



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.



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

Ollie's Law Timeline



Bill signed 9/20/2024

Ollie's Law takes effect 12/19/2024

Advisory Committee Formed 3/19/2025

**Municipalities must submit first annual
kennel list to MDAR 6/1/2025**

MDAR reports to legislature 7/1/2025

**Regulations must be completed by
6/2026**

**Advisory Committee Sunsets
12/31/2026**

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.



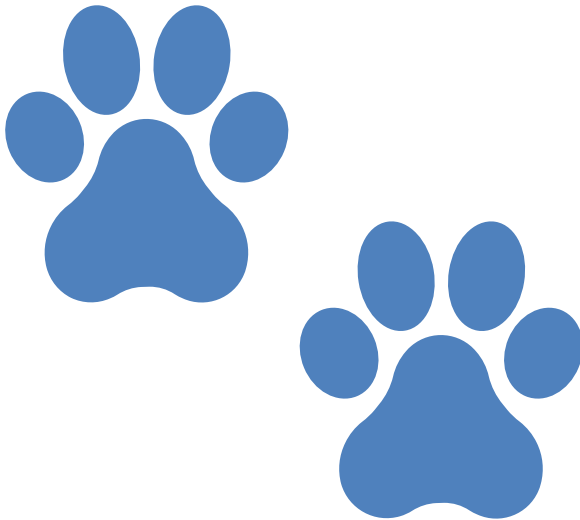
Chat Question

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.





Chat Question

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

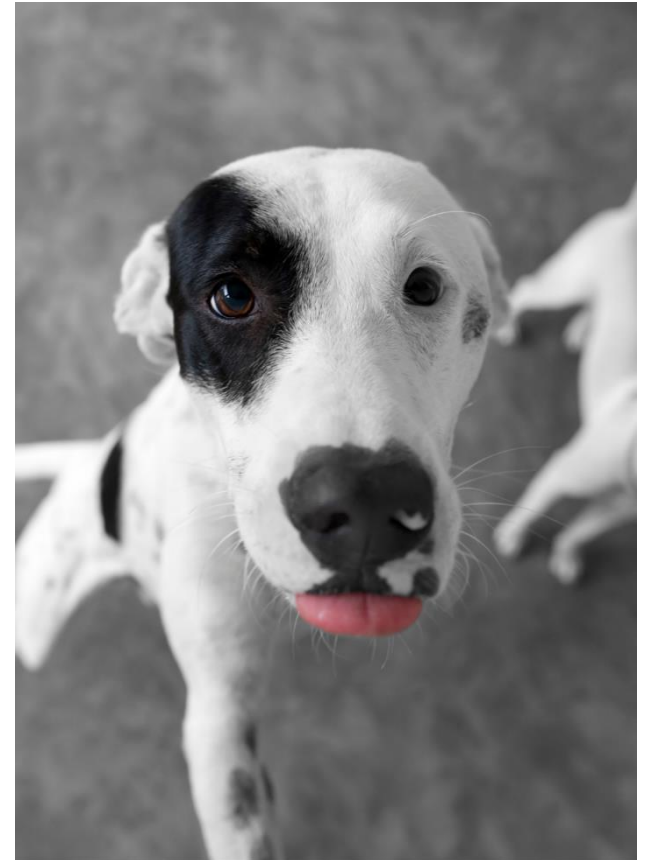
A: It should be in development now. Licensed kennels must be reported to MDAR by 6/1/25.

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!)





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.



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.

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.



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

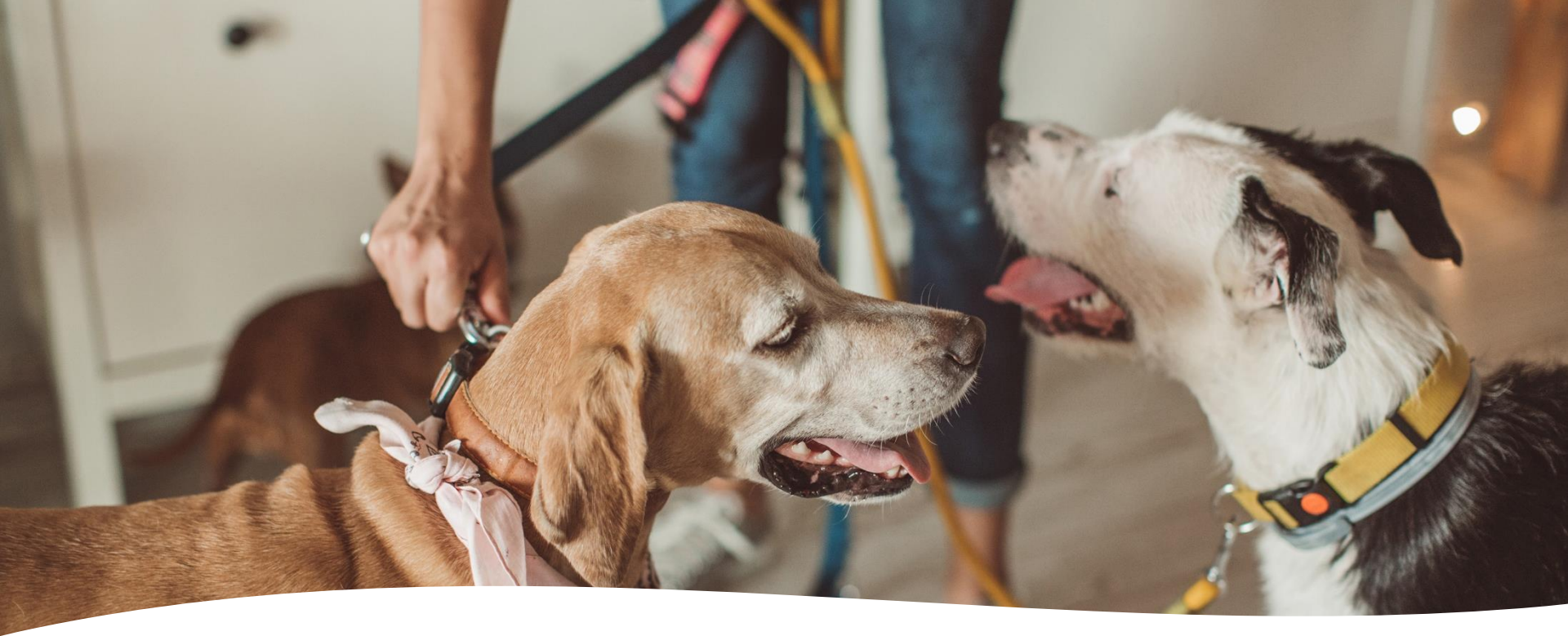


Chat Question

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.



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)



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.



Search Sitters Become a Sitter Our Services

Loving pet care in your
neighborhood™

Book trusted sitters and dog walkers.

I'm looking for service for my: ☒ Dog ☐ Cat

For When You're Away

For When You're At Work


Boarding


House Sitting


Drop-In Visits


Doggy Day Care

Boarding near

For these days

Zip code or Address

Drop off



Pick up

My Dog Size

Small
0 – 15 lbs

Medium
16 – 40 lbs

Large
41 – 100 lbs

Giant
101+ lbs

Search



Dog Training **NEW**
With a private trainer

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.**



Municipal Shelters

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





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)

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





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

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.

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

Kennel Inspections

Inspections **MUST** be conducted by an ACO before initial licensing, and UPON renewal

ACO must give a **PASSING** Kennel Inspection Report to the licensing authority prior to issue.

Kennel inspections shall be performed as needed (at least annually) by the ACO, but if there is a conflict of interest or ACO is unavailable the following municipal employees may inspect (for non-licensing purposes):

- Selectman
- Mayor
- Police Chief
- Police Commissioner (Boston)
- Town Manager

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



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 2.

A. Dogs are housed in a humane manner:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
B. Dogs are able to stand, lie down and turn around freely:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Kennel is kept at an ambient temperature: (between 55 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
D. Kennel is maintained in a sanitary manner:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
E. The kennel has adequate lighting:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
F. Dogs have access to clean, fresh food and water:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
G. Dogs have adequate exercise space:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
H. Veterinary and other records available:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

5. Comments:

Approved ☐ Not approved ☐ Reinspect on or after: _____

ACOs name: _____ Report received by: _____

ACO's Signature: _____ Signature of Recipient: _____

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



Page ____ of ____

[illegible]

ACO's Signature: _____



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

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



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



A black dog, possibly a Labrador Retriever, is looking out from a wire cage. The dog's face is partially visible through the metal bars. The background shows a wooden structure, likely part of a kennel or animal shelter.

Kennel License Fines

Fines for kennel violations are as follows:

- \$500 for a first offense
- Not more than \$1,000 for a second or subsequent offense

Enforcement can be done by the licensing authority (Acts 2024), the ACO, or LE

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 done by the licensing authority or MDAR

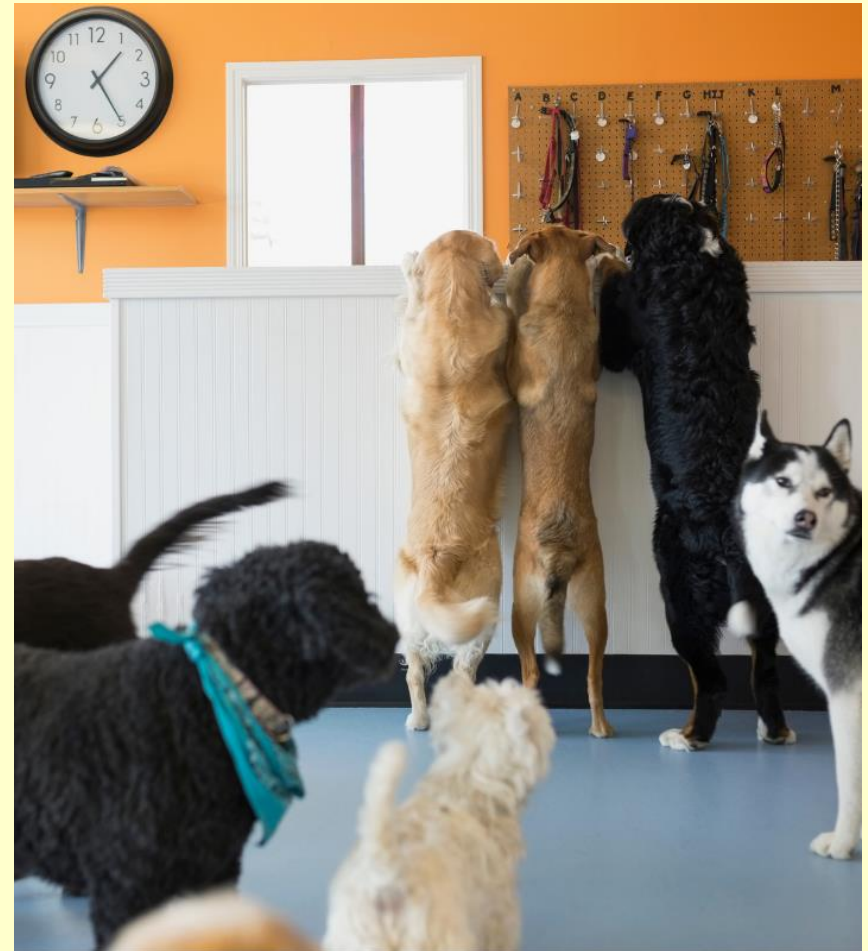
Injury Reporting

- 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

<p align="center">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</p>		Municipality: _____ Date Submitted: _____ Documents attached: _____
<h2>Kennel Injury Reporting Form</h2>		
Person Submitting Report: <input type="checkbox"/> Please check if you wish to remain anonymous.		
Name: _____	Address: _____	Phone: _____
Email: _____	Association with kennel: <input type="checkbox"/> Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Client <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Kennel Information:		
Name of kennel/organization: _____		
Address: _____		City/Town: _____
Owner name: _____	Phone: _____	Email: _____
Injury Information: <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Human Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
Please describe the injury/incident: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ 		
Was medical attention received? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If so, for who? _____		
Where was the medical attention received? _____		
ACO Investigation Information:		
Kennel Licensing Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Expired <input type="checkbox"/> Revoked/Suspended Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Unlicensed		
Inspection Needed <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Violation Found: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes _____		
Actions Taken: _____ _____ _____ _____ 		
Receiving Authority Title: _____		
Receiving Authority Signature _____		Date _____

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





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.