

Forsyth County Animal Ordinances

Chapter 6 of the Forsyth County Code

(Important sections of the ordinance are summarized for your information.)

Sec. 6-6. - General duties of keepers of animals.

(a)Unlawful conduct. It shall be unlawful for any person to abuse an animal as "abuse" is defined in this chapter.

(b)Abandonment. It shall be unlawful for any person owning or having possession, charge, custody or control of an animal to leave that animal on a street, road, highway, public place, animal shelter or private property without having made adequate provision for the animal's care.

(c)Breeding and reproduction of diseased animals prohibited. A person owning or having possession, charge, custody or control of an animal shall not breed, sell, give away, or allow to reproduce any animal with a disease contagious to other animals or human beings.

(d)Tethering. It shall be unlawful for any person to restrain a dog using a chain, wire or other type of tethering device in a manner prohibited by this subsection.

Section 6-7 Cruelty to Animals. It shall be unlawful for any person to molest, torture, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, cruelly beat, mutilate or kill, wound, injure, poison, abandon, or subject to conditions detrimental to the health and welfare of any animal.

Animal abuse includes, but is not limited to, failing to provide adequate veterinary medical care and failing to provide adequate, structurally sound shelter for animals kept outside; with three sides, a roof, and a floor and is water and wind resistant.

Section 6-9 Animals Creating a Public Nuisance. It shall be unlawful for any owner or custodian to permit his or her animal, or an animal in his or her care to create a public nuisance.

Public nuisance is defined as damaging, soiling, or defiling community or neighborhood private or public property; interfering with ordinary use and enjoyment of a person's property; turning over garbage containers or damaging flowers or vegetables; causing unsanitary or offensive conditions; or impeding the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorists.

Section 6-13 Running at Large Prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any person having possession, custody, control, or ownership of an animal (including cats) to allow that animal to run at large. Hunting dogs shall be excluded provided they are legally hunting and not trespassing. Dogs must be leashed when in any public park. (This restriction does not apply within the boundaries of a legal dog park)

**The City of Winston-Salem as well as some incorporated towns within the County have enacted separate local leash laws (Restraint of Dogs) that are enforced by The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Division. Within Winston-Salem City Limits, dogs must be contained to the owner's property by a fence or other device. If required, fencing must be adequate in height and construction as to keep the resident dog in and other dogs and children out.*

Section 6-17 Animal Bite. It is unlawful for any person having possession, custody, control, or ownership of an animal to allow that animal to bite a human being. The animal may be impounded and preventative measures may be required.

Section 6-18 Preventatives Measure for Confinement of Animals. The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Division shall have the authority to require specific preventative measures which may include, but are not limited to, fence installation, repairs, or security. The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Division also has the authority to require the animal's owner to obtain liability insurance for the benefit of anyone who may be injured by the animal.

Section 6-25 Vaccination of Dogs, Cats, and Ferrets. It shall be unlawful for any person having possession, custody, control, or ownership of an animal to fail to provide a current rabies vaccination for any dog, cat, or ferret three (3) months of age or older. Dogs must wear a rabies tag. Cats and ferrets are not required to wear a rabies tag. The owner must have written proof of vaccination for all animals.

Section 6-27 Report and confinement of animals biting a person. Any animal who has bitten a person shall be confined for ten (10) days at the direction of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Division. Confinement shall be at the expense of the animal's owner. It shall be unlawful to fail to report an animal bite or the whereabouts of an animal that has bitten a person.

Section 6-44 Impoundment. Any animal which appears to be lost, strayed, or abandoned; or dogs found not to be wearing a valid registration tag, if applicable, or rabies tag; or animals found running at large shall be impounded by the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Division.

Animal Regulations

In

Forsyth County, North Carolina



Section 6-46 Redemption The owner of an impounded animal may redeem the animal within three (3) business days of impoundment by paying all fees and penalties due. Every dog and cat reclaimed by its owner will be microchipped prior to its release. Failure to reclaim an animal does not relieve the animal's owner from paying all applicable fees and penalties.

**If necessary, fees for microchip(s), any applicable vaccinations, and/or boarding fees will be due at time of redemption. Any unpaid past due citations will be due to the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office prior to redemption as well.*

Section 6-54 Possession of Inherently Dangerous Exotic Animals and Wild Animals Prohibited. It is unlawful for any person or business to possess, harbor, or have an inherently dangerous exotic mammal, an inherently dangerous reptile, or a wild animal. Exemptions include lawfully operated carnivals and circuses, lawfully operated pet shops, zoos, veterinarians, and wildlife rehabilitators with proper permits.

**** This brochure offers brief excerpts from some of the most violated ordinances. For a full listing of all Forsyth County Codes regarding animals, you can visit:**

https://library.municode.com/nc/forsyth_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH6AN

Section 6-55 Violations and Penalties

- (a) **Criminal Penalties.** If a person violates this ordinance, they shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than \$500.
- (b) **Civil Penalties.** Any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty for each violation in the amount established by the Board of County Commissioners.
- (c) **Citations.** The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Division is authorized to issue written citations to violators of this chapter. No impounded animal may be redeemed from the shelter until all incurred penalties have been paid in full.

First offense	\$50 and microchip
Second offense	\$75 and microchip
Third offense*	\$150 and microchip
Fourth offense*	\$200 and microchip
Fifth and successive*	\$500 and seizure of animal(s)

*And animal must be spayed or neutered