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—Dr. Nicholas H. Dodman
Professor, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine

Officials Recommend and Praise Chaining Laws as Enforceable and Effective

[The tethering ordinance in Washington, D.C.] has given the [Washington Humane Society] Humane Law Enforcement Division an excellent tool in improving the lives of dogs in the District of Columbia . . . [The anti-chaining law] makes for safer neighborhoods and happier dogs all without adding burden to our enforcement division. Passing this law has reduced our workload rather than increased it. For these reasons we are strong proponents of the anti-chaining law and feel it has been a success here in the nation’s capital.”

—Adam Parascandola, director of humane law enforcement, Washington (D.C.) Humane Society

“I encourage any city or county (hopefully states someday) to [pass] a similar … ordinance to improve the lives of dogs and protect their citizens.”

—Elaine Modlin, animal control officer, Laurinburg, North Carolina

Wichita’s ordinance . . . has been a very useful tool in our efforts to improve the lives of the dogs in our city. . . . This is a welcome and enforceable tool . . . [and] has made it possible for our officers to educate pet owners about the importance of interacting with their pets, proper activity, and exercise. It has also given us the ability and ‘the teeth’ to prosecute those individuals that refuse to comply. . . . I highly recommend that other jurisdictions consider passing similar ordinances if they have issues with animal neglect, continuous chaining, and illegal dog fighting. Our ordinance has served us well.”

—Dennis Graves, animal control supervisor, Wichita, Kansas

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Resources
PETA stands ready to meet with and provide interested officials with further information about ways to improve the welfare of communities and animals through antitethering and other legislation. Please feel free to contact us for statistics, indices, expert statements, and sample ordinances.

PETA Headquarters
301 First St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA
HelpingAnimals.com

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DOG ATTACKS
A resource guide to keeping your community safe
Since 2003, at least 130 Americans have been injured or killed by chained dogs. Nearly 75 percent of those victims were children, and 17 died in the attacks. Chaining dogs, or “tethering” as it is sometimes called, is a national public- and animal-welfare crisis. More than 85 American cities and counties (as well as the state of California) have recognized the dangerous consequences of tethering—both for the community and for dogs—and have passed laws restricting or banning it. With this publication, PETA hopes to help you keep your community safe by introducing and passing your own law.

**Chaining Dogs Endangers Citizens, Especially Children**

A study partly authored by two Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) physicians found that chained dogs were 2.8 times more likely to attack than dogs who were not tethered.

Dog attacks are a serious public safety issue. In many cases, the attacking animals are chained; have broken loose from their tethers, or have generally been kept chained.

The most common victims in these attacks are young children. According to Karen Delise, author of Fatal Dog Attacks, 79 percent of the 431 people killed by dogs in the United States between 1965 and 2001 were children under the age of 12.

In 2002, chained dogs killed more American children than did fireworks accidents and falls from trees and playground equipment combined, and they killed as many kids as did gun accidents. A 1996 study partly authored by CDC officials found that of 38 children between the ages of 1 and 9 who were killed by dogs in the United States between 1989 and 1994, nearly 30 percent died after “wandering too close to a chained dog.”

Passing a law restricting or banning the continuous chaining of dogs following such tragedies helps ensure that no more lives will be claimed. In July 2005, Orange County, Florida, officials severely restricted the tethering of dogs and named the law for Myles Leakes, an Orlando boy who was fatally mauled by chained dogs the previous December. Vanessa Valenti, a spokesperson for Orange County’s Animal Services Division, explained, “We’re trying to reduce the number of people [bitten] by dogs.”

**“Chaining dogs creates unsafe neighborhoods. Chaining dogs creates communities in which our children, our elderly, or anyone unlucky enough is at risk for injury or death.”**

—Animal behaviorist Sue Sternberg

**The Dangerous, Cruel Practice of Chaining Dogs and a Community’s Answer**

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**“Children are the most common victims of serious dog bites.”**

—The American Veterinary Medical Association

“We [passed] this ordinance for two main reasons: (1) the safety of our citizens and (2) for the humane treatment of the animals. Our records indicated that 31 percent of our dog bites were from dogs [who] were confined on chains or had been chained and had broken loose.

... I observed that most of our dogs [kept] chained were receiving inhumane treatment.”

—Elaine Modlin, animal control officer, Laurinburg, North Carolina
Removing the option of flight for any animal will always increase the chance of a fight. Most chained dogs are cognizant of the fact that he can only retreat the length of the chain and will often opt to "stand his ground." Karen Delise explains: "[T]he natural fight or flight response afforded to most animals in most stressful situations is denied to a chained animal. The dog is cognizant of the fact that he cannot fly and that he cannot run away. When confronted with a threat, a dog will either flee from the danger or confront it. Dogs are 'fight or flight' animals. They feel extremely uncomfortable in their own territory when they are not able to retreat. Physical restraint promotes excessive territoriality, which may be manifested as aggression. These attacks are completely unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment."

—Elizabeth Shull, president, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

"In addition to frustration, the constant physical restraint promotes excessive territoriality, which may be manifested as aggression. These attacks are completely unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment." —Elizabeth Shull, president, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

Animal Behaviorists Agree: Chaining Makes Dogs Dangerous

While the fatal consequences to humans of chaining dogs are what most often capture public attention and officials' ire, continuous chaining is also detrimental to the physical well-being of any dog. Many chained dogs are deprived of adequate food and water, shelter, and veterinary care, and their social needs are ignored. They frequently die of starvation throughout the winter and succumb to exposure during the summer. Internal and external parasites feed on these animals year-round. In the summer, round and hook ticks and biting flies are especially severe for chained dogs, who have no escape from them.

Chained dogs are often choked to death or are attacked.

Chained dogs hang or choke to death after they become entangled or try to leap over fences or other items. Collars put on dogs as puppies become painfully embedded in the animals' skin as they grow older and the collars are not enlarged. These animals' fates have prompted many cities and counties to pass anti-tethering legislation. For example, Fairhope, Alabama, banned chaining after the city's animal control officer rescued a chained dog who was so starved that his ribs were clearly visible. After the remains of a Burleigh, New Jersey, woman's chained dog were found in her backyard in January 2004, at least six cities in Cape May County adopted anti-tethering legislation. Navarre, Florida, enacted identical anti-"chaining" laws "[which] had been tied out around up choking themselves" by "jumping over items," according to the City Attorney's Office.

Chaining Dogs is Cruel to Animals

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"The ordinance was originally passed because putting an animal on a [tether] was deemed cruel for a variety of reasons. ... We had seen a number of instances where animals ... wound up choking themselves when they tried to escape by jumping over items in the yard, such as cars or mowers..." —Pat Mehrhoff, senior assistant prosecuting attorney, Tucson, Arizona

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Make Your Community and Its Dogs Safer by Banning Chaining

Whether you are considering legislation to restrict or ban the continuous chaining of dogs in response to a serious community need such as a tragic dog attack or a community safety concern, taking this initiative on behalf of your constituents and your community's animals. According to the CDC, “[t]he nature is something that needs to be done for the safety of the public and the animals.”

—Kenny Beasley, mayor, South Roxana, Illinois

In September 2006, the state of California banned the tethers of dogs for more than three hours.

“This bill helps protect dogs from cruelty and enhances public safety by preventing aggressive animal behavior that can result from inhumane tethers.”

—Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger

Effective bans on tethers prohibit the fastening, tying, or chaining of dogs to all stationary objects by any means.

Bans on tethering can be read at the text of every American anti-tethering ordinance can be found at http://www.yourundo.org. Strategies to encourage responsible pet ownership and reduce dog bites include regulatory measures ... and legislation.”

“Make Your Community and Its Dogs Safer by Banning Chaining”

Here are three sample ordinances:

**Orange County, Florida**

Section 5.99: Defenses

Restraining Device shall mean a chain, cord, or cable, and such other means of attachment as can be used to ensure that the dog or puppy is fixed to the premises of the owner of the animal, including at all times when the animal is not directly under the control of the owner or his/her designee.

(a) It is prohibited to exclusively restrain a dog or puppy by a fixed-point chain or tether. A fixed-point chain or tether shall be fixed to the premises of the owner and confined in a secure enclosure designated by the owner or his/her designee.

(b) A dog may be exclusively restrained by a chain or tether provided that it is at least ten (10) feet in length and attached to a pole or tree and cannot be used to prevent the dog from having free access to food, water, shelter, adequate ventilation, protection from the elements or other care generally considered to be normal and usual. This device shall be proportional in size, weight and length to the specific breed of animal and its approximate adult size. These devices shall not be used to confine a dog or an owner's property between the hours of 5:00 am and 7:00 pm, unless the owner and during times of extreme weather, e.g., hurricanes, below freezing conditions.

(c) Any tethering system employed shall not allow the dog or puppy to have a range of movement for a reasonable period.

(d) Any chain or tether shall not be used to confine a dog or puppy to a tree limb or any other stationary or highly immobile object by any means.

(e) Any chain or tether shall not be used to confine a dog or puppy to a fixed point of the owner's property.

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**Los Angeles, California**

Section 5.70: Care and Maintenance of Dogs

In order to ensure the health and welfare of a dog, it is prohibited to exclusively restrain a dog by means of a rope, chain, strap or other physical restraint for a temporary task that requires the dog to be physically restrained for a reasonable period.

The dog must be restrained by a non-choke type collar or harness worn by the animal.

• Orange County, Florida

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**Louisville, Kentucky**

Section 59.001: Definitions. Restraint.

1. A dog may be exclusively restrained by a chain or tether provided that it is at least ten (10) feet in length and attached to a pole or tree and cannot be used to prevent the dog from having free access to food, water, shelter, adequate ventilation, protection from the elements or other care generally considered to be normal and usual. This device shall be proportional in size, weight and length to the specific breed of animal and its approximate adult size. These devices shall not be used to confine a dog or an owner's property between the hours of 5:00 am and 7:00 pm, unless the owner and during times of extreme weather, e.g., hurricanes, below freezing conditions.

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