

Crawford County Animal Control Ordinance

SECTION 1 — PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide for the supervision of animals and dogs; to protect human beings, livestock, and domesticated animals from the dangers of dangerous and vicious animals; prevent hoarding and abandonment; and promote responsible animal care in Crawford County, Iowa.

SECTION 2 — DEFINITIONS

For use in this Ordinance, the following terms or words are interpreted or defined:

1. “Animal” means any nonhuman vertebrate.
2. “Animal hoarding” means keeping animals in such numbers or conditions that endanger health, safety, or well-being of animals or people, or violate sanitation standards.
3. “At large” means any animal found off the owner’s property and not under the control of the owner or other person acting as owner, or confined to a veterinary hospital or kennel. Animals must be securely restrained or under the control of a competent person.
4. “Control” means an animal is secured by a leash or lead, confined in a fenced area, or is restrained in a home or vehicle, or is obedient to a responsible person’s commands.
5. “Dangerous animal” means any animal not naturally tame or gentle, capable of killing or inflicting serious injury upon or causing disease among human beings or domestic animals or livestock and having tendencies as a species to do so; and the following animals, which shall be deemed to be dangerous animals per se:
 - a. Lions, tigers, jaguars, leopards, cougars, lynx, bobcats, or other animals that qualify as “big cats”;
 - b. Wolves, wolf-dog hybrids, coyotes, coyote-dog hybrids, foxes, and jackals;
 - c. Badgers, wolverines, weasels, skunks, and mink;
 - d. Raccoons;
 - e. Wild rodents;

- f. Bears;
 - g. Monkeys, chimpanzees, or other related nonhuman primates;
 - h. Bats;
 - i. Alligators and crocodiles;
 - j. Scorpions;
 - k. Snakes that are venomous, or constrictors;
 - l. Any other animal deemed, for cause by use of this section, as a dangerous animal.
 - m. An animal is not deemed dangerous if it bites, attacks, or menaces:
 - i. Anyone assaulting the animal's owner;
 - ii. A trespasser on the property of the owner;
 - iii. Any person or other animal who has tormented or abused it, or otherwise provoked a response from the animal that would likely not have occurred but for the torment or abuse.
6. "Owner" means any person owning, keeping, sheltering, or harboring an animal, or any other person acting as owner.
7. "Vicious dog/animal" means any dog or animal that has attacked a human being or domestic animal or livestock without provocation, regardless of whether or not an injury occurred; any dog or animal with a history, tendency, or disposition to attack, cause injury to, or otherwise endanger the safety of human beings or domestic animals.

SECTION 3 — OWNER'S DUTY

It is the duty of any owner of an animal to ensure that the animal is not dangerous or vicious. An owner shall not keep an animal in violation of this ordinance and is responsible for ensuring the animal does not run at large, bite, attack, damage property, or otherwise endanger humans or other animals. Owners must take reasonable measures to prevent their animals from becoming a public hazard or nuisance.

SECTION 4 — ANIMALS AT LARGE PROHIBITED

Animals, including dogs, running "at large" as defined in this ordinance, is prohibited.

SECTION 5 — DAMAGE OR INTERFERENCE

It is unlawful for any animal to damage, soil, defile, or deface public or private property, or to disturb, interfere with, or place in jeopardy persons, vehicles, livestock, domestic animals, or other property not belonging to the owner.

SECTION 6 — PROHIBITION AGAINST KEEPING DANGEROUS AND VICIOUS ANIMALS

Keeping dangerous or vicious animals is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by law (e.g., licensed facilities or state jurisdiction). The County may seize, impound, or order removal or destruction of such animals if found in violation, in addition to seeking other penalties as outlined in this Ordinance. Dogs used by law enforcement or the military shall not be deemed dangerous nor vicious and are not included in the prohibition.

In addition, this Ordinance prohibits any person from opening any gate, bar, door, fence, partition, or any other such barrier, kennel, or shelter with the intent to allow an animal to escape. Such offenders may also be cited under this Ordinance.

SECTION 7 — BITING OR ATTACKING OTHER ANIMALS OR HUMANS

No animal shall bite, attack, or attempt to bite or attack any person or domestic animal without provocation. Owners are strictly liable for damages. An animal or dog that bites or attacks a person or domestic animal may be deemed a dangerous or vicious animal or dog.

SECTION 8 — ANIMAL HOARDING

It is prohibited to hoard animals in conditions that endanger health, safety, sanitation, or create a public nuisance. The County may impound animals kept in violation and may pursue sanctions according to this Ordinance.

SECTION 9 — ABANDONMENT

Owners shall not abandon cats or dogs. They may transfer ownership to a willing person, deliver the animal to a shelter, pound, or licensed veterinarian. The County may impound animals abandoned in violation and may pursue sanctions according to this Ordinance.

SECTION 10 — LIABILITY

Nothing in this Ordinance absolves owners of any civil liability that may result from animals/dogs that inflicts injury to a person or property.

SECTION 11 — VARIANCES

The Board of Supervisors may, upon written request, grant variances to specific provisions of this ordinance if it finds that strict enforcement would cause undue hardship and the variance would not compromise public safety or welfare.

SECTION 12 — ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

Violations may be enforced as:

- A simple misdemeanor under Iowa Code §§ 903.1(1)(a), 331.302(2); or
- A county civil infraction under Iowa Code § 331.302(16), subject to civil penalties (up to \$750 for first offense; \$1,000 for repeat offenses).

Each violation may be pursued as a separate offense. Ongoing violations may be pursued with each day constituting a separate offense, particularly, but not limited to, Sections 6 & 8. In addition, the County may seize, impound, or destroy animals as necessary for public safety.

SECTION 13 — IMPOUNDMENT AND DISPOSITION

Animals found in violation may be impounded. Owners have 7 days to reclaim animals and pay costs. Once impounded, animals shall not be released to the owner until proof of rabies vaccination is provided by the owner. Unclaimed animals may be rehomed or humanely destroyed with costs assessed to the owner.

SECTION 14 — APPEALS

A person found in violation of this Ordinance may appeal according to the Iowa Rules of Criminal and Civil Procedure.

SECTION 15 — SEVERABILITY

If any section, provision, or part of this ordinance is adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such judgment shall not affect the remainder of the ordinance, which shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 16 — NO LIMITATION

Nothing in this Ordinance shall be deemed to supersede or limit any other statutes or regulations permitted under Iowa law.

SECTION 17 — EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as required by Iowa law.

Dave Muhlbauer, Chairman Date

Terri Martens, Auditor Date