

Ponoka's New Animal Control Bylaw – Find Out What's New

Did you know the Town of Ponoka has a new Animal Control Bylaw that regulates both cats and dogs? Over the coming weeks, we'll bring you a series of 'What's New' articles that explore the new Bylaw. This week, we'll look at some new definitions in the Bylaw.

New Definition for 'Animal'

The new Bylaw defines 'Animal' as any cat or dog, so wherever you see the word 'Animal' in the new Bylaw, it is referring to cats and dogs. For example, where the Bylaw states that animal owners are guilty of an offence if the animal is running at large, this rule applies to both cats and dogs.

New Definition for 'Exotic Pets'

The new Exotic Pet definition was added to the Bylaw in response to input received during the public consultation process held by the Town in late 2019 and 2020. The new Bylaw defines an 'Exotic Pet' as an Animal that is of foreign origin or character, not native or introduced from abroad but not fully naturalized. The Town of Ponoka allows Exotic Pets unless they are restricted by provincial or federal legislation.

Grandfathering Licence

A maximum limit of five cats and dogs in total per residence is permitted in the Town of Ponoka under the new Bylaw (unless the property is occupied and operated by a licensed kennel operator in accordance with a development permit under the Town's Land Use Bylaw).

Pet owners who currently own more than five cats and dogs can apply



for a Grandfathering Licence for each animal that exceeds the five-animal-per-residence limit. Upon application and payment, those animals would be grandfathered under the new Bylaw. Grandfathering Licences are not transferrable to another dog or cat.

A Grandfathering Licence may be applied for between April 1 and June 30, 2021 by contacting the Town Office at 403-783-4431. Applications for Grandfathering Licences will not be accepted after June 30, 2021. Grandfathering Licences purchased before the deadline will not expire until December 31, 2022, giving those pets an extra six months of licensing coverage in the first year of the new Bylaw. After December 2022, grandfathering licences will need to be renewed annually.

Other provisions in the new Bylaw include:

- **Annual licensing** is required for all dogs and cats aged six months and older; and
- **New fee and fine schedules** that were last updated in 2007.

The Bylaw takes effect immediately, but the five-animal limit and cat regulations and licensing will not be enforced until **July 1, 2021** in order to give citizens time to become familiar with the new Bylaw and to purchase cat licences and Grandfathering Licences.

Next week we will discuss the new definition, regulations and licensing requirements for Aggressive Dogs under the new Bylaw.

Questions?

You can learn more about the new Animal Control Bylaw at an **online Open House** being held on the Town website at www.ponoka.ca. Scroll down the homepage and click the link under 'New Animal Control Bylaw – Online Open House'.

If you have any questions about the new Animal Control Bylaw, please phone the Town Office during regular office hours from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday at 403-783-4431.

How to Buy a Cat Licence

You will be able to purchase cat licences starting later this month once the new cat tags arrive. The exact date will be announced soon. To purchase a cat licence once they become available, please contact the Town at pets@ponoka.ca or 403-783-4431 to request a copy of the animal licensing form. You can then send the completed form with payment by mail to the Town Office (#200, 5604-50 Street, Ponoka, AB, T4J 1G5), by email with credit card information at pets@ponoka.ca, or by placing the animal licensing form and payment in the drop box in the west vestibule at the Town Office between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Cat owners have until July 1 to purchase licences before enforcement of the Bylaw begins. Licences purchased this year will **not expire until December 31, 2022**, giving cat owners an extra six months of licensing coverage in the first year of the new Bylaw. After December 2022, cat licences will need to be **renewed annually**, similar to dog licences. Owners must include proof their cat has been spayed or neutered to be eligible for the Altered Licence fee. Dog licences purchased this year will expire and require renewal by December 31, 2021.



~ UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS ~

- **Next TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 @ 6 p.m.**
- **Next COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 @ 6 p.m.**
- **The public is welcome to observe all Council and Committee of the Whole meetings electronically due to COVID-19. Please register first** by no later than 12 noon on the day of the meeting by phoning 403-783-4431 during office hours Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You will be provided with details on how to observe the meeting by telephone or an online audio link.
- **Public Forum:** If you would like to address Council via telephone during the Public Forum portion of the meeting, please register by no later than 12 noon on the day of the meeting by phoning 403-783-4431.

~ TOWN NEWS ~

- **Town Services During COVID-19** – The Town Office at the Ponoka Civic Centre remains closed to the public due to provincial COVID-19 health directives, but is still open for business by phone, email, fax and online. Citizens can contact the Town by phone at 403-783-4431, by email at town@ponoka.ca, or by fax at 403-783-6745. Citizens can also use the drop box in the west vestibule from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays to Fridays. For more information about Town services available during COVID-19, please visit www.ponoka.ca, scroll down to 'Updates on the Town of Ponoka Response to COVID-19' and click the link.
- **Recyclable Materials** bundled in clear or blue transparent plastic bags should be placed at the curb for pick up March 17, 18 and 19 – depending on what Zone you live in.
- **Grey Carts and Green Carts** should be placed at the curb for pick up on March 24, 25 and 26 – depending on your Zone.



Hometown Weekly
Town of Ponoka News & Events

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