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PALO ALTO COUNTY IOWA

Amended Ordinance Establishing Animal Control In Palo Alto County

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Recorder's Cover Sheet

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Legal Description:

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AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 9-1-2026

AN ORDINACE ESTABLISHING ANIMAL CONTROL IN PALO ALTO COUNTY.

Be It Enacted by the Board of Supervisors, Palo Alto County, Iowa:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to improve animal control within the rural areas of Palo Alto County.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined for use in this Ordinance pertaining to Animal Control:

A. "Dog" means a domesticated quadruped descended from different wild species of the genus canine, as the wolf, fox or jackal.
B. "Cat" means a domesticated animal of the feline family.
C. "Domesticated animal" means any animal that is tame and has been selectively bred and genetically adapted over generations to live alongside humans.
D. "Livestock" means any animal owned, kept, maintained, bred, or raised for agricultural purposes, included but not limited to breeding, dairy or milk production, meat or fiber production, feeding or fattening, raising, sale, marketing, exhibition, transportation, or other commercial or agricultural purposes. Livestock includes, but is not limited to, cattle, horses, mules, donkeys, sheep, goats, swine, llamas, alpacas, and other domesticated animals commonly raised or maintained for agricultural purposes.
E. At large" means any dog or cat, any livestock, or any domesticated animal found off the premises of such animal's owner and not under the control of a competent person, restrained within a motor vehicle, or housed in a veterinary hospital or kennel or pen. The premises of such animal's owner should not include any public property. The premises shall only include private property.
F. "Owner" means any person owning, keeping, sheltering or harboring a dog, cat, any livestock, or other domesticated animal.

SECTION 3. DOGS, CATS, OR LIVESTOCK RUNNING AT LARGE

It is unlawful for dogs, cats, or any livestock to run at large within Palo Alto County. The owner of any dogs, cats, or livestock, found running at large is guilty of this section.

SECTION 4. AT LARGE/NUISANCE, SUMMONS

The owner of any dog, cat, any livestock, or other domesticated animal found at large or a nuisance in violation of this Ordinance based off the complainant(s) detailing the time, date and duration of being at large or a nuisance and/or photographic or video evidence submitted by a complainant. The complainant may be required to appear before a proper court to testify to the charges made for violation of this Ordinance.

SECTION 5. ANIMAL AT LARGE PROHIBITED

It shall be a violation of this Ordinance for an owner or person in control to permit or allow any domesticated animal or any livestock to run at large or to remain at large.

SECTION 6. ANIMAL NUISANCE

It shall be unlawful for any person to permit an animal under such person's control or within such person's custody to commit a nuisance. An animal shall be considered a nuisance if it:

A. Damages, soils, defiles or defecates on private property other than the owner's or on public walks and recreation areas unless such waste is immediately removed and properly disposed of by the owner.
B. Causes unsanitary, dangerous or offensive conditions.
C. Causes a disturbance by frequent and habitual howling, yelping, barking, or otherwise; or by running after or chasing persons, bicycles, automobiles or other vehicles, molests, attacks or interferes with a person or other domestic animals on public property.

SECTION 7. IMPOUNDMENT

If upon investigation there is probable cause to believe that a domesticated animal's continued presence would impair the safety or peace, a law enforcement officer may apprehend and impound the domesticated animal. The officer shall provide written notice of impoundment to the owner if the owner's name and current address can be determined. The notice shall be sent within two days after the domesticated animal has been impounded. The notice shall provide that if the owner does not redeem the domesticated animal within seven days from the date that the notice is delivered the domesticated animal may be humanely destroyed or otherwise disposed of in accordance with law. Notice is delivered when the officer mails the notice by regular mail. An owner may redeem a domesticated animal by paying the costs of impoundment. If the owner of the impounded domesticated animal fails to redeem the domesticated animal within seven days from the date of delivery of the notice to the domesticated animal's owner, the domesticated animal may be disposed of in accordance with the law. If the domesticated animal is destroyed, it must be destroyed by euthanasia as defined in Iowa Code Section 162.2.

SECTION 8. PENALTIES

Any person violating any of the provisions of this Ordinance is guilty of a simple misdemeanor. Any person convicted of such violation shall be punished by a fine of not more than $855.00, and not less than $105.00. (Code of Iowa, Section 331.302(2))

SECTION 9. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

If any section, provision or part of this Ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole or any section, provision, or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 10. STATE LAW – ADDITIONAL MEASURES

This ordinance is intended to supplement Iowa Code Chapter 351 as additional measures in the regulation of dogs and other animals.

SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as provided by law.

Adopted and passed by the Palo Alto County Board of Supervisors on this 1st day of September 2026.

Palo Alto County Board of Supervisors

Linus Solberg, Chairperson

Roger Faulstick

Ron Graettinger

Keith Wirtz

Craig Merril

ATTEST:

Jordan Morey, Deputy Auditor