



New Dog Tethering Law in Effect January, 1, 2014

Drafted and supported by a broad coalition, the new law adds an important tool to address the public safety and animal welfare problems presented by chronically-chained dogs in communities across Oregon. Like all laws, this one is intended to be enforced by appropriate law enforcement officers. Fences For Fido does not have enforcement authority.

The new law does the following:

- *Limits tethering to:*
 - *Ten hours (in a 24 hour period) when dog is tethered to a stationary object;*
 - *Fifteen hours (in a 24 hour period) when dog is tethered to a running line, “zip line”, trolley, or pulley system;*
- *Prohibits use of choke and pinch collars when tethering dogs;*
- *Creates the offense of unlawful tethering, which*
 - *Is a Class B violation;*
 - *Is a Class B misdemeanor if the unlawful tethering results in the physical injury of the dog;*
 - *Is a Class A misdemeanor if the unlawful tethering results in serious physical injury or death of the dog.*
- *Creates new definitions for “adequate shelter” and “adequate bedding” to better protect animals from the elements*
 - *Prohibits sheltering in or under the following:*
 - *under vehicles, homes or porches;*
 - *in vehicles when doing so endangers the dog;*
 - *in cardboard boxes, in crates and carriers designed for temporary housing;*
 - *in wire cages;*
 - *in areas surrounded by debris or hazards that pose a threat to the dog.*
 - *Dogs tethered under the following circumstances are not subject to the tethering time limitations*
 - *Tethering in the physical presence of the person who owns, keeps, or controls the dog;*
 - *Tethering to comply with rules of campgrounds or other recreational area;*
 - *Tethering in connection with activities requiring a license, including hunting;*
 - *Tethering in connection with herding or protecting livestock, dogsledding or hunting;*
 - *Tethering while dogs are being transported;*

The law gives officers a valuable tool for enforcement:

Regulating the tethering of dogs and upgrading care standards will give animal control and law enforcement officers an important opportunity to educate dog owners on proper care, providing law enforcement with more certain, consistent, and enforceable minimum care standards. Tethering inconsistent with the requirements of the law is a violation (giving law enforcement a tool to require the family to make changes and corrections). In short, this new law may be used as a deterrent, a mechanism and tool to elevate the standard of care for those dogs living outside most hours of the day.

We anticipate that the regulation of chaining or tethering will reduce the high volume of calls to animal control and the law enforcement regarding the concerns over chained dogs, and complaints from neighbors over the constant barking, running at large, and the other undesirable behaviors of tethered dogs. The law will also reduce the threat to public safety, since chained dogs are far more likely to be aggressive.

Tethering and chaining is unsafe for dogs, and the community.

As FFF volunteers know only too well, a dog on a chain is lonely and isolated, and that can exacerbate a host of behavioral problems. The continuous chaining or tethering of a dog is a key contributor to poor socialization, as dogs chained long-term tend to bark excessively and often suffer great psychological damage which can make them anxious and aggressive. The Centers for Disease Control and the American Veterinary Medical Association warn that chained dogs are about eight times more likely to bite. Chained dogs are more likely to seek escape, and if successful, run at large, and pose a threat to themselves and the public. Further, the USDA considers tethering as a means for confinement to be inhumane and an inadequate method of confinement. Chains catch on objects, which can be dangerous, and can cause dogs to be unable to reach their food, water, or shelter. The new will help protect dogs from the risk of injury and strangulation.

Fences For Fido's Commitment to the Communities We Serve

While the heart of Fences For Fido will always be building fences, as an organization we recognized it was not enough to simply build fences alone. In order to be responsive to the needs of the communities we now serve, we needed to address the overarching problems associated with long-term tethering. It is not uncommon for FFF volunteers in the course of their work to encounter chained dogs who jump on people for attention, relentlessly bark, or who become lethargic and depressed. Once unchained, the dogs transform into different animals completely and often are invited into the home. While FFF will always be respectful with our families, we needed to elevate the standards of care, asking our families to search out ways to better meet the needs of their four legged family members, yet not abdicating our own responsibility as an organization, to be there for them, providing resources—working in partnership and collaboration.

Fences For Fido, an all-volunteer 501(c)(3), improves the quality of life for chained dogs living outside in the elements day and night. We attend to all needs by building a fence, removing the chain, supplying a warm dog house, providing critical veterinary care along with spay/neuter, and returning yearly to ensure the dog lives a safe, un-chained life. Founded in May 2009, Fences For Fido has built free fences for nearly 700 dogs throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington. Each of these dogs may have otherwise spent their entire lives on the end of a cold, metal chain.