



HOW TO FILE A POTENTIALLY VICIOUS ANIMAL COMPLAINT



Dear Resident:

Ordinance 607 provides a procedure for identifying and dealing with animals that might be a threat to humans, dogs, and cats. A potentially vicious animal is defined as any animal, **when unprovoked**:

1. Acts as if intends to bite a human, dog, or cat whether on public or private property;
2. Chases or approaches a human upon a public way in a threatening fashion as if to inflict injury or serious harm;
3. Demonstrates aggressive behavior, which requires a human to take defensive or evasive action to avoid physical contact with the animal.

If you have witnessed an animal, which exhibits threatening behavior as listed above, here is what you can do:

- Call Code Enforcement/Animal Control and state that you wish to initiate a hearing to declare an animal “potentially vicious.” You will need to be able to provide basic information to the call taker so that he/she can direct your call properly. The number for Code Enforcement/Animal Control is 751-0493.
- The Animal Control Officer will come to your home to take the report and to initiate required paperwork. If you prefer, you can come to City Hall to start the process.
- When the Animal Control Officer arrives, you will be asked to fill out and sign various reports and questionnaires, which will be needed to pursue the matter further. Please provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all witnesses who can provide relevant and credible testimony. All witnesses must be willing to testify at a hearing before the Municipal Judge. Remember, the chance of success will depend on the amount of evidence provided and the credibility of the witnesses.
- The Animal Control Officer will review the application and determine whether the information is complete. Upon the determination that the information is complete, the Animal Control Officer will submit the information to the Court Clerk. The Court Clerk will place the matter for hearing on the Court docket. The animal owner and the complainant will both be notified of the time and date of the hearing.
- The Municipal Judge will hold a hearing within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the completed and approved application. The Judge will examine the evidence and hear testimony. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Judge will decide if the animal is, or is not, potentially vicious. If the Judge declares the animal to be potentially vicious, the owner of the animal will be ordered to comply with the provisions of Section 5-77 within thirty days. The Judge’s decision is final.