




Please note this is a very large meeting so please make sure you turn off your cameras and microphones for the duration.

Acts of 2024

- Ollie's Law: Signed into Law 9/20/24 updates kennel licensing laws and gives MDAR authority to write rules and regulations for kennels.

These are slides and notes from the 1/30/25 & 2/11/25 MDAR, MSPCA and ARL Ollie's Law Zoom Meetings for ACOs, ACO Supervisors, Town Clerks and other Town Officials.



**Ollie's Law
Information
Page**

- MDAR has created a webpage where they will post resources and any updates
- The website can be found at:

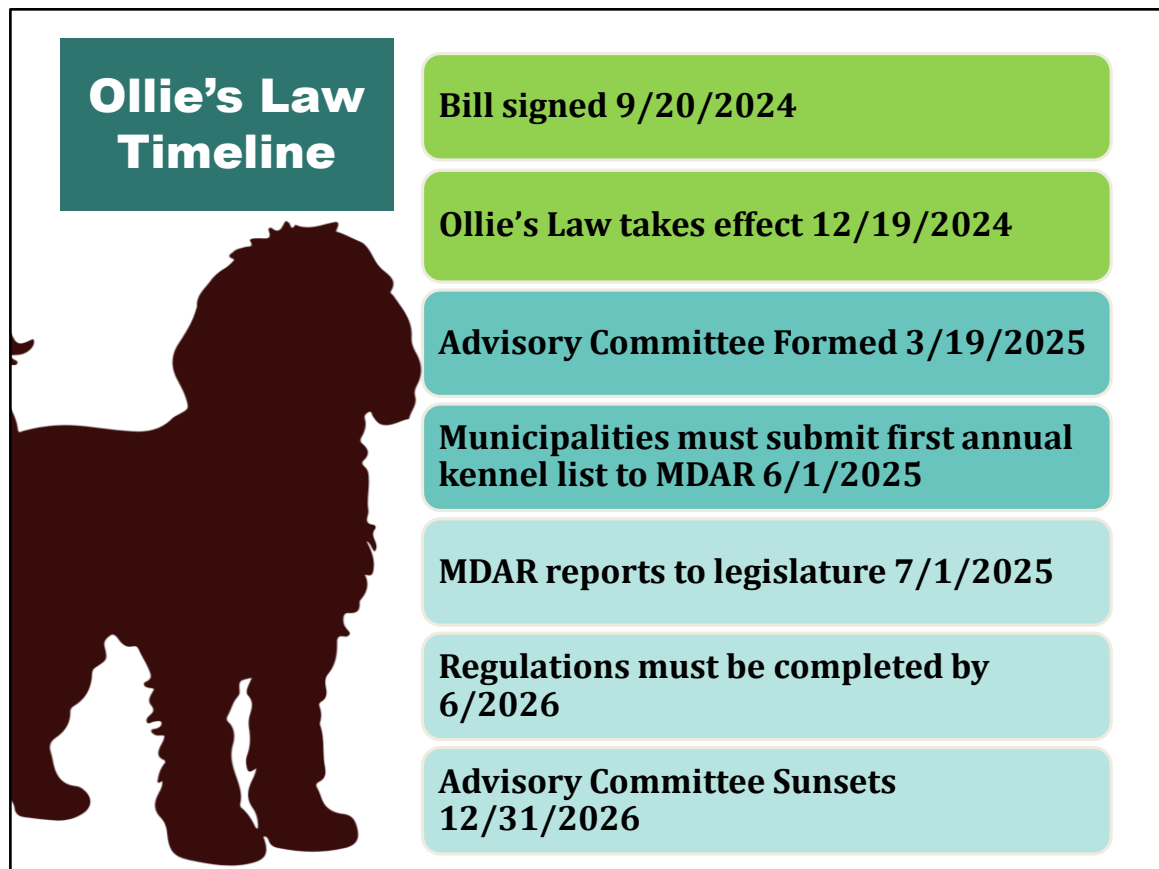
www.mass.gov/info-details/ollies-law-information

Mike Cahill (MDAR) spoke to the group and stated that MDAR is developing resources for ACOs, shelters/rescues, town clerks, etc. Sheri Gustafson (MDAR) presented the material, and Kara Holmquist (MSPCA), Allison Blanck (ARL), and Mike Cahill handled chat questions and the attendees. This was the first two Zoom meetings for Ollie's Law. Link to the Ollie's Law Information Page:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ollies-law-information>

Q: it would be helpful to have links and boxes other places and labeled new kennel info etc because a lot of people do NOT know that it is called ollie's law.

A: Sure, we can work on adding more labels, thank you for the suggestion.



Sheri mentioned that Ollie's was signed by the Governor in September, and while the law took effect on 12/19/2024. Many components of it will be developed and implemented over the next couple of years. The meetings were designed to focus on what things you need to know today and to chat about things that will be coming.

Ollie's Law Key Points



- Municipalities **must** have a system in place to for their licensing authority to issue, suspend and revoke kennel licenses, (can't just not do kennel licensing)
- There is no exemption for kennel licensing if the town is allowing the kennel to operate
 - For example: they cannot exempt an operating kennel from getting a kennel license because its location is in area it is not zoned for a kennel under their bylaws.

Chat questions:

Q: Does this apply to private dog daycares that do not have a business license?

A: Day Cares are within the definition of commercial boarding kennels. They must have a kennel license from the municipality.

Q; If Doggie Dates operates in multiple cities and towns, would they need a kennel license in each town?

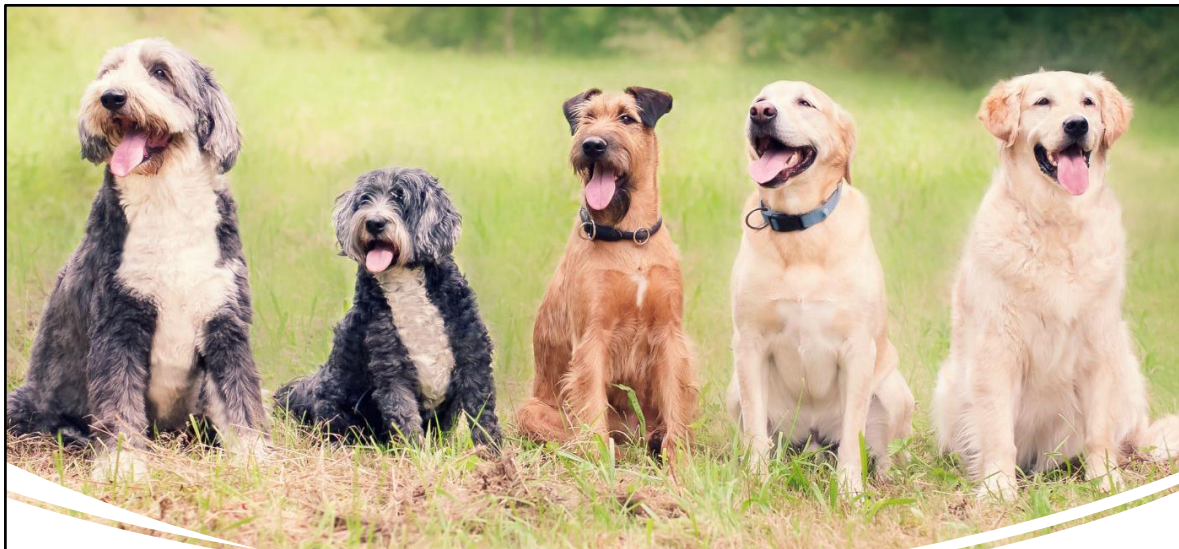
A: Yes, a kennel license is for a specific premises. If a licensee operates multiple locations, they need separate kennel licenses from the municipality they are in.

Q: So, are the local kennel regulations (bylaws) written by the Local Board of Health null and void?

A: Bylaws can expand state laws and make them “more strict.” However, they can not conflict with state laws, so the answer really depends on what is in your bylaws.

Q: Are there any sample dog by-laws that would include what is now required? A template?

A: We don't have sample bylaws, however, if you contact us, we can review bylaws or point you towards communities that may have bylaws you can pull from.



Chat Question

IF someone lives in an area not zoned for kennels but has 5 or more dogs, must they license all the dogs individually since they can't get a kennel license because of where they are?

Chat Question

If zoning prohibits anyone having a kennel license in that area, they cannot have 5 dogs in that area. If the zoning bylaw is intended to prohibit commercial boarding facilities in that area, but not prohibit personal dog ownership, then the bylaw should take the definitions in MGL Chapter 140, section 136A into consideration. If someone owns 5 dogs, they are required to have a kennel license.

Note: If zoning does not allow for a kennel license to be issued for an existing property, speak with your zoning department. The owners may be able to apply for a special permit or variance from their Zoning Board of Appeals to still be able to operate.

Ollie's Law Key Points

Remember the kennel licensing process is to ensure the animals there are kept in a safe and humane manner

The purpose of the law was to ensure that municipalities provided oversight to any location providing these services. You may have a by law that prohibits kennels, but you will have to enforce it.

If no bylaw exists to prohibit kennels, the place must be inspected and obtain a license to operate.



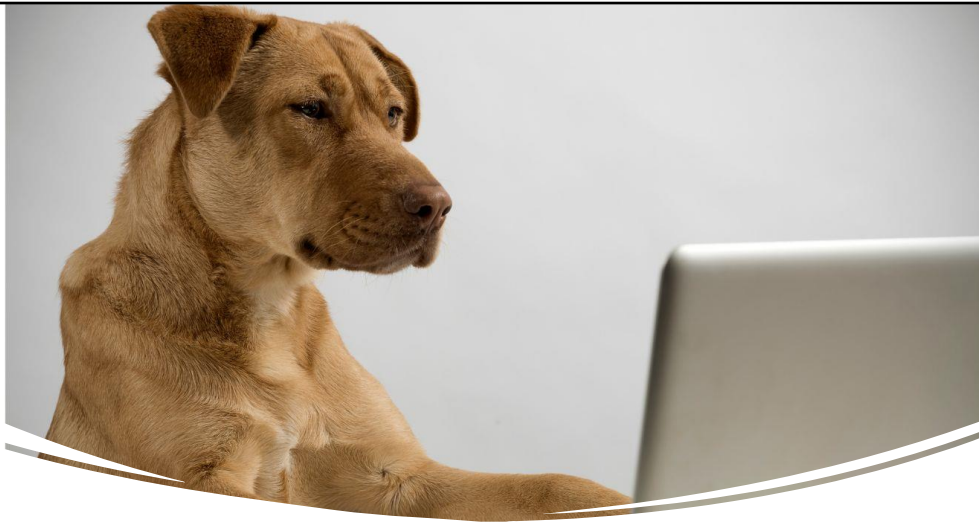
Q: Can you talk a little bit about the "No grandfathering" rule? I spoke with my licensing authority yesterday and he said this law doesn't apply to the daycare we have in town because they cannot obtain a kennel license due to zoning.

A: Municipalities must follow the state law. There is no grandfather clause in the statute. If a municipality is allowing a kennel to operate it must be licensed and inspected.

Q: If a business does grooming, boarding, and breeding, does one license cover all or is a kennel license needed for grooming, another for boarding, and so on?

A: The boarding aspect requires a commercial boarding

kennel license.



Chat Question

Q: If your town does not have a licensing program, when do they have to have their program established by?

A: It should be in development now. Licensed kennels must be reported to MDAR by 6/1/25.

Q: We won't have a kennel license program adopted by our town by June 2025. What should we send to MDAR if we have not issued any kennel licenses at that time?

A: If kennels are operating in town, like people that own 5 or more dogs or boarding kennels like doggy daycares, state law requires the animal control officer to inspect and the town to issue a license to these locations. That is not new, that has been the state law for decades.

Q: We have not issued a license to the doggy daycares because there is no kennel licensing procedure outlined in our bylaws. We only have definitions in our zoning bylaw that we

are working to update, but will not be updated by our annual town meeting. If my ACO has inspected a doggy daycare, but we have no license program in our bylaw therefore no kennel license issued, what do I do as the clerk? Do I just send MDAR a report of those who pass the kennel inspections?

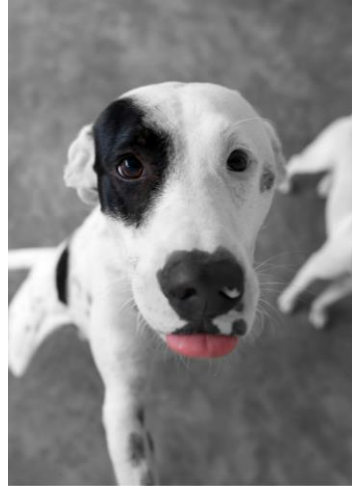
A: The state law adequately outlines the process and the requirement for licensing kennels. The municipality is not compliant with state law. That is the situation that was occurring in the town where Ollie was killed. It is why this law was passed. The municipality needs to get a system in place as soon as possible.

Ollie's Law Key Points

- Ollie's Law adjusted some key wording in MGL Chapter 140 section 137A:

All persons maintaining a kennel shall obtain a kennel license.

(This did not change!)



Q: We have a business in town where the individual picks up customers' dogs drives to a location to take them for a hike and then returns them to the owner's home. She does transport a few dogs at one time. Does this person need a kennel license?

A: No, she is walking the dogs, not bringing them to her premises or a place she contracts, so the activity isn't regulated under the kennel laws. Transporting and walking dogs is not currently addressed in Massachusetts law. As described, that activity does not require a kennel license.

Q: How about a dog walker that has the dogs at her house throughout the day?

A; Yes, that would fall under the definition of a Commercial Boarding/Training Kennel. They would need a kennel license to operate that way.

Q: What are the limits for dogs in a vehicle? Should they be in crates? What is the ratio of person to dog in a vehicle, hiking? If an accident occurs in a vehicle what are the protocols for dogs not being thrown out of the vehicle? Are they required to have an inspection at their facility & who monitors how many dogs are in the session per day and how many dogs should be allowed?

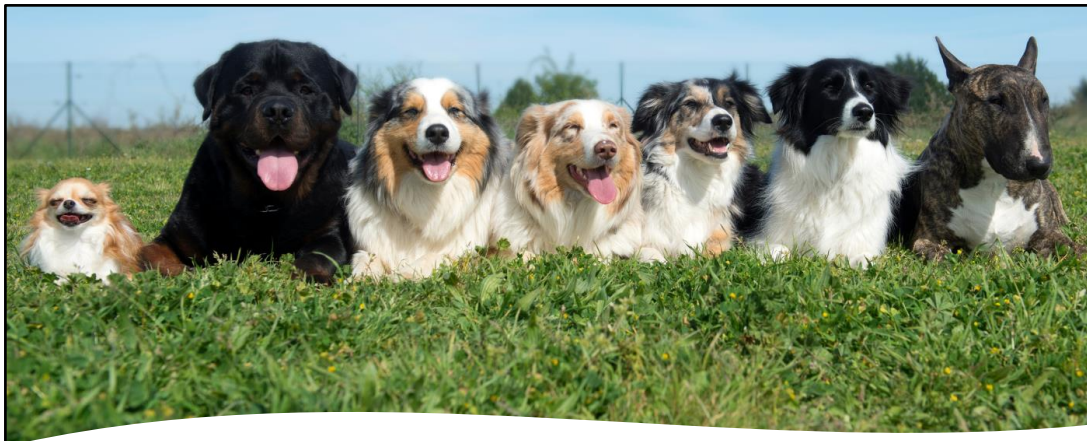
A: Dogs in vehicles, on dog walks, hiking, etc. are not areas that Ollie's law covers. Ollie's Law was created to help regulate kennel issues only.



Kennel Definitions Chapter 140 sec. 136A

- **"Kennel"**, a pack or collection of dogs on a single premise, including a commercial boarding or training kennel, commercial breeder kennel, domestic charitable corporation kennel, personal kennel or veterinary kennel.
- **"Licensee"** a person who owns and maintains a kennel that has received a kennel license from the relevant licensing authority
- **"Department"**, the department of agricultural resources.
- **"Keeper"**, a person, business, corporation, entity or society, other than the owner, having possession of a dog.
- **"License period"**, the period of time for which a municipal licensing authority prescribes the validity of a dog license, including the date of issuance of the license through the date on which the license expires, inclusive.
- **"Licensing authority"**, the police commissioner of the city of Boston and the clerk of any other municipality.

It's important to look at the definitions in MGL Chapter 140 sec. 136A to determine who needs a kennel license and who has the authority to enforce, and issue kennel licenses.



Kennel Definitions Chapter 140 sec. 136A

"Personal kennel", a pack or collection of more than 4 dogs, 3 months old or older, owned or kept under single ownership, for private personal use; provided, however, that breeding of personally owned dogs may take place for the purpose of improving, exhibiting or showing the breed or for use in legal sporting activity or for other personal reasons; provided further, that selling, trading, bartering or distributing such breeding from a personal kennel shall be to other breeders or individuals by private sale only and not to wholesalers, brokers or pet shops;

provided further, that a personal kennel shall not sell, trade, barter or distribute a dog not bred from its personally-owned dog; and provided further, that dogs temporarily housed at a personal kennel, in conjunction with an animal shelter or rescue registered with the department, may be sold, traded, bartered or distributed if the transfer is not for profit.

Ollie's cleaned up some conflicts in the laws about personal kennels. Now anyone who has 5 dogs or more needs a kennel license. There is no longer an option to get a kennel license in lieu of individual dog licenses if a premise does not meet the definition of a kennel. There were a lot of questions about personal kennel licenses from the attendees, here are just a few to help clarify.

Q: Do you want personal kennels with 4 dogs reported to you if the town's bylaw says more than 3 need a kennel license & Personal kennel with their own dogs - 4 or less dogs.. with this new legislation I can no longer issue a kennel license.

A: If they have 4 or fewer dogs, each will need to be licensed individually, they can not obtain a kennel license if they don't

fit the kennel definition.

Q: A town could change its bylaw though to say the definition of a personal kennel is 4 or more dogs correct?

A: No. Since dogs at a personal kennel do not have to be individually licensed, the Department feels lowering the threshold to obtain a kennel license conflicts with the law. If your town has a bylaw that conflicts with the state law, it needs to be changed

Multifamily units

We understand there seems to be a bit of confusion when it comes to multifamily and multi-unit housing. The rule of thumb is if there are 5 or more dogs in a family dwelling unit then they need to obtain a kennel license,

if you come across a unique situation and you need help determining if a kennel license is needed, do not hesitate to reach out to MDAR for guidance.



Q: Def of Personal Kennel states a single owner but Sheri stated a single premises. Which one is it?

A: It's both. ""Kennel", a pack or collection of dogs on a single premise..." ""Personal kennel", a pack or collection of more than 4 dogs, 3 months old or older, owned or kept under single ownership..."

Q: What if you have a couple living on a single premise with a total of 8 dogs, and they each claim to own 4 of the dogs?

A: We would say they need a kennel license.

Q: What about apartment buildings? It's one premise but multiple owners?

A: Each apartment, unit, is a separate premises.

Kennel Licenses Chapter 140 Sec. 137A

Personal kennel license needed

MORE than 4 dogs on the premise

- Breeder (hobby or individual)
- Foster home for licensed shelter/rescue
 - Foster dogs must also be individually licensed if over 6 months and kept for more than 30 days



*Dogs under 3 months of age don't count

Q: My question is about dogs that aren't required to be rabies vaccinated until 6 months of age, and that rabies vaccines can't be given until 12 weeks of age, but you need proof of a rabies vaccine for an individual dog license, how would you handle the following circumstance:

Household that has 3 adult dogs and 2 puppies that are 3-months-old. They can't apply for a kennel license until the puppies are vaccinated and the owner is choosing to wait until 5 months to vaccinate them.

A: This is a three-step answer.

Dogs over 3 months of age will count towards the requirement for having a personal kennel license. So the owner in the circumstance above needs a personal kennel license. The owner can their kennel license after passing an inspection by

the animal control officer and upon proof that the 3 adult dogs are currently vaccinated for rabies.

Chapter 140 sec. 136A – ““Personal kennel", a pack or collection of more than 4 dogs, 3 months old or older, owned or kept under single ownership, for private personal use....”

Chapter 140 sec. 137 (individual dog licensing law) “This section shall not apply to a person to whom a valid kennel license has been issued.”

Chapter 140 sec. 137A – “A kennel that owns or keeps a dog over the age of 6 months shall comply with section 145B” (the rabies vaccination law).

So in summary: Because the owner will have a personal kennel license, there is no requirement that any of the dogs are individually licensed. The owner will have a personal kennel license, and needs to show proof of current rabies vaccination for any dog that is over 6 months of age. When the puppies turn 6 months the owner will need proof that they have been vaccinated too.



Chat Question

Q: How should we handle a case of a breeder with three adult dogs and four 4-month old puppies?

A: Inspection, kennel license, rabies tags and certs for adults and puppies when they reach 6 months of age.

-note since these dogs are personally owned by the kennel license holder, they do not need individual dog licenses.

Q: Where is the exemption for individual dog licensing for dogs owned by a kennel licensee?

A: Last sentence of part (c) of MGL Chapter 140, section 137: "This section shall not apply to a person to whom a valid kennel license has been issued."

Q: Does anyone have any advice for a single-residence home in town that has more than 5 dogs, but they do not even apply for regular town dog licenses? They would need a kennel license AND regular individual dog licenses, correct? How can we enforce this? If people don't come to license their dogs, how do we know if they have enough for a kennel license?

A: If a single residence has 5 or more dogs they must have a personal kennel license. Anyone with a personal kennel

license is exempt from having to get individual dog licenses. Operating a kennel without a license is subject to a fine under MGL Chapter 140, sec. 137A – “A person who violates this section shall be assessed a fine of \$500 for a first offense and a fine of not more than \$1,000 for a second or subsequent offense.” Veterinarians are required to send rabies vaccination certificates to the town clerk for any dog, cat, or ferret that they vaccinate (330 CMR 10.03(3): “One copy of the certificate shall be filed by the vaccinating veterinarian within 30 days with the clerk of the city or town where the dog, cat, or ferret resides, one copy is to be provided to the owner of the animal, and one shall be retained by the vaccinating veterinarian.”

Q: We have a veterinary clinic nearby that is no longer sending rabies vaccination certificates to us, and states that we have to get them from the owner. How will we know if they get new dogs?

A: If you know of a veterinarian that is not sending in copies of rabies vaccination certificates to the town clerk, please reach out to MDAR and we will remind them of their obligation under the Department’s regulations. Continued violations can result in fines from the Department or disciplinary action against their license to practice by the Board of Registration in Veterinary Medicine.

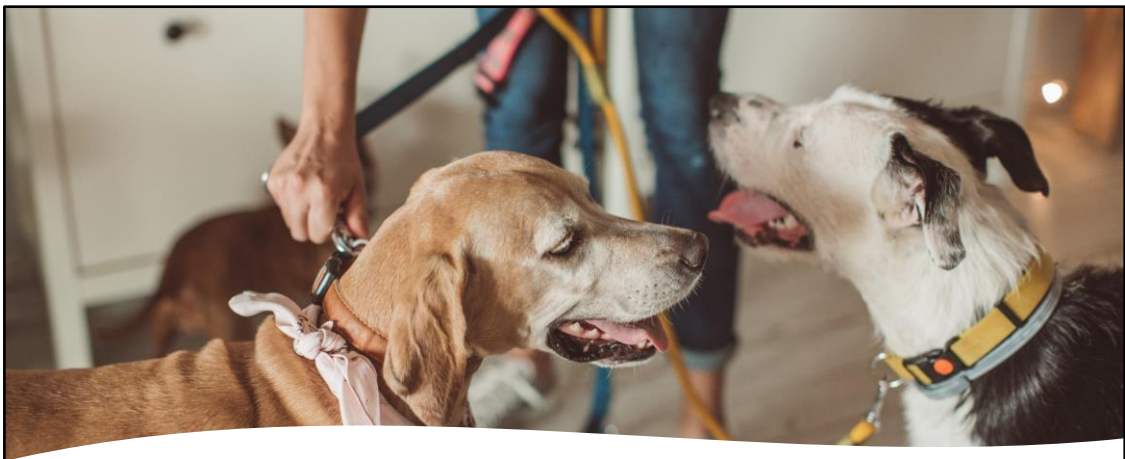
Q: So, those breeding will have a kennel license and each dog will also be licensed individually?

A: Breeding dogs does not require a kennel license. It is the number of dogs on the premises that determines whether they need a personal kennel license or not. If they have 5 or more dogs (3 months old or older) they need a personal kennel license. If they have a kennel license they are exempt from

having to get the dogs individually licensed. If they only have 4 dogs, they do not need a kennel license, but any dog 6 months of age or older will need to be individually licensed.

Q: Will we be going over what type of tags are required? Our clerk has some with "X01, X02" but also some with just normal consecutive numbers (1,2, etc.) - we used the X ones last year, was that the correct way to do that? So, instead of tags with X on them, should residential kennels have individual numbering on their tags?

A: There are no kennel tags anymore. If the owner has a personal kennel license, the dogs will only be wearing rabies tags.



Kennel Licenses Chapter 140 Sec. 137A

Personal kennel license wanted? There is no longer an option for an individual to get a kennel license in lieu of getting their dogs individually licensed if they don't meet a kennel definition.

(4 or less personally owned dogs for example and not other dogs on premise, for example)

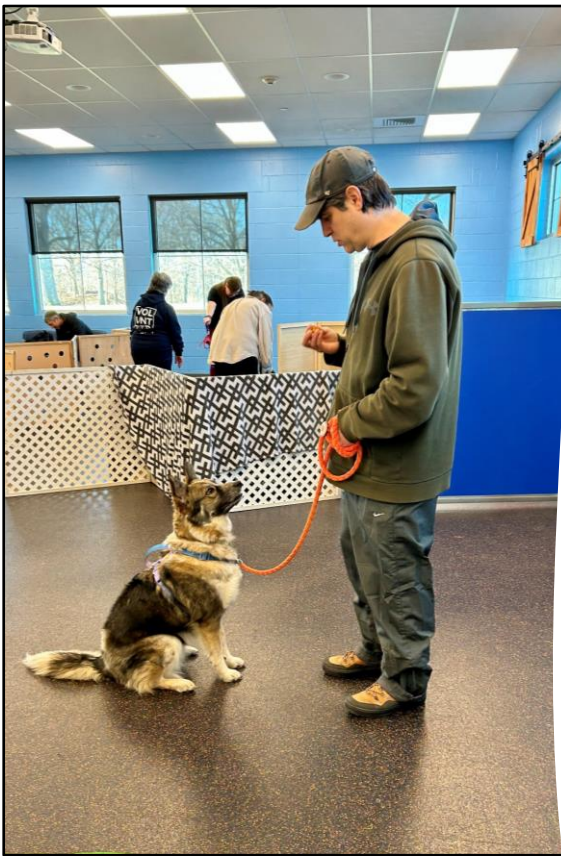
Q: Can a town bylaw require a personal kennel license for less than 5 dogs on a premise, or can a kennel license be issued for less than 5 dogs, if those dogs are also individually licensed?

A: While bylaws can make MGLs more strict, by doing so in this case it would create a conflict with the individual dog licensing law since it would be less strict. The option for someone to obtain a kennel license instead of individually licensing their 4 or fewer dogs was removed. We don't think the town bylaw can allow them to get a kennel license if they don't meet the definition. Therefore, all the dogs would need to be individually licensed. We feel that if the bylaw says they can still get a kennel license it would be in conflict with the statute.

In summary: they can no longer have a kennel license if they don't meet the MGL definition so those dogs should be individually licensed.

Q: Do households who own four dogs individually license the same as if they had 1-3? Our town had been issuing them kennel licenses because it is cheaper than 4 individual tags.

A: No, they can no longer have a kennel license if they don't meet the MGL definition so those dogs should be individually licensed.



Kennel Definitions Chapter 140 sec. 136A

"Commercial boarding or training kennel", an establishment used for boarding, holding, day care, overnight stays or training of animals that are not the property of the owner of the establishment, at which such services are rendered in exchange for consideration and in the absence of the owner of any such animal;

- shall not include an animal shelter or animal control facility,
- a pet shop licensed under section 39A of chapter 129,
- a grooming facility operated solely for the purpose of grooming and not for overnight boarding or an individual who temporarily, and not in the normal course of business, boards or cares for animals owned by others.

"Commercial breeder kennel", an establishment, other than a personal kennel, engaged in the business of breeding animals for sale or exchange to wholesalers, brokers or pet shops in return for consideration.

Chat Question

Q: What if the training kennel does not do boarding & would a training facility that never has dogs left without an owner would require this?

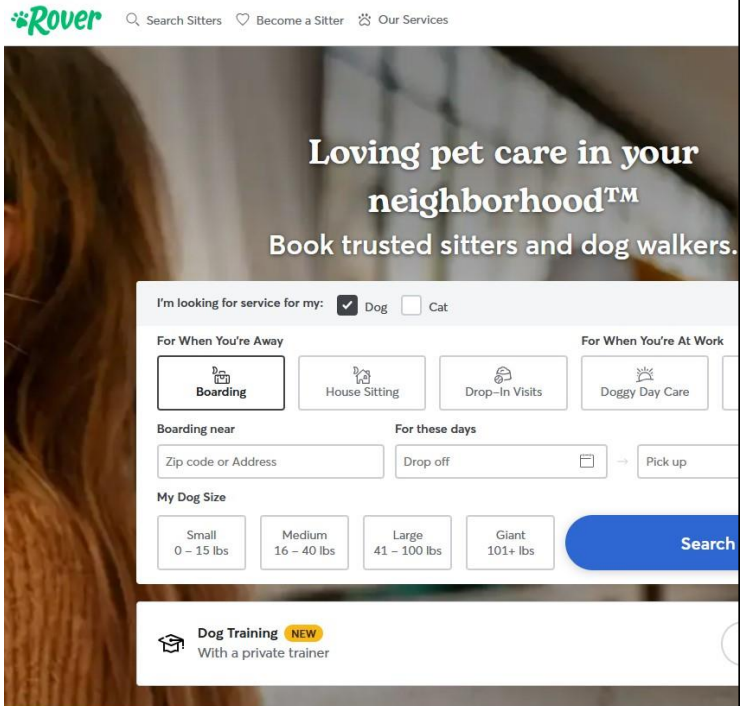
A: Both activities require a kennel license. "an establishment used for boarding, holding, day care, overnight stays OR training of animals" however, you also need to consider this phrase in the definition since it is key: "absence of the owner of any such animal".

In summary: if the training, boarding, or daycare is being done at the premise in absence of the owner, then they need a kennel license. If the service is only being done with an owner present, then they do not need a kennel license.



What about businesses like Rover or dogwalkers?

- Rover, Wag (or equivalent) can be used in different ways. Both have contractors that provide services to owners.
- Contractors can be paid to come to the owner's home and do a drop in visit or a dog walk on public land. In these cases they would not need a kennel license.
- Contractors can be hired to pet sit or train dogs in the contractors' home or space. In this case they fall under the definition of commercial kennel and need a kennel license to operate.

The image shows the Rover website's search interface. At the top, the Rover logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Search Sitters', 'Become a Sitter', and 'Our Services' are on the right. Below the navigation is a hero section with the text 'Loving pet care in your neighborhood™' and 'Book trusted sitters and dog walkers.' The main search form is titled 'I'm looking for service for my:' with radio buttons for 'Dog' (selected) and 'Cat'. Below this, there are two columns of service options: 'For When You're Away' (Boarding, House Sitting, Drop-In Visits, Doggy Day Care) and 'For When You're At Work' (Doggy Day Care). The 'Boarding near' section has a text input for 'Zip code or Address'. The 'For these days' section has a 'Drop off' date picker and a 'Pick up' date picker. The 'My Dog Size' section has four buttons: 'Small (0 - 15 lbs)', 'Medium (16 - 40 lbs)', 'Large (41 - 100 lbs)', and 'Giant (101+ lbs)'. A blue 'Search' button is on the right. At the bottom, there is a 'Dog Training' section with a 'NEW' badge and the text 'With a private trainer'.

Q: What if the city or town does not require a kennel license for a rover sitter?

A: The statutory definitions for kennels did not change. If the activity/service provided meets the definition of a kennel, it "shall" be licensed. It will depend on specifically what service is being provided.

Q: Does Doggie Dates need a kennel license for the fenced field they use for playgroups?

A: If we understand that model correctly, it sounds like an employee is picking up dogs and bringing them to a public space, like a dog park. If so, the law does not specifically

address this activity. We do not think a kennel license could be required.

Q: So if someone has a commercial kennel license like Rover do they need to individually license their dogs or are they included in the kennel license? I mean the personal dogs of the person holding the commercial kennel license, do those dogs need individual licenses?

A: No, people who have a kennel license are exempt from having their personally owned dogs individually licensed. Those dogs must wear rabies tags. Please note that the clients of the boarding or training kennel will have their dogs individually licensed, so those dogs will be wearing their individual dog license tag and a rabies tag.

Q: If they are spending time at the dog walker's house, that would meet the definition of a commercial boarding kennel, if it's just one dog overnight in another home for pay?

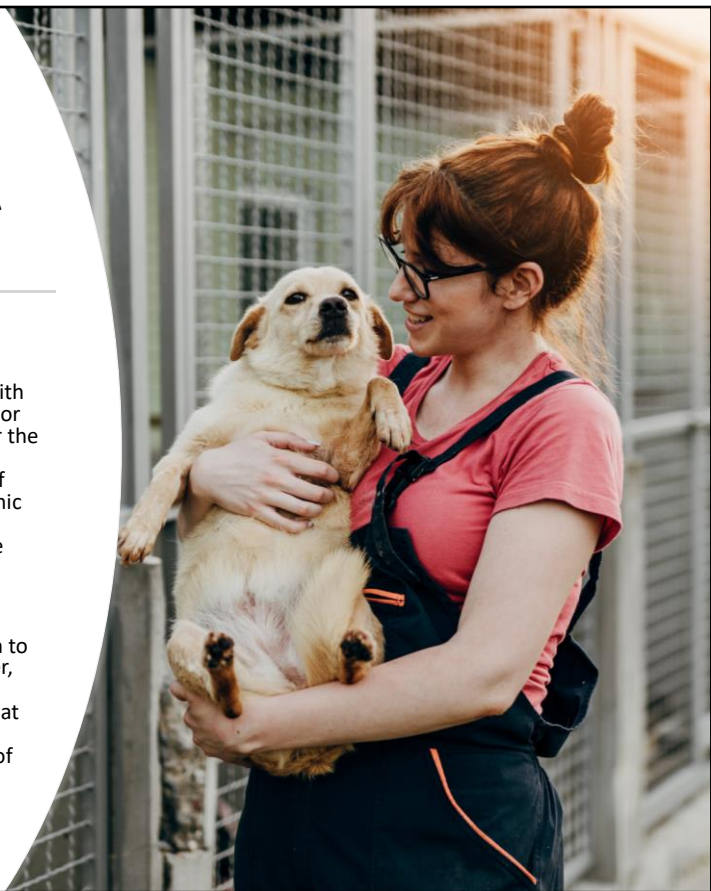
A: If the service is being provided "for pay", then yes, that falls under the definition of a commercial boarding kennel and a license would be required. There is no minimum number of dogs necessary to meet that definition.

Kennel Definitions

Chapter 140 sec. 136A

"Domestic charitable corporation kennel", a facility operated, owned or maintained by a domestic charitable corporation registered with the department or an animal welfare society or other nonprofit organization incorporated for the purpose of providing for and promoting the welfare, protection and humane treatment of animals, including a veterinary hospital or clinic operated by a licensed veterinarian, which operates consistent with such purposes while providing veterinary treatment and care.

"Veterinary kennel", a veterinary hospital or clinic that boards dogs for reasons in addition to medical treatment or care; provided, however, that "veterinary kennel" shall not include a hospital or clinic used solely to house dogs that have undergone veterinary treatment or observation or will do so only for the period of time necessary to accomplish that veterinary care.



Kennel Licenses Chapter 140 Sec. 137A

Commercial kennel license needed

- Boarding or training, including daycare
- Breeders – commercial
- Charitable corporations (shelters / rescues)- **No licensing fee**
- Veterinarians holding animals beyond medical necessity
- ***NEW* (Acts of 2024) Kennel tags are no longer required.**



Q: Is having an isolation/ quarantine space required for shelter rescues?

A: Only if they are importing animals do they need isolation.
All shelter FACILITIES require a quarantine room. Facilities do not include foster homes.

Municipal Shelters

- Municipal owned shelters do not need a kennel license, but MDAR recommends that they get inspections done on a regular basis.



It would be a conflict of interest for an ACO to inspect their own shelter. An inspection can be done by a board of selectmen, a police chief, or even an ACO from a nearby town if they have a mutual aid agreement.

Q: Is a municipal shelter similar to a dog "pound"? Where lost dogs in town go until claimed?

A: Yes, a municipal shelter was traditionally referred to as a "Town Pound". It is a town building used by animal control to hold strays.

Q: If a municipality does not have its own municipal shelter, what can it do?

A: Municipalities can contract with a licensed kennel to hold

municipal animals. If no owner is found and the animal remains unclaimed after the required animal holding period, a municipality then has to explore placement options, MDAR created a document to explain those options:
www.mass.gov/doc/aco-animal-placement-options/download



Other Scenarios

- Groomers not holding beyond grooming services do not need a kennel license under state laws
- Only dog kennels need kennel licenses. (Catteries are not required to have kennel licenses under the state laws)

Q: Does Ollie's Law help regulate grooming businesses?

A: Grooming businesses that only hold dogs for the time necessary for grooming do not require kennel licenses, therefore they are not regulated under Ollie's Law.

Chat Question

Q: Please explain why groomers don't need a kennel license, when some dogs sit at a groomer for up to 6 hours.

A: if a groomer is offering things such as daycare or boarding in addition to grooming, then they should be inspected and would need a kennel license. If the dog is dropped off just for grooming but has a wait, think of it as an equivalent to dropping of an animal for a medical procedure, such as a spay/neuter. That scenario would not need a kennel license.

Note: if a compliant or welfare concern is brought to the municipal attention, then it should be investigated just as a tethering/confinement, or neglect or cruelty complaint is.



Kennel Licenses (Updated 9/20/24!)

Chapter 140 Sec. 137A

NEW in 2025

Municipalities must annually (by Jun1st) report to MDAR a list of ALL licensed kennels and their addresses

- Kennel licenses are issued by the municipal licensing authority
 - Municipality determines licensing period

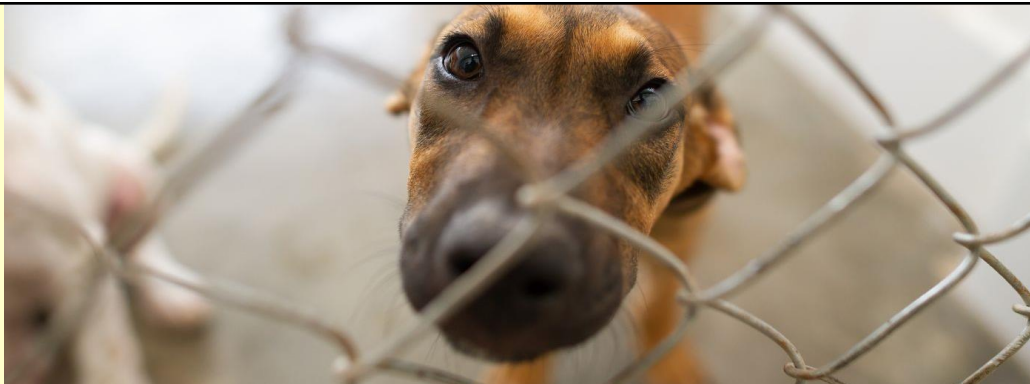


Q: If a city/town has an animal commission that licenses dogs, is the City Clerk responsible for kennel licenses?

A: Licensing authority is defined in MGL Chapter 140, section 136A: "**Licensing authority**", the police commissioner of the city of Boston and the clerk of any other municipality.

Q: In a lot of towns the Health Department has been in charge of making the Local Kennel Regulations, is that not allowed?

A: There is nothing that restricts a health department from regulating kennels, the rules just can't conflict with the state laws.



Kennel Licenses (Updated 9/20/24!) Chapter 140 Sec. 137A

On license, the licensing authority must specify:

Type of kennel license:

- Commercial Boarding, Training, Charitable, Personal etc.

Maximum number of animals

- Determined by the ACO

Q: Are there any specific requirements about the form that is used to apply for a kennel license / the info we must ask for on the licensing application?

A: We are not aware of a standardized form. You need enough information to know what license is being applied for (what activity they are conducting), and so the ACO can find the location and conduct the inspection.

Q: Do we need to physically provide kennel tags, or is providing a paper kennel license sufficient?

A: There are no more kennel tags. That was eliminated from the law. A paper kennel license covers the kennel. The dogs

will still need to wear their rabies tags (as always) and an individual town license (unless they are personally owned by the kennel license holder).

2025 Kennel Reporting

Under MGL Chapter 140 sec. 137A:

e)(1) Annually, not later than June 1, the licensing authority shall send to the department a list of all kennels and their addresses licensed by the city or town pursuant to this section.

Q: Who submits the annual report (list)? The Town Clerk's office or Animal Control?

A: The statute states it should be done by the licensing authority, who in most cases the Town Clerk.

Q: Do you need a login for the portal when we report in June?

A: No, you do not need a login.

Q: Does the portal accept Google Sheets?

A: Google Sheets should be able to be downloaded as a CSV file for submission.

Kennel Reporting

- MDAR has created a portal and templates for this purpose.

www.mass.gov/forms/kennel-reporting-for-municipalities

1. Municipality*

2. Name of person submitting information*

First Name

Last Name

3. Title of person submitting information*

4. Would you like to upload a list of all kennels in your municipality or enter manually. *

☐ Upload a list

☐ Enter manually

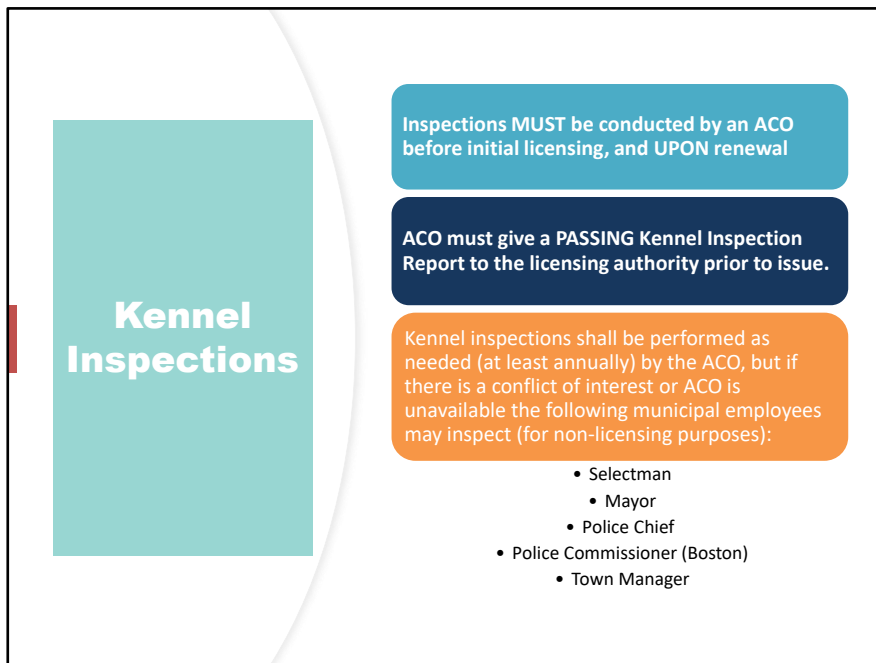
Q: Are those Kennel Types prescribed? Is Commercial or Non-Commercial acceptable as types?

A: The portal has a drop-down menu where you can select the following types: commercial boarding or training kennel, commercial breeding kennel, domestic charitable corporation kennel, personal kennel, or veterinary kennel. If you are uploading a list you will want to make sure you are entering the defined type of kennel. Kennel types are specifically defined in MGL Chapter 140, section 136A.

Q: If there just happen to be no such entities in town, can you just report that there are no kennels operating in your municipality?

A: Yes, if there are no kennels operating in the municipality

that is the information you will submit.



Q: Must the ACO inspect personal kennels or does that only apply to commercial or boarding kennels?

A: Yes, all kennels must be inspected at least once annually.

Q: Is an Animal Inspector not an acceptable alternative to an Animal Control Officer for inspections?

A: The statute requires the licensing inspection to be completed by the Animal Control Officer. MGL Chapter 140, section 137C allows the following: "The mayor of a city, the selectmen of a town, the police commissioner in the city of Boston, a chief of police or an animal control officer may at any time inspect a kennel or cause the inspection of a kennel." The animal inspector is not on that list. The animal inspector's authority is linked to MGL Chapter 129.

Q: When stating the ACOs MUST inspect, there was a list of alternatives such as the Mayor or Police Chief. I did not see an Animal Inspector as an option. Since my department provides animal control (but no licensing) services to multiple cities, would the ACOs be responsible for inspecting outside of our primary town?

A: If you provide ACO services, that includes the inspection of kennels.

Q: Does this apply to cat facilities?

A: No, the kennel laws only apply to dog facilities.

Chat Question

Q: Must the ACO inspect personal kennels or does that only apply to commercial or boarding kennels?

A: Yes, they also need to inspect personal kennels, ALL kennels must be inspected at least once annually.



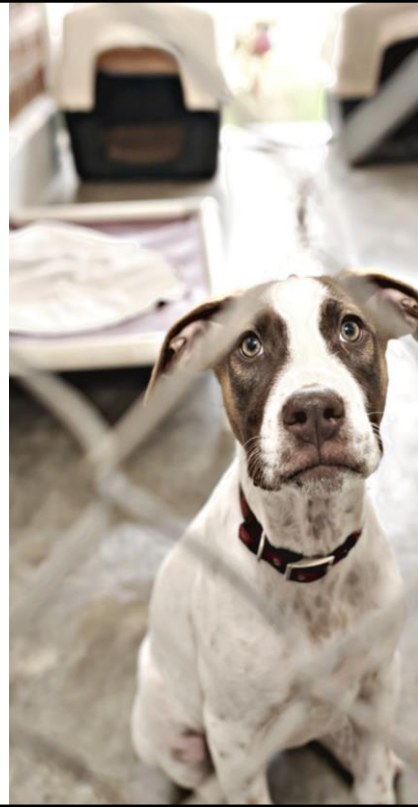
Kennel Inspections

For NOW the standard set in the statute is
“maintained in a sanitary and humane manner”

- Sanitary Condition(s). The state of Facilities, Primary Housing Enclosures, and associated equipment having been Cleaned and Disinfected as often as necessary to be free of, at a minimum, urine, feces, and noxious odors.

Kennel inspections

- *municipalities can add further clarification into bylaws
 - Looking for adequate shelter, fresh food and clean water
 - Waste is managed appropriately; no buildup of feces or urine
 - Adequate ventilation with no excessive odors
 - Adequate temperature between 55°- 85°F
 - Cages, enclosures or other housing is in good repair
 - No sharp edges
 - Functional latches



You should be looking to ensure the animals appear happy and healthy, and that the kennel is maintained in such a way that there is no build up of solid or liquid waste. If the place is clean, smells good, and is comfortable, thank them for their time, hand them a copy of the completed inspection report, and let them know you'll see them next year. If the conditions are not acceptable, the specific problems will need to be documented in writing, for you and the owner.

Kennel Inspection Report

*Once the regs are passed in 2026 a new form for those types of kennels will be developed.

Town Clerks should refer to the kennel inspection's number of dogs allowed on license.

Kennel capacity is determined by the inspecting ACO.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER KENNEL INSPECTION REPORT

City or Town of: _____ Page 1
 of _____

Kennel license number: _____
 Inspection date: _____

1. Kennel information:

Kennel name: _____
 Kennel owner: _____
 Kennel address: _____
 Kennel phone: _____
 Kennel veterinarian and address: _____

Number of dogs over 6 months old on premise: _____
Maximum number of dogs allowed for this license: _____

2. Licensing status:

Kennel license status: New ☐ Renewed ☐ Expired ☐ Unlicensed ☐
 Kennel type: Personal ☐ Commercial ☐ Daycare ☐ Training ☐ Boarding ☐ Veterinary ☐
 Check all that apply: Protection Dogs ☐ Shelter/Rescue ☐ Animals for Sale ☐ Breeder (parents on-site) ☐ Other _____
 If kennel license has not been renewed, why not? _____

3. Housing:

Dog Housing: Crates ☐ Kennel ☐ Free Range ☐ Other _____

4. Conditions: Please explain any No answers on page 1.

A. Dogs are housed in a humane manner: Yes ☐ No ☐
 B. Dogs are able to stand, lie down and turn around freely: Yes ☐ No ☐
 C. Kennel is kept at an ambient temperature: (Between 55 and 87 degrees Fahrenheit) Yes ☐ No ☐
 D. Kennel is maintained in a sanitary manner: Yes ☐ No ☐
 E. The kennel has adequate lighting: Yes ☐ No ☐
 F. Dogs have access to clean, fresh food and water: Yes ☐ No ☐
 G. Dogs have adequate exercise space: Yes ☐ No ☐
 H. Veterinary and other records available: Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Comments:

Approved ☐ Not approved ☐ Reinspect on or after: _____
 ACO's name: _____ Report received by: _____
 ACO's Signature: _____ Signature of Recipient: _____

Q: Who sends you a copy of the inspection reports animal control or city clerk?

A: Completed kennel inspections are sent to the town clerk from the ACO. MDAR does not automatically receive inspection reports, but they are public record and may be requested.

Kennel Inspection Report

- Page 2 is new. It gives an area to write in any problems/concerns discovered
- <http://massanimalfund.com/animal-control-laws/>

[illegible]

The kennel inspection report developed by MDAR will work, or the municipality is welcome to develop their own form. If there is a significant issue with the inspection, or you need assistance with a serious problem, you should feel free to contact MDAR for guidance.



Kennel Capacity

- All kennel licenses issued should contain a number for the maximum number of dogs allowed
 - This number should never be written in a way that doesn't set a limit. For example: do not include "more than 50"
 - ACOs should set the kennel capacity while considering space, staff, animal welfare and emergency plans

We really want to stress that a limit needs to be clearly defined. "More than 50", has caused problems for ACOs trying to get the numbers down when the owner can't handle the care or cleaning associated with having that many dogs

Q: How are ACOs supposed to determine the appropriate amount of animals? Should that be zoning/ fire department?

A: This determination is made not just by the size of the space, but the ability of the staff to ensure the safety of the animals and their ability to maintain sanitary conditions. This is what the ACO will be looking for during their inspection.

Q: For kennel capacity, what if there is a special permit for a kennel and that sets the limit? Is that still okay?

A: It is as long as that number does not surpass what the animal control officer has determined the facility can handle. Capacity is not just about square footage, the ACO also considers the staff's ability to provide adequate care and maintain sanitary conditions.

Dog Licenses – Section 137

- (2) a commercial boarding or training kennel shall maintain records of individual dog licenses, as required in section 137, for all dogs in its care.
- All dogs 6 months or older that are required to be licensed under 137
- Requires proof of current rabies vaccine



Q: are electronic records acceptable or do they need to have paper copies on hand? This was a question from a large daycare/boarding facility

A: Electronic copies would be adequate provided they are available during inspection.

Q: Can we get more specifics about what records of individual dog licensing the boarding facilities are supposed to maintain?

A: There should be a copy of the license issued by the town and a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate. The license is a piece of paper. The tag is the tag that hangs on the collar. Just like the rabies vaccination certificate is a piece of paper, and the owner also gets a rabies tag for the dog to

wear. The piece of paper is the documentation the kennels should have on hand for inspection.

Q: Do they need a physical or electronic copy of both records, or would the date of vaccination be sufficient for the rabies requirement?

A: A date is not proof of a rabies vaccination. They need a vaccination certificate. Either hardcopy or electronic records are fine provided they are available during inspections.

Q: What about out-of-state dogs?

A: There may be other states that don't require licensing (though I think that is rare). If the dog is required to be licensed they should be providing the kennel with documentation. They need a current rabies vaccination certificate.

Required Tags (dogs over 6 months)

- Municipal Dog Tag must be inscribed:
 - dog's license number
 - name of the city or town
 - Rabies Tag
 - Both of these tags are required, to be worn on a collar or harness by their statutes.
 - previously there was a mention in the kennel law that said a kennel tag could be worn in lieu of an individual dog license, but that was removed.
- *It is important to note that dogs were always required to be wearing identification



Q: What about if someone has a personal kennel license and may board their dogs somewhere while on a trip? Since kennel tags are no longer issued, and a dog is required to have a tag

A: We don't have a good answer for this. They should have the rabies vaccination information and perhaps a copy of the dog owner's kennel license would ensure the boarding kennel is compliant.

Q: If kennel license tags are no longer required and it is up to the individual municipalities if they will require BOTH individual dog licenses with kennel licenses - how does the tag requirement apply to personal kennels?

A: Dogs in a personal kennel will all need proof of rabies vaccination and should be wearing their rabies tag, but they do not need individual dog licenses or tags. There is no requirement for municipalities to issue kennel tags anymore.

Q: Do we give each dog a kennel license (i.e. K1 x 6 dogs) or do they get regular Town license tags?

A: The person operating the kennel is the licensee. They get the license. Individual dogs must have rabies tags, but there are no longer kennel tags. Dogs at a commercial kennel should be wearing their individual dog license tags.

Q; Are there any accommodations that can be made for dogs being required to wear a license and rabies tag during boarding and daycare stays when they are 1) in their kennel and 2) in play groups with other dogs?

A: No, there were always tag requirements for dogs, Ollie's Law just changed what tags were required. Dogs should be wearing dog license tag and rabies tag at all times. If kennels are concerned about injuries, they can utilize breakaway collars, or even tag pouches to reduce risk. A tag's purpose is to be able to identify a dog at any time, especially during times of an emergency.

Q: What section of MGL notes that tags are always required? I would like to be able to cite this directly to a kennel in town

that struggles with this.

A: Rabies tags are required by MGL Chapter 140 sec. 145B and individual dog tags are required in MGL Chapter 140 sec.

137. Chat Comment: Speaking as an ACO, all dogs wearing tags makes it easier to get them home fast.

Q: I feel that even with breakaway collars, this is just downright dangerous. They are not always easy to break away and malfunctions can happen as well. I do understand the thought behind it but there has to be a way we can all find a different solution to this particular issue.

A: I think it's important to note collars or harnesses with IDs being worn at all times were in place way before Ollie's Law was passed, Ollie's Law just changed what IDs had to be worn. Ollie's Law did give MDAR authority to work with an Advisory Committee over the next couple of years to develop regulations for boarding and training facilities and for the first time, all injuries now have to be reported. So, if breakaway collars or other tools are creating safety issues I'm sure that will be addressed in the regulations and alternative solutions for canine identification will be explored.



Q: Regarding C 140 S137A (f):"(f) A person who violates this section shall be assessed a fine by the licensing authority of \$500 for a first offense and a fine of not more than \$1,000 for a second or subsequent offense. (Acts of 2024)" It sounds like the clerks (except for Boston) cite for violations, but ACOs typically have written these citations. Just looking to clarify which department enforces.

A: While the statute says that the licensing authority can assign fines for violations, keep in mind that is in addition to the ACO since you get authority to enforce all the animal laws in Chapter 140 from Chapter 140 sec. 136A. "an animal control officer", an appointed officer authorized to enforce sections 136A to 174G (Acts of 2024), inclusive.

Future MDAR Regulations

Under MGL Chapter 140 Section 174G, regulations for commercial boarding and training kennels need to be promulgated by the state (MDAR) by June 2026. Until those are promulgated there will not be specific standards that govern commercial boarding and training facilities. They are still required to be inspected – just as all other kennels are.

Commercial boarding and training kennel Regulations (**June 2026**) may include:

- **Administrative:** licensing, inspection, compliance and enforcement, use of best practices and operation;
- **Animal Safety:** provider and staff to animal ratios, fire and emergency planning, group sizes and supervision, minimum housing and care requirements, indoor and outdoor physical facility requirements, utilities;
- **Employee Safety and Training:** body language interpretation, breed familiarity, dog handling, insurance, proper education and training of dog daycare staff, operational safety standards, risk management, and consumer education and protection.

Chapter 140 Section 174G (Acts of 2024)



- Requires that injuries to animals or people at a **commercial boarding or training kennel** be reported to licensing authority.
 - Investigations of injuries may be by done by the licensing authority or MDAR

Q: Would a veterinary hospital that offers boarding be required to report injuries? What if the injury was not related to boarding but happened on the premises?

A: They only need to report injuries associated with commercial boarding kennels.

Q: Are ALL injuries to be reported- even if someone trips over a vacuum cleaner?

A: the statute states “injuries to animals or people that occur on their premises “This may get further clarification once the AC Committee starts meeting with MDAR to develop rules and regulations. Until then, we would expect any injury that

requires or should need medical care for a person or animal, and any injury to an animal or person that is a skin break (possible rabies exposure) should be reported.

Q: For personal kennels, the homeowner falls doing homeowner stuff, does this mean it needs to be reported?

A: Personal Kennels are not included in the injury reporting requirement. It is limited to commercial boarding or training kennels.

Injury Reporting

- MDAR created a Form for Injury Reporting
- This form should be submitted to the licensing authority
- The licensing authority then should assign who investigates
- MDAR does not have a portal for reporting injuries since these are to go to the licensing authority

Under MGL Chapter 140 Section 174G all injuries to animals and/or people that occur on the premise of a commercial boarding kennel or training facility must be reported to the licensing authority. The licensing authority shall investigate all complaints. Please submit this form through your local Town Clerk and Animal Control Officer

Municipality: _____
Date Submitted: _____
Documents attached: _____

Kennel Injury Reporting Form

Person Submitting Report: ☐ Please check if you wish to remain anonymous.

Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____ Association with kennel: ☐ Owner ☐ Employee ☐ Client ☐ Other _____

Kennel Information:

Name of kennel/organization: _____
Address: _____ City/Town: _____
Owner name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Injury Information: ☐ Dog Injury ☐ Human Injury ☐ Other: _____

Please describe the injury/incident:

Was medical attention received? ☐ No ☐ Yes If so, for who? _____

Where was the medical attention received? _____

ACO Investigation Information:

Kennel Licensing Status: ☐ Current ☐ Expired ☐ Revoked/Suspended Date: _____ ☐ Unlicensed

Inspection Needed ☐ No ☐ Yes Violation Found: ☐ No ☐ Yes _____

Actions Taken: _____

Receiving Authority Title: _____
Receiving Authority Signature _____ Date _____

Q: Please clarify...if a dog bite occurs at a boarding facility, the incident is to be reported to the licensing authority to then be investigated...by the licensing authority.

A; The statute states “(b)(1) Commercial boarding or training kennels shall report to the licensing authority injuries to animals or people that occur on their premises and the department or licensing authority shall investigate all reports.” So, injuries should be reported to the licensing authority and then they will assign the proper authorities to investigate the report. For example: if a dog bite is reported, the licensing authority would most likely assign the ACO and the Animal Inspector (AI) to work together to address the situation. The AI may need to follow up on possible rabies exposure aspects. If

a physical injury happens to a staff member that is unrelated to the animals, they may be assigning follow-up to a building inspector, etc.

Q: What happens if an injury is noticed on a dog that did not occur at the facility, but the dog came in with the injury, should that be reported?

A: The facility should have a process in place for situations like that. If a dog comes in with an injury or wound that is discovered at intake, the owner should be notified immediately, and the issue should be addressed appropriately. If it's unclear if the injury happened at the facility or not, it should be reported to the licensing authority and investigated.

Q: So how do we get the kennels in the habit of filling this out? Do they need to print it, scan it, and email it to our licensing authority? Do we just leave them with a stack of physical reporting forms when we inspect?

A: Communicate with the kennels that all injuries now must be reported to the licensing authority, you can direct them to our website to download the form as a fillable PDF or you can bring them hardcopies. The Municipality should decide how they want them submitted.

Q: What if they don't report?

A: A failure to comply can subject the kennel to a license suspension or revocation.

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Chapter 140 Section 174G (Acts of 2024) Next Steps

- Gives MDAR the authority to write/enforce rules and regulations for kennels within 18 months of 12/20/24
- MDAR Commissioner will assign a committee to advise MDAR during the creation of regulations within 90 days of 12/20/24



Q: Are boarding facilities/doggie daycares now going to be required to have a certain amount of trained staff for a certain amount of dogs at their facility?

A: When the advisory Committee starts meeting with MDAR, that will probably be a topic of discussion. However, right now there is no formal guidance on ratios. If an ACO wants to discuss the matter to help determine dog capacity at a specific kennel, we encourage them to reach out to MDAR staff.

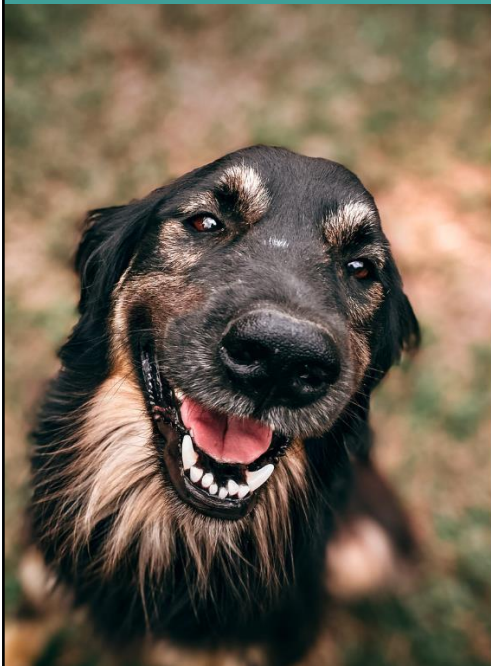
Q; Will there be any formal opportunities for ACOs and others to engage or provide feedback on regulations outside of the committee?

A: The department will be having public meetings with the

advisory committee while drafting the regulations. There is also a formal public hearing as part of the regulatory promulgation process, which allows for both oral and written testimony. That testimony is reviewed to determine if any amendments to the proposed regulation need to be made before they are finalized.

Q: Where Ollie's law was initially petitioning for safer facilities at commercial kennels - will there be any chance the committee might change the requirements for collars in the future? Or is that something that is permanent in terms of this changes of this law?

A: There may be further clarification once the regulations are developed.



DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE LOOP?

Sign up for our ACO or
Ollie's Law newsletter



Wrapping up

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to MDAR, ARL or MSPCA

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Animal Record Requirements *for Town and City Clerks*

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) Division of Animal Health provides resources and training to municipal Animal Control Officers (ACOs) and Animal Inspectors (AIs). We would like to extend our resources to town and city clerks since their collaboration with ACOs is essential to ensure the health and safety of animals in the community they serve.

Dog Licensing



MGL Chapter 140 Section 137: All dogs 6 months or older must be licensed. A newly acquired dog or a dog that is new to the town has 30 days to obtain a license if it is 6 months or older.

The license tag must be inscribed with the dog's license number, city, and year of issue.

License fees are determined by municipalities with the following considerations: spayed/neutered dogs shall be less than intact dogs, no fee shall be charged for an ADA-defined service dog, and a municipality may waive the fee for a dog owned by a senior 70 years or older.

A license requires proof that the dog has a current rabies vaccination. Medical exemptions for rabies vaccinations are only valid if signed by a Massachusetts veterinarian for an

The licensing list should contain the license number and status, rabies vaccination expiration, a detailed description of the animal, and the owner /keeper's address and contact information.

Individual dog licensing currently does not apply to dogs housed at a licensed kennel, or dogs housed at a research institution.

ACO Records in Clerk's Office



MGL Chapter 140, Sections 151A (b): ACOs must keep and maintain records on each animal in the officer's custody. All domestic animals (alive or deceased) and wildlife (alive) require records.