

DOG LAW
Act of Dec. 7, 1982, P.L. 784, No. 225
AN ACT

Cl. 03

Relating to dogs, regulating the keeping of dogs; providing for the licensing of dogs and kennels; providing for the protection of dogs and the detention and destruction of dogs in certain cases; regulating the sale and transportation of dogs; declaring dogs to be personal property and the subject of theft; providing for the abandonment of animals; providing for the assessment of damages done to animals; providing for payment of damages by the Commonwealth in certain cases and the liability of the owner or keeper of dogs for such damages; imposing powers and duties on certain State and local officers and employees; providing penalties; and creating a Dog Law Restricted Account. (Title amended Dec. 11, 1996, P.L.943, No.151)

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The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

ARTICLE I
SHORT TITLE AND DEFINITIONS

Section 101. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Dog Law."

Section 102. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the meanings given to them in this section:

"Boarding kennel." Any establishment available to the general public where a dog or dogs are housed for compensation by the day, week or a specified or unspecified time. The term shall not include a kennel where the practice of veterinary medicine is performed if the kennel is covered by the provisions of the act of December 27, 1974 (P.L.995, No.326), known as the "Veterinary Medicine Practice Act." The term shall include any boarding facility operated by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine whether or not this facility is on the same premises as a building or structure subject to the provisions of the "Veterinary Medicine Practice Act." The term shall include any establishment available to the general public that, for consideration, takes control of a dog from the owner for a portion of a day for the purposes of exercise, day care or entertainment of the dog. For the purpose of this term, each time a dog enters the kennel it shall be counted as one dog. This term does not include an establishment engaged only in dog grooming or dog training.

"Commercial kennel."

- (1) A kennel that breeds or whelps dogs and:
 - (i) sells or transfers any dog to a dealer or pet shop-kennel; or
 - (ii) sells or transfers more than 60 dogs per calendar year.
- (2) The term does not include a service dog kennel.

(Def. amended July 8, 2024, P.L.527, No.47)

"Dealer kennel." A kennel operating within the Commonwealth which:

- (1) publicly or privately sells or offers for sale any dog as an owner, agent or assignee for a fee, commission or percentage of the sale price;
- (2) transfers dogs at wholesale for resale to another; or
- (3) offers or maintains dogs at wholesale for resale to another. The term does not include a pound, shelter or common carrier or a kennel defined elsewhere in this section.

"Humane society or association for the prevention of cruelty to animals." A nonprofit society or association duly incorporated pursuant to 15 Pa.C.S. Ch. 53 Subch. A (relating to incorporation generally) for the purpose of the prevention of cruelty to animals, which has a licensed physical kennel facility that can house a minimum of ten dogs, and which is not located on a residential property. (Def. amended Oct. 23, 2023, P.L.114, No.18)

"Kennel." Any establishment in or through which at least 26 dogs are kept or transferred in a calendar year, or a boarding kennel as defined in this act.

"Out-of-state dealer." A person who does not reside in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and who:

- (1) sells or offers for sale a dog in this Commonwealth belonging to another person, for any type of consideration, fee, commission or percentage of the sales price; or
- (2) transfers a dog in this Commonwealth for resale to another for any type of consideration, fee, commission or percentage of the sales price.

"Pet shop-kennel." Any kennel or person that acquires and sells dogs for the purpose of resale, whether as owner, agent or consignee, and sells or offers to sell such dogs on a retail basis.

"Private kennel." A kennel not meeting the definition of "commercial kennel" where dogs are kept or bred by their owner, for the purpose of hunting, tracking and exhibiting in dog shows, performance events or field and obedience trials.

"Rescue network kennel." A kennel that utilizes rescue network kennel homes with the goal of ultimately transferring the dog to a permanent owner or keeper through any means of transfer.

"Rescue network kennel home." An establishment to which a rescue network kennel assigns a dog until the dog is ultimately transferred to a permanent home.

"Research kennel." Any Federal research kennel or other research kennel duly registered with and inspected by the Federal Government under the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act (Public Law 89-544, 7 U.S.C. § 2131 et seq.) and its attendant regulations.

"Service dog kennel." A kennel that:

- (1) Is accredited by an organization that:
 - (i) is an international coalition of nonprofit member programs that includes organizations in this Commonwealth that train service dogs;

- (ii) has a chapter in North America; and
 - (iii) accredits nonprofit organizations, as defined under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) (relating to exemption from tax on corporations, certain trusts, etc.), that place service dogs.
- (2) Exclusively breeds, trains and places service dogs to support people with disabilities.
- (3) Is a nonprofit organization as defined under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).
- (Def. added July 8, 2024, P.L.527, No.47)