

DESERET Morning News

Laws against tethering dogs are 'no-brainers'

By Matthew Margolis

Published: August 10, 2006

California is considering a law (SB1578, Sen. Alan Lowenthal, D-CA) that would make it a crime to tether a dog for more than three hours a day to a fixed object. The violation would be a misdemeanor that would require fines of up to \$1000 per dog and six months in jail.

Other anti-tethering legislation is being considered elsewhere in the states of Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania. Communities throughout North America the United States are also considering laws that ban or limit chaining. They include: Chicago, Ill.; Danville, Va.; Bloomington, Ind.; Gainesville, Fla.; and Burnaby, B.C. British Columbia. Laws that limit or ban inhumane tethering have been passed in: Baker, La.; Creve Coeur, Mo.; Dodge City, Kan.; and Columbus, Ga., among others.

Anti-chaining and anti-tethering laws are "no brainers" as far as I am concerned. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tell us that chained dogs are three times more likely to bite than nontethered dogs. Beyond that, how can anyone disagree that tethering is animal cruelty? I don't think a dog should be tethered for any reason, unless it is while being groomed or for a short period of time for the dog's protection in certain environments. If you can't provide an adequate environment for a dog, like a fence, kennel or dog run, then you should reconsider getting a dog.

Tethering a dog has more negatives than positives. They often become frustrated, anti-social for the most part, and they develop compulsive behaviors like pacing and excessive barking. Dogs are territorial by nature, regardless of their temperament. Tethering increases territorial aggression. The dog is basically trapped without the ability to deal with the world around him or anything that he might perceive as a danger. So everything becomes a danger — including approaching animals or humans.

There are those who oppose anti-tethering legislation, saying they have concerns about people who work or that tethering is not a cause of aggression. But chaining or tying up dogs does contribute to aggressive behavior, often with terrible consequences. Since the beginning of this year there have been many cases of the devastating mauling of children by chained dogs in the Carolinas, California, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio and no doubt others. Chained dogs have killed children in Oklahoma, Missouri and Virginia — all since the beginning of 2006. If you want to get a complete picture of why dogs should not be tethered, visit a website that promises to open your eyes about the cruelty and consequences of tethering dogs. Go to www.unchainyourdog.org.

Of course, when there is an incident of a tethered dog that bites, those who do not understand dog behavior will blame the breed. Those who are in favor of allowing tethering will blame the aggression on other things like lack of socialization or the dog's temperament. Aggression is caused by a lot of things, and chaining or tethering dogs is the foul-tasting frosting on this bitter cake.

So what are the restrictions imposed in California's SB1578? It would restrict tethering, yet allow dogs to be attached to running lines and pulleys. Dogs could also be restrained in parks and recreational areas for limited amounts of time. My question to legislators everywhere when it comes to anti-tethering laws: What are you waiting for?

Don't forget to enter your dog in our cash-award contest before August 1. Submit a picture and a paragraph about "How Your Dog Has Changed Your Life." Rules and prizes are detailed on my website, and there is a handy online entry form that lets you publish your own submission. Visit my online magazine, The Woof Gazette, at www.unclematty.com.

Woof!

Dog trainer Matthew "Uncle Matty" Margolis is co-author of 18 books about dogs, a behaviorist, a popular radio and television guest, and host of the PBS series "WOOF! It's a Dog's Life!" Send your questions to

dearuncle.gazette@unclematty.com or by mail to Uncle Matty at P.O. Box 3300, Diamond Springs, CA 95619. © Creators Syndicate Inc.

© 2006 Deseret News Publishing Company | All rights reserved

State Law Limiting Dog Chaining Modeled on L.A. Ordinance

Los Angeles Times
September 27, 2006

SACRAMENTO -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill today outlawing the chaining of dogs for more than three hours a day, saying the new law will help prevent dog attacks.

Animal rights groups sponsored the bill, arguing that chained dogs often don't get adequate food, water or medical attention and are more likely to bite people because they are not socialized and cannot flee perceived threats.

The governor's signature makes California the second state, after Connecticut, to limit dog tethering. The new law is modeled after a city of Los Angeles ordinance.

"This bill helps protect dogs from cruelty," said Schwarzenegger in a statement, "and enhances public safety by preventing aggressive animal behavior that can result from inhumane tethering."

The governor, the owner of two dogs, signed the bill despite the opposition of policy advisors who called it unnecessary.

The legislation, SB 1578 by Sen. Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), takes effect in January. It makes it a misdemeanor — punishable by a fine of \$1,000 or six months in jail — to tie, chain or tether a dog for more than three hours a day. The law makes exceptions for dogs tied to running lines and pulley systems, used for hunting or herding sheep or cattle and those staying in campgrounds.

Roughly 80 cities or counties in the U.S. have passed similar ordinances, including Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles ordinance is more strict than the new state law. It allows no exception for running lines or pulley systems, said Ed Boks, general manager of the city's Department of Animal Services.

"We have found in Los Angeles that dogs are three times more likely to be involved in a biting situation if they are tethered," he said.

Roughly half of all children are bitten by dogs by the age of 12, said Boks.

"This is a real tool for animal care and control officers," he said. "It's a real tool, too, in helping people understand the value of their own pets. A tethered pet typically doesn't get the love and attention of a household pet."

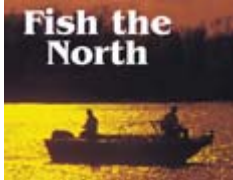
Pam Runquist, a spokeswoman for California Animal Assn., the coalition of 15 animal rights groups that sponsored the bill, said she understood that some families might not be able to afford a fence so an exception was made for dogs on a running line or pulley system.

Such methods of confinement are not ideal, she said, but allow a dog more movement than chaining.

"This is really a precedent-setting measure, in that we are banning [tethering] for other than short periods of times and demonstrating that California really cares about the treatment of our dogs," said Runquist.



52 Things To Do in the NW



Northern B.C. Tourism
Northwest B.C. Travel
Trails & Rec sites
Getaway B.C.
Heritage Park Museum

Health

[Water tests](#)
[Food safety ratings](#)
[Northern Health Authority](#)
[Air quality indexes](#)

Weather and Roads

[Terrace weather](#)
[Hwy16/37 road reports](#)
[Pacific weather map](#)
[Avalanche report](#)

Business

[enTel](#)
[Terrace Airport](#)
[16/37 Community Futures](#)

Aboriginal

[Nisga'a Lisims Gov't](#)
[Kermode Friendship Society](#)
[Gitxsan Chiefs](#)
[Kitsumkalum Band](#)
[Kitselas Band](#)
[NW Tribal Treaty](#)

Government

[City of Terrace](#)
[Kitimat Stikine Regional District](#)
[Province of B.C.](#)
[Government of Canada](#)
[Statistics Canada](#)
[Northern caucus](#)

because, as she put it, he was lonely and bored.

healthy, happy lives. SARAH ARTIS PHOTO

She considered this a matter of animal cruelty, public safety, public nuisance, public expense, public health and lawlessness.

Research shows dogs that are ignored and kept tied up are more likely to lash out, bite and bark.

City animal control officer Tammy McLean said the city had considered changing the bylaw before but never had the evidence to back it up.

Once Rivet demanded action, however, McLean did more research on other municipalities' legislation and went from there.

"It made sense," McLean said.

Terrace's new laws are heavily based on those of the City of Burnaby in the Lower Mainland.

At this time, the city has no plans to increase staff for enforcement.

"It's going to be more of an education program," McLean said. "People thought for a long time it was a good thing to tie up your dog. Now we have to readjust their thinking, get them on the same page."

The city plans to produce a brochure with care tips and leave it at houses that are the basis of complaints.

"We are hoping with (the new laws), we will be able to calm the majority of barking complaints we get," she said.

Rivet added, "Even if you don't have the manpower to reinforce everything, the expectation is there."

"This is the minimum standard to keep an animal," she said. "Just the fact that it exists teaches a minimum standard of care. A lot of people don't know better."

Other changes to the animal control bylaw include the addition of a \$10 fee to recover impounded cats and other small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs, and small updates to do with livestock allowances.

Some property were considered big enough to now have large livestock, McLean said.

The city also plans to post four new brightly coloured signs on Ferry Island that clearly indicate on- and off-leash areas.

McLean said dogs were the focus of the changes because the city dealt with them the most.