dog's current location.
- Brief details of the incident, including names and numbers of witnesses.
- The location, date and time of the incident.
- Breed, size, and colour of the dog.
- Any identifying features (i.e., collar/harness, markings, etc.)
- Where the dog lives and/or who the owner is.
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**PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF BYLAW:**

Bylaw 3183 allows for fines up to \$10,000.00 and one year in jail. The following are specified penalties for first offences:

Running at large: \$100.00

Use off leash area contrary to sign: \$100.00

Bite or chase a person: \$250.00

Chase a vehicle or bicycle: \$100.00

Bark or howl to disturb a person: \$100.00

Cause a person to fear for their safety: \$250.00

Causes damage to property: \$250.00

Enter a floral area or destroy vegetation: \$100.00  
 Enter a pool, water park or body of water: \$100.00  
 Enter a cemetery: \$100.00  
 Leave unrestrained dog in a vehicle: \$100.00  
 Fail to provide ventilation for a dog left in a motor vehicle: \$100.00  
 Fail to comply with directions of a Bylaw Enforcement Officer: \$250.00  
 Vicious Dog that bites or chases a person: \$1500.00  
 Vicious Dog that damages property: \$1000.00  
 Fail to keep Vicious Dog in proper confinement: \$1000.00  
 Fail to muzzle and leash Vicious dog while off owners property: \$1000.00  
 Vicious dog running at large: \$1000.00  
 Fail to clean up dog defecation: \$100.00  
 Fail to keep property clean and tidy: \$100.00  
 Fail to have up to date rabies vaccination: \$100.00  
 Fail to supply vet records: \$100.00  
 Fail to license a dog: \$250.00  
 Fail to license a Vicious Dog: \$1000.00  
 Harbour more than 4 dogs: \$100.00  
 Fail to have dog tag on dog: \$100.00  
 Use tag assigned to another dog: \$100.00  
 Obstruct Bylaw Enforcement Officer: \$100.00  
 Tease, torment or annoy a dog: \$250.00

#### **A DOG OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Keeping your dog on a leash at all times, except in designated exercise areas is an absolute obligation. If you love your dog, you simply will not do it any other way. Unleashed dogs get into fights, get injured or killed by other animals and get run down by vehicles. They also wander over other people's private property, dig holes, defecate and urinate on lawns, parks and playgrounds, overturn garbage cans and create excessive noise. Such activities rightfully distress many people and create neighbourhood tensions.
2. When you exercise your dog in a designated off leash area keep it under control at all times. Wait two full hours after feeding your pet before you take it for a walk. Most dogs will have had a bowel movement within that period of time. Train your dog to use your backyard for that purpose and carry a number of plastic bags to pick its dropping from all other private and public lands. Irresponsible owners who do not pick up after their pets, offend other citizens who take pride in their own property, City parks and playgrounds. Such pet owners are also in violation of the Bylaw which carries heavy penalties.
3. Identify your pet with a collar and a tag. All dogs three (3) months of age and older must be licensed in the City of Medicine Hat. A current license tag must be worn at all times the dog is off your property.
4. Train your dog to be obedient and curb aggressiveness. Aggressive dogs can be a threat to all citizens, particularly small children and the elderly. Owners of such dogs should consult with their lawyer to better understand the legal ramifications of dog attacks on people and other animals. Dogs with aggressive tendencies and behavioural problems can be trained; seek advice from your veterinarian about recommended obedience schools.
5. Every dog born should be planned for, wanted and loved; not the result of irresponsible dog ownership. Unless you are a breeder of quality, pedigreed dogs, and have a consistent and responsible market for litters, it is absolutely necessary that you spay or neuter your pet. Ideally, this should happen before the pet reaches six months of age; certainly before the female comes into heat. Dog owners who do not alter their pets and allow uncontrolled mating are directly responsible for the suffering of surplus [- animals in or community. These surplus animals live terrible lives - dodging vehicles, suffering from diseases and freezing in our severe winters. If they survive until they are six months old, they breed and create a greater problem.

6. Dogs, like people, require proper health care. This involves a balanced, commercial diet, regular exercise, proper grooming, annual vaccinations and check-ups.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY DOG GETS LOST?

- Look around you neighbourhood immediately.
- Phone the Municipal Bylaw & Enforcement Section, and the S.P.C.A. and provide them with a detailed description of your dog.
- Visit the S.P.C.A. All dogs found at large are taken to their shelter.
- Check the veterinary clinics.
- Place notices, preferably with a picture of your dog in neighbourhood stores, veterinary clinics and the S.P.C.A.
- Talk to your mail carrier, neighbours and especially the children who play in your area.
- Ask the local radio stations to mention your dog.
- Check the Lost and Found section of the paper.
- Place your own add in the paper.
- Don't give up. Sometimes a lost dog will show up months later.

**IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

Municipal Bylaw and Enforcement Section  
884 - 2nd Street S.E.

General Information on By-laws: 529-8447

Complaints: 529-8400

**Medicine Hat S.P.C.A.**

55 Southwest Drive S.W 526-7722