

REASONS FOR DOG CONTROL

Each year the La Plata County Animal Protection Department receives hundreds of complaints about dogs. Most of the complaints involve problems created when dogs are permitted to run at large. The problems caused by dogs running at large may be classified as follows:

Property Damage Complaints

These complaints include the death of or injury to livestock, poultry, wildlife, and pets, including dog fight injuries.

Unprovoked Dog Bites

These often result in substantial physical injury to citizens of La Plata County.

The Creation of Hazardous Driving Conditions

Dogs running loose on roads create conditions which may result in automobile accidents, and may lead to injury and death to La Plata County citizens and to the dogs themselves.

Dog Nuisance Complaints

These complaints include dogs urinating or defecating on property other than the dog owner's, dogs raiding trash containers and scattering trash and garbage; and dogs chasing pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars.

Uncontrolled Breeding Problems

Dogs running at large breed with each other or with dogs that are restrained. Unwanted breeding leads to the production of unwanted puppies, which in turn leads to the expansion of the dog population in the county.

The Spread of Canine Diseases and Parasites

Dogs running loose can spread diseases such as parvo (an often fatal gastro-intestinal diarrhea), distemper, kennel cough (bordetella), and rabies, and can spread parasites such as fleas, mange, giardia, roundworm, and hookworms.

The Potential Spread of Disease from Canine Populations To Human Populations

Diseases such as bubonic plague (from fleas), ringworm, giardia, and rabies can be spread from dogs to people.

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The La Plata County Dog Control Ordinances (Secs. 10.31-10.112) were enacted to address these concerns. There is no such thing as a "harmless" dog at large. All dog owners in the unincorporated areas of La Plata County are expected to comply with the provisions of this law. Any dog found to be in violation may be impounded at the La Plata County Humane Society Animal Shelter, and the owner of said dog may be cited by authorized enforcement personnel for any violation.

VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

Section 10-88 Dog Not Vaccinated Against Rabies:

All dogs three months of age or older must be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian.

Section 10-86 Dog Not Licensed:

All dogs three months of age and older in the unincorporated areas of La Plata County must be licensed. Directions for licensing are on the back of the brochure.

Section 10-87 License Tag Display :

The License Tag must be worn by licensed dog at all times and attached to a durable collar or harness, unless on the property of the owner.

Section 10-34 Dog At Large:

Defined as any dog not restrained **on** the owner's property by means of fence or chain, or not under the owner's direct supervision and verbal command. Verbal Command requires the owner to be **outdoors** within sight and hearing of the dog, and to give it needed commands which must be carried out by the dog. Exempted are dogs being used in law enforcement activities, and dogs **actively** herding or protecting livestock.

A violation of the above laws carries a penalty of \$20, plus a 37% Victim's Assistance Surcharge, plus \$26 Court Costs. A second violation, after the first conviction, carries a penalty of \$60, plus the same surcharges and court costs as the previous conviction. A third violation regarding the same offense requires an appearance before the County Court Judge and carries a penalty, upon conviction of \$100 to \$300, plus the 37% surcharge and a potential jail term.

**To report violations or dog-related
problems, please call Durango Central
Dispatch at 970-385-2900.**

Section 10-64 Dog Injuring a Person:

This provision makes it unlawful to permit bodily injury to any person, and a dog owner is deemed to permit such injury if his dog is running at large at the time the bite occurs. This is a Class II misdemeanor and carries a potential fine of up to \$1,000 and a potential jail term. Being charged with this offense requires an appearance before County Court.

STATE LAWS:

The State of Colorado has also passed legislation which deals with dog-related problems. Any citizen of La Plata County can also be charged under these laws.

CRS 33-6-128(2) Allowing Dog to Harass Wildlife:

carries a fine of \$200, plus a 37% surcharge and may include restitution to the State of Colorado for injury to or death of wildlife. It also provides that any Peace Officer may shoot a dog which chases wildlife.

CRS 35-43-126 Dog Worrying Stock:

Provides that **any** person may shoot any dog which barks at, runs after, or chases livestock; and that the owner of such dog is financially liable for all damages done by it.

CRS 18-9-204.5: Unlawful Ownership of a Dangerous Dog:

This law provides **SEVERE** penalties regarding dogs which bite and inflict bodily injury, serious bodily injury, or death to any person; and it also applies to dogs which injure or kill domesticated animals (including other dogs, cats, and livestock). Restitution for damages is also mandated within the text of this law, and immediate impoundment of such dog can occur at the dog owner's daily expense until an officer of the Court releases said dog. It also allows the Court to order humane euthanasia of a dangerous dog.

CRS 18-9-202: Cruelty to Animals

It is unlawful to knowingly or with criminal negligence overdrive, overload, overwork, torture, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, unnecessarily or cruelly beat, needlessly mutilate, needlessly kill, carry or confine in or upon any vehicle in a cruel or reckless manner, or otherwise mistreat or neglect any animal. It is unlawful to fail to provide proper food, drink, protection from the weather or abandon an animal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BARKING DOGS: No county laws exist which relate to barking dog problems.

LICENSING: Proof of current rabies vaccination is required to obtain a dog license, and the license expires one year after date of issue. License fees are \$10.00 per year for neutered or spayed dogs, and 25.00 per year for intact dogs. Licenses are available only from the La Plata County Humane Society. The license must be renewed each year and worn on the collar at all times, unless on the owner's property.

IMPOUNDMENT: The Humane Society charges impound fees. They are \$40 if the dog is licensed, \$60 if it is unlicensed. These fines increase by \$20 for each subsequent impound. In addition there is a \$20 per day boarding fee.

CATS: Cats are not addressed by the county statues and Animal Protection will not pick up cats. Stray cats can be trapped and brought in to La Plata County Humane Society.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the Dog Control Ordinance or its enforcement, you may contact an Animal Protection Officer at 970-259-2847.

The La Plata County Humane Society Animal Shelter is located just North of Walmart at:

1111 S. Camino Del Rio
Durango, Colorado 81302
Telephone: 259-2847

To report violations or dog-related problems, please contact Durango Central Dispatch at 385-2900.

WILDLIFE ISSUES: Colorado Division of Wildlife 247-0855 is assigned all responsibility for wildlife issues within the State of Colorado. Animal Protection Officers will provide advice and guidance with issues such as skunk problems, rattlesnakes in yards, birds and bats within buildings, etc.

LIVESTOCK ISSUES:

- Colorado is an "OPEN RANGE" state requiring property owners to **fence livestock OUT** and OFF their property. Once a legal fence has been constructed the property owner can be compensated for damages done by livestock getting past the fence through civil court. A legal fence has fence posts 20 ft. apart with 3 strands of barbed wire able to turn ordinary horses and cattle.
- The Brand Inspector is assigned responsibility for lost, found, and stray cattle and equines; and is locally dispatched through the Colorado State Patrol Offices. (970) 385-8454
- For public safety reasons, Animal Protection Officers may **assist** with livestock loose on highways and county road right-of-ways. The direct responsibility for these issues is assigned by state statute to the County Sheriff's Department, the Colorado State Patrol, and the Brand Inspector.

DEAD ANIMALS: Animal Protection Officers may pick up dead **dogs** and **cats** on roads if the animals are reported in a timely manner, and provided the animals have not significantly deteriorated.

RABIES PREVENTION AND ANIMAL BITES:

The enforcement of regulations regarding Rabies Prevention and Animal Bites is the direct responsibility of the State Health Department. Animal Protection Officers assist by issuing Quarantine Orders to the owners of animals which inflict bites on persons, and by investigating the circumstances of the bites.

LA PLATA COUNTY ANIMAL PROTECTION



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1111 S. CAMINO DEL RIO
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