

Responsible Pet Ownership

So you've got a pet (or a few) - lucky you! You get a lifetime of companionship, love, activity and much more from your four-footed family member. You also get a whole new set of responsibilities!

One of those responsibilities is following the laws of our County and State which pertain to animals. Following these laws will help your pet live a healthier and safer life. Below are summaries of some of the most commonly violated laws, and ways in which you can be responsible for your own pets - and be a good neighbor!

LICENSING. Your dog is required to wear a current Hawaii County license at all times, even when on your property. Licenses are just \$6.10 (or only \$2.10 if your dog is sterilized) and can be purchased at any HIHS shelter. You can be fined if your dog is unlicensed at any time, even on your property.



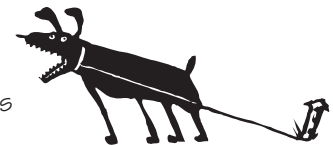
Cats are not required to wear tags, but we encourage all cat owners to put collars and tags on their cats. ID tags help your pet get home in case he or she gets lost. Microchipping is also a great way to give your pet a permanent ID in case her collar gets lost. Check with your veterinarian or HIHS about getting your pet microchipped.

LOOSE ANIMALS. For your dog's safety, he should be confined to your property at all times, or secured on a leash when in public. Loose dogs can get into car accidents, hurt (or be hurt) by other animals, or be lost or stolen. Hawaii County code (HCC 4-30) states that an owner of a loose dog can be fined anywhere from \$25 to \$500 for permitting the dog to stray.

There are many ways to secure your dog - HIHS can provide guidance and suggestions to help you keep your dog safely confined.

DEFECATION & NUISANCE. HCC 4-19 states that it is unlawful to allow your pet to defecate or cause any nuisance on a public street or private property. In other words, pick up the poop!

NOISE. According to HCC 4-24, you are breaking the laws if you allow your dog to bark incessantly for more than 10 minutes continuously, or for 20 minutes intermittently within a 30-minute period. If your dog is barking continuously, he is probably trying to tell you something! Don't ignore your barking dog - your neighbors won't.



If you have a noisy dog in your neighborhood, try approaching your neighbor to work out a reasonable solution. Sometimes, animals bark when the owner isn't home - they may not even be aware of the problem! If the owner refuses to address the problem and the dog continues to be disruptive, notify police.

CRUELTY. You must provide adequate food to maintain your pet's body weight, and fresh water and shelter at all times. The animal's living area must be clean and free from excess waste and other contaminants. It is considered cruelty to animals if a person overworks, tortures, beats, or starves or deprives a pet of food or water; or mutilates, poisons, or kills without need any domestic animal, including cockfighting and dog fighting.



Any possible cruelty situation should be reported to the Humane Society IMMEDIATELY. If you see a case of possible neglect or cruelty, don't wait until it may be too late. Report the incident right away - your call can be kept anonymous.

SPAY AND NEUTER. Although sterilization is not required by law, it is important to consider all of the benefits of sterilizing your pet. Sterilized animals have less chance of developing certain forms of cancer and can lead longer lives. Male dogs and cats that are neutered will exhibit fewer nuisance behaviors associated with mating - spraying, yowling, or running off in search of a mate. Aggression is also reduced. The American Veterinary Medical Association determined that up to 75% of all dog bites were made by unneutered male dogs. Most of all, there are already way too many animals on our island, and most of them can't find homes. Don't add to the problem. Truly responsible pet owners have their pets spayed or neutered.



The Hawaii Island Humane Society is here to help you with these and other animal related problems. Speakers are available from each shelter to speak to your community group.



Kona 329-1175
Waimea 855-4558
Keaau 966-5458