

Animal Services - Frequently Asked Questions

Dog & Kennel Licenses

Licenses can be purchased from the Treasurer's Office by visiting the website at <https://www.yorkcounty.gov/346/Dog-Tags>.

You may purchase your license online by selecting "Renew a License" if you receive a notice from the Treasurer. Individual lifetime licenses are issued for \$10.00.

Dogs 4 months and older must be vaccinated against rabies and be licensed with the County. Lifetime dog licenses are issued by the Treasurer's Office for \$10 each. A current rabies certificate must be presented to obtain the license. Cats do not need a license; however, they need a current rabies vaccination. For more information, visit the [Treasurer's Office website](#) or by telephone at 757-890-3420.

The keeping of 5 or more dogs for the purpose of showing or hunting or as household pets constitutes operation of a private kennel, which is only permitted in certain areas of the County and under certain circumstances set forth in the York County Zoning Ordinance. If you need to request licenses for 5 or more dogs, please contact the [Development Services Division](#) at 757-890-3523 before purchasing.

Any request for a dog license(s) for 5 or more dogs must be accompanied by written authorization from the [Development Services Division](#) office and submitted to the Treasurer's Office. Kennel tags can be obtained in the following increments (note: the \$5 individual fee is waived in lieu of purchasing a kennel tag):

- Kennel of 1 to 10 dogs \$15
- Kennel of 11 to 20 dogs \$20
- Kennel of 21 to 30 dogs \$25
- Kennel of 31 to 40 dogs \$30
- Kennel of 41 to 50 dogs \$35

Are cats required to be licensed?

No, you are not required to acquire a license for cats, and cats are allowed to roam free without being tethered. However, they do need to be vaccinated for rabies.

All dogs and cats are required by state law to be vaccinated for rabies at 4 months of age.

What if I or someone I know are missing a pet?

Report loss pet to Animal Services at 757-890-3601. Search your immediate neighborhood. Call your local animal shelter to see if your pet was picked-up and to report the loss if your pet should happen to be brought in on a later date. You can call the Heritage Humane Society at 757-221-0150 (typically animals picked up in the Northern End of York County) and the Peninsula Regional Animal Shelter at 757-933-8900 (typically animals picked up in the Southern End of York County).

Pets without identification can look alike so, visit the animal shelter and look at the animals not only in the impound area but, also the animals in the injured, sick, and quarantine areas. If you find your pet, please advise the local shelter and Animal Services, so the lost pet can be cleared off their list of lost animals.

Does Animal Control take care of spiders, mice, lizards, or flying and buzzing insect pests?

Our Animal Control Officers do not respond to calls to remove crawling critters such as spiders, mice, lizards, or flying bugs like wasps, hornets, bees, or any other buzzing insects from your property. Please contact a local exterminating company for help with these animals. There are many wonderful and helpful options in our area.

What do I do if I find a dead animal?

- Any dead animal that is found on private property becomes the responsibility of the property owner.
- Any dead animal that is found on a private road becomes the responsibility of the property owner or their Homeowners Association.
- If a dead animal is found to be on a roadway that is maintained by VDOT, it will be responsibility of VDOT to remove it. Contact the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) click on the link for [reporting a road problem online](#) or calling 1-800-FOR-ROAD (1-800-367-7623).
- If a dead animal is found on a public roadway that is maintained by VDOT, contact the York County Emergency Communications Center at their non-emergency number (757) 890-3621.

What if I experience nuisance wildlife at my home or in my area?

Animal Services will not trap nuisance wildlife that is on your property or that is simply passing through your yard. They will only respond to wildlife that is an immediate threat to personal safety, because it is in the main living space of your home. A nuisance animal is an animal that habitually destroys property. Some animals are exempt from being declared a nuisance, such as all birds of prey (ospreys, eagles, falcons, hawks, etc.), deer, and any animal or reptile protected by the state and/or federal government.

Should you have a reoccurring problem with nuisance wildlife, you may contact the Wildlife Conflict Hotline at 1-855-571-9003 in regards to deterring the species of animal that is concerning you. You may also want to check out the link below from VDWR (Va. Department of Wildlife Resources). It lists many different types of animals and suggests ways to try to keep those animals from continuing to visit your yard. You may also contact a local wildlife removal company to trap the species at a cost to you. A quick search on the internet will give you a list of companies to choose from.

It is important to note that Animal Services also does not collect newborn or orphaned wildlife. You may contact Tidewater Wildlife Rescue for emergencies at 757-255-8710 or the Wildlife Response Hotline at 757-543-7000. <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/nuisance/>

Is caring for injured or orphaned wildlife a good idea?

According to the VDWR, more often than not, handling injured, sick, or orphaned wildlife can do more harm than good. Although our intentions are well-meaning, human interaction with wildlife should always be kept to a minimum. Humans often misinterpret normal wildlife behavior as abnormal and may unnecessarily disturb and stress wild animals by attempting to catch them.

Often, particularly in spring, concerned people pick up animals that they think are orphaned. More than 75 percent of such orphans “rescued” every spring should have been left alone. Most wild animals are dedicated parents and will not abandon their young, but they do leave them alone for long periods of time while looking for food. Additionally, many behaviors that people may view as abnormal actually are not in wildlife, and people may do much more harm than good by attempting to catch them for rehabilitation.

Do not attempt to rescue skunks or bats. These are high-risk animals that are potentially harmful to your health. Never attempt to capture an adult sick or injured mammal. If they are frightened and/or in pain and see you as a threat, they can be quite dangerous and can cause a severe bite.

There is much more information on the VDWR website. If a wild animal has been injured or truly orphaned, please locate a licensed wildlife rehabilitator by calling the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources at their toll-free wildlife conflict hotline at 1-855-571-9003, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, or visit the licensed wildlife rehabilitator section of their website.

Rabies & Animal Bites

"Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. It kills almost any mammal or human that gets sick from it." (Virginia Department of Health)

The Rabies virus lives in the saliva and is spread when the infected saliva gets into a wound. Only mammals get rabies. Rabies can be prevented by getting the proper vaccinations from your local veterinarian on a regular basis. Keep records of your pet's vaccinations for future reference.

Only mammals get rabies: bird, fish, reptiles, and amphibians do not. Skunks, bats, foxes, raccoons, dogs, cats and some farm animals are most likely to get rabies. Rabbits, squirrels, rats and mice, and pets like gerbils and hamsters seldom get it.

Rabies can be prevented in cats, dogs, and some livestock with a rabies vaccination. For most wild and exotic animals, there are no rabies vaccines available that have been shown to protect them. A vaccine is available for ferrets, but because not enough is known about how rabies affects them, even vaccinated ferrets may still have to be killed and tested if they bite someone or get exposed to a rabid animal.

Because of improved rabies vaccination programs for pets and better treatment for people who are bitten, rabies cases among humans in this country are rare. The best way to prevent the spread of rabies to humans is by keeping pets properly vaccinated.

What to Do

If your pet is bitten, contact the local health or animal control authorities. To limit the possibility of exposure, keep your pets on your property. Do not leave garbage out that may attract wild infected animals to your property. A rabid animal sometimes acts tame. Do not keep wild animals as pets. If you see an animal acting strangely, report it to your local animal control. Do not go near it yourself!

If your pet **has** bitten someone, tell the person who was bitten to see a doctor immediately. Domestic animals will be confined for a period of 10 days for observation/quarantine. Report the bite to the Animal Control Services at 757-890-3601 and to the local health department as well. In Williamsburg, this number is 757-603-4277. The number for all other areas on the Virginia lower Peninsula is 757-594-7340.

If you have been bitten, do not panic but do not ignore it. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and plenty of water. Get medical attention as soon as you can. If you can, identify the animal before it runs away, then call the local animal control. If it is a wild animal that must be killed, do not damage the head. The brain is used to test for the rabies virus.

Requesting an Animal Trap

Animal Services will only loan traps for citizens to catch feral cats. Traps are not loaned out to trap any other wildlife. Traps are loaned at no cost, on a “first come, first serve” basis, and will not be issued during inclement weather. Any requests regarding the needs for a trap must be made by telephone at 890-3601. All trapped cats must be cared for and transported by the homeowner to the nearest humane society or animal shelter. They will be accepted at the shelters at no cost.

Animal Services will not issue traps for any wildlife that is on your property. You may contact a wildlife removal company that will come out to remove the nuisance animal at your own expense. Unfortunately, any wildlife that is captured cannot be relocated, and the animal will have to be euthanized. A nuisance animal is considered to be an animal that habitually destroys property. Some animals are exempt from being declared a nuisance, such as all birds of prey (ospreys, eagles, falcons, hawks, etc.) deer, and any animal or reptile protected by the state and/or federal government.

Should you have a reoccurring problem with nuisance wildlife, you may contact the Wildlife Conflict Hotline at 1-855-571-9003 in regards to deterring the species of animal that is concerning you. You may also want to check out the link below from VDWR. It lists many different types of critters and suggests ways to try to keep those animals from continuing to visit your yard.

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