

CHAPTER 721

DOG LICENSES

§3921. License necessary

A dog may not be kept within the limits of the State, unless the dog has been licensed by its owner or keeper in accordance with the laws of this State. [PL 1997, c. 690, §13 (AMD).]

Any law enforcement agency within the State, counties or municipalities owning dogs for law enforcement purposes shall be required to license the dogs in the municipality in which they are domiciled, but shall be exempt from any license or recording fee, provided that all other licensing requirements are fulfilled. [PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW). PL 1995, c. 409, §3 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §13 (AMD).

§3921-A. Permanent identification of wolf hybrids

The commissioner shall adopt rules to establish methods of identifying wolf hybrids through tattooing, the placement of a microchip under the animal's skin or any other method determined by the commissioner as adequately providing a permanent means of identification on the body of the animal. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. A person may not own or keep a wolf hybrid under section 3921-B, subsection 2 or under Title 12, section 12152 unless the animal has identification in compliance with the rules adopted under this section. [PL 2011, c. 100, §9 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2001, c. 129, §2 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 100, §9 (AMD).

§3921-B. Prohibition on keeping a wolf hybrid; exception

1. Prohibition. Except as provided in subsection 2, a person may not keep a wolf hybrid in the State unless that person holds a valid permit to possess wildlife in captivity issued by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife under Title 12, section 12152. [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

2. Exception. A person keeping a wolf hybrid as a pet and in compliance with all applicable provisions in this Part on June 1, 2011 may continue to keep that wolf hybrid as long as the following conditions are met:

A. The wolf hybrid has been spayed or neutered; and [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

B. The owner continues to license the wolf hybrid in accordance with section 3922, subsection 3-B. [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

3. Restrictions on transfer. A person keeping a wolf hybrid under subsection 2 may transfer ownership of the wolf hybrid to a person:

A. Holding a permit to possess wildlife under Title 12, section 12152 and authorized to accept wolf hybrids in compliance with rules adopted under Title 12, section 12160, subsection 2; [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

B. Who operates an animal refuge in another state that is licensed to accept wolf hybrids; or [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

C. Who has had direct contact with the wolf hybrid, is familiar with the wolf hybrid's behavior and has been advised of the reporting requirement under subsection 4 and licensing laws under section 3922. [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

A person transferring ownership of a wolf hybrid under this subsection shall within 10 days of the transfer notify the department and provide the name and address of the person accepting the transfer. [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

4. Duty to report death. The owner of a wolf hybrid kept under subsection 2 shall notify the department of the wolf hybrid's death on a form prescribed by the department within 30 days of the wolf hybrid's death. [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

5. Violation. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of \$2,500 may be adjudged. [PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2011, c. 100, §10 (NEW).

§3922. Issuance of license

1. License; January 1st. Each owner or keeper of a dog at the age of 6 months or more, on or before January 1st of each year, shall obtain a license:

A. From the clerk of the municipality where the dog is kept; [PL 2001, c. 422, §6 (AMD).]

B. From the dog recorder in the unorganized territory where the dog is kept or, in the absence of a duly authorized dog recorder, from a dog recorder in the nearest municipality or unorganized territory in the same county where the dog is kept; [PL 2003, c. 405, §10 (AMD).]

C. From a person authorized to issue licenses under section 3923-F; or [PL 2013, c. 115, §9 (AMD).]

D. From the department using the Internet in accordance with section 3923-G. [PL 2003, c. 405, §12 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 115, §9 (AMD).]

2. License; after January 1st. The owner or keeper, within 10 days of the conditions of paragraph A or B being met, shall obtain a license, if between January 1st and October 15th of any year:

A. A dog reaches the age of 6 months or more; or [PL 1997, c. 690, §14 (AMD).]

B. A person becomes the owner or keeper of a dog aged 6 months or more. [PL 1997, c. 690, §14 (AMD).]

[PL 1997, c. 690, §14 (AMD).]

3. Proof of immunization. A municipal clerk may not issue a license for a dog until the applicant has filed with the clerk proof that the dog has been immunized against rabies as provided in section 3916, subsection 1-A and in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, except that the requirement of immunization may be waived by the clerk under conditions set forth by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

The commissioner shall adopt rules that allow the clerk and the commissioner to accept valid proof of immunization against rabies provided by another state.

[PL 2025, c. 141, §8 (AMD).]

3-A. Exception to immunization requirement for wolf hybrids.

[PL 2007, c. 439, §13 (RP).]

3-B. Proof of permanent identification and other restrictions on licensing a wolf hybrid. A municipal clerk may not issue a license for a wolf hybrid until the applicant has filed with the clerk proof that:

- A. The wolf hybrid has been permanently identified in accordance with section 3921-A; [PL 2011, c. 100, §11 (NEW).]
- B. The wolf hybrid has been spayed or neutered; and [PL 2011, c. 100, §11 (NEW).]
- C. The wolf hybrid was licensed in this State in 2011 by:
 - (1) June 1, 2011 if the wolf hybrid was 6 months old or older on June 1, 2011; or
 - (2) December 31, 2011 if the wolf hybrid was less than 6 months old on June 1, 2011. [PL 2011, c. 100, §11 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 100, §11 (AMD).]

4. Service dogs. If a service dog has not been previously registered or licensed by the municipal clerk to whom the application is being made, the clerk may not register the dog nor issue to its owner or keeper a license unless the applicant presents written evidence to the municipal clerk that the dog meets the definition of "service dog." For the purpose of this subsection, "written evidence" means a service dog certification form approved by the department in consultation with the Maine Human Rights Commission.

[PL 2019, c. 437, §1 (AMD).]

5. Form of license. The license must state the breed, sex, color and markings of the dog, whether the animal is a dog or wolf hybrid, whether the dog has been determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a dangerous dog or a nuisance dog and the name and address of the owner or keeper. If the person applying for a license declares that the dog is a wolf hybrid, the license must state that the dog is a wolf hybrid. The license must be issued in triplicate and the original must be given to the applicant and the remaining 2 copies must be retained by the municipal clerk or dog recorder.

[PL 2017, c. 404, §5 (AMD).]

6. Designation of wolf hybrid. An owner or keeper of a dog declared as a wolf hybrid may not change the license designation. A dog that has been declared a wolf hybrid must be treated as a wolf hybrid in accordance with Title 22, chapter 251, subchapter 5. The procedure prescribed under Title 22, chapter 251, subchapter 5 for a wolf hybrid suspected of having rabies does not change based on proof that the wolf hybrid has received a rabies vaccination.

[PL 2007, c. 439, §14 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 643, §2 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 468, §25 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 657, §§20,21 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 409, §4 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §14 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 704, §§7-10 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 129, §3 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 422, §§6,7 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 405, §§10-12 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 689, §B7 (REV). PL 2007, c. 439, §§12-14 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 664, §11 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 100, §11 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 115, §9 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 404, §5 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 437, §1 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 141, §8 (AMD).

§3923. License and recording fees

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 278 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 528, §RRR (AFF). PL 1991, c. 528, §§ (AMD). PL 1991, c. 591, §§ (AMD). PL 1991, c. 622, §§FF15,16 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 779, §27 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 779, §52 (AFF). PL 1991, c. 779, §§52,60 (AFF). PL 1993, c. 468, §11 (RP).

§3923-A. License and recording fees

Except as provided in subsection 3 and section 3923-B, a dog owner or keeper obtaining a license from a municipal clerk, dog licensing agent or dog recorder shall pay the license and recording fees established in this section. For purposes of this section, "dog licensing agent" means an animal shelter or a veterinarian pursuant to section 3923-F. [PL 2025, c. 414, §4 (AMD).]

1. Dogs capable of producing young. A dog owner or keeper shall pay a fee of \$11 to the municipal clerk or dog licensing agent for each dog 6 months of age or older and capable of producing young. A dog is considered capable of producing young unless certification under subsection 2 is provided.

The municipal clerk or dog licensing agent shall retain a \$1 recording fee and pay the remaining \$10 to the department for deposit in the Animal Welfare Fund.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §10 (AMD).]

2. Dogs incapable of producing young. A dog owner shall pay a fee of \$6 to the municipal clerk or a dog licensing agent for each dog 6 months of age or older and incapable of producing young. A dog is considered incapable of producing young when the owner provides the following:

A. A written certificate issued by a veterinarian stating that the veterinarian has neutered the dog; [PL 1997, c. 690, §15 (AMD).]

B. A written certificate issued by a veterinarian stating that the veterinarian has examined the dog and determined that the dog is incapable of producing young; or [PL 1997, c. 690, §15 (AMD).]

C. A previous license stating that the dog is incapable of producing young. [PL 1997, c. 690, §15 (AMD).]

The municipal clerk or dog licensing agent shall retain a \$1 recording fee, deposit \$2 in the municipality's animal welfare account established in accordance with section 3945 and pay the remaining \$3 to the department for deposit in the Animal Welfare Fund.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §10 (AMD).]

3. Exemption from fees. A municipal clerk or a dog licensing agent shall issue a license upon application and without payment of a license fee required under this section for:

A. A service dog owned or kept by a person with a physical or mental disability; [PL 2007, c. 664, §12 (AMD).]

B. [PL 2007, c. 664, §12 (RP).]

C. [PL 2007, c. 664, §12 (RP).]

D. A trained search and rescue dog recognized by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or by the statewide association of search and rescue that cooperates with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in developing standards for search and rescue or such a dog awaiting training; and [PL 2001, c. 422, §9 (AMD).]

E. A dog certified by the State and used for law enforcement purposes. [PL 2001, c. 422, §9 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 115, §10 (AMD).]

4. Late fees. An owner or keeper required to license a dog under section 3922, subsection 1 or section 3923-B, subsection 1 and applying for a license for that dog after January 31st shall pay to the municipal clerk, dog licensing agent or dog recorder a late fee of \$25 in addition to the annual license fee paid in accordance with subsection 1 or 2. The clerk, dog licensing agent or dog recorder shall deposit all late fees collected under this subsection into the municipality's animal welfare account established in accordance with section 3945.

[PL 2025, c. 414, §5 (AMD).]

5. Dogs determined to be dangerous dogs or nuisance dogs by the court. The owner or keeper of a dog determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a dangerous dog shall pay a fee of \$100 to the municipal clerk or a dog licensing agent. The municipal clerk or dog licensing agent shall retain a \$1 recording fee, deposit \$98 in the municipality's animal welfare account established in accordance with section 3945 and pay the remaining \$1 to the department for deposit in the Animal Welfare Fund.

The owner or keeper of a dog determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a nuisance dog shall pay a fee of \$30 to the municipal clerk or a dog licensing agent. The municipal clerk or dog licensing agent shall retain a \$1 recording fee, deposit \$28 in the municipality's animal welfare account established in accordance with section 3945 and pay the remaining \$1 to the department for deposit in the Animal Welfare Fund.

A dog determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a dangerous dog or a nuisance dog does not qualify for the exemptions from fees under subsection 3.

An owner or keeper of a dog determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a dangerous dog applying for a license for that dog after January 31st shall pay to the municipal clerk, dog licensing agent or dog recorder a late fee of \$150 in addition to the annual license fee paid in accordance with this subsection.

An owner or keeper of a dog determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a nuisance dog applying for a license for that dog after January 31st shall pay to the municipal clerk, dog licensing agent or dog recorder a late fee of \$70 in addition to the annual license fee paid in accordance with this subsection.

The clerk, dog licensing agent or dog recorder shall deposit all late fees collected under this subsection into the municipality's animal welfare account established in accordance with section 3945.

[PL 2017, c. 404, §6 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 468, §12 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 657, §§22-24 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 409, §5 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 557, §1 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §15 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 597, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 422, §§8,9 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 405, §13 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 439, §15 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 664, §12 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 343, §13 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 548, §3 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 115, §10 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 404, §6 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 414, §§4, 5 (AMD).

§3923-B. Tags

1. Tags. The municipal clerk or dog licensing agent shall provide with each new license issued under section 3923-A a tag indicating the year the license is issued and bearing other information prescribed by the department. The owner or keeper shall make sure that the tag is securely attached to a collar of leather, metal or material of comparable strength and that the collar is worn at all times by the dog for which the license was issued, except as provided in subsection 3.

If the tag is lost or the owner has moved to a different municipality, the owner or keeper of the dog shall obtain a new license and tag. The municipal clerk or dog licensing agent shall issue another license and tag upon presentation of the original license and payment of \$1. The clerk or agent shall retain the \$1 for a recording fee.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §11 (AMD).]

2. Rabies tags.

[PL 1997, c. 690, §16 (RP).]

2-A. Rabies tags. An owner or keeper shall ensure that a rabies tag obtained from a veterinarian, a licensed veterinary technician under the direct supervision or indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian or a certified rabies vaccinator for immunization against rabies is securely attached to a collar of leather, metal or material of comparable strength and that the collar is worn at all times by the

dog for which the rabies tag was issued, except as provided in subsection 3. For purposes of this section, "direct supervision" has the same meaning as in Title 32, section 4853, subsection 4-A; "indirect supervision" has the same meaning as in Title 32, section 4853, subsection 4-B; "licensed veterinarian" has the same meaning as in Title 32, section 4853, subsection 5; and "licensed veterinary technician" has the same meaning as in Title 32, section 4853, subsection 11.

[RR 2025, c. 1, Pt. A, §14 (COR).]

3. Exceptions. A dog is not required to wear a tag when on the premises of the owner or off the premises of the owner while hunting, in training or in an exhibition. When a dog is hunting, in training or in an exhibition, its owner or keeper shall produce proof of licensure and proof of rabies immunization within 24 hours upon request by a humane agent, animal control officer or law enforcement officer, including a game warden.

[PL 1999, c. 254, §6 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 468, §12 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 657, §§25,26 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 409, §6 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §16 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 254, §§5,6 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 439, §16 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 115, §11 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 141, §9 (AMD). RR 2025, c. 1, Pt. A, §14 (COR).

§3923-C. Kennel license

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 657, §27 (NEW). PL 1995, c. 409, §7 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 490, §§8,9 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 625, §§B1,2 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §§17-21 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 405, §14 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 536, §4 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 422, §7 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 403, §2 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 414, §6 (RP).

§3923-D. Temporary licenses

An animal shelter may issue a temporary dog license when transferring ownership vested in the animal shelter under section 3913, subsection 4 to a person buying or otherwise accepting ownership. The department shall provide animal shelters with temporary license forms. The animal shelter shall complete all information prescribed on the form, provide the owner with the original temporary license and submit the copy for the municipal clerk and the animal control officer to the appropriate municipal clerk. The animal shelter may retain a copy of the temporary license to comply with section 3914. A temporary license is valid for a period of 10 days beginning on the date of issuance. An animal shelter may charge \$1 for issuing a temporary license. [PL 1997, c. 690, §22 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 657, §27 (NEW). PL 1995, c. 409, §7 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §22 (AMD).

§3923-E. Monthly report

Municipal clerks or dog recorders shall receive the license fees in accordance with section 3923-A, pay them to the department and make a monthly report to the department on a department-approved form of all licenses issued and fees received. [PL 2025, c. 414, §7 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 657, §27 (NEW). PL 2025, c. 414, §7 (AMD).

§3923-F. Veterinarian or animal shelter serving as dog licensing agent

The commissioner may authorize an animal shelter licensed in accordance with chapter 723 and a veterinarian licensed in accordance with Title 32, chapter 71-A to issue dog licenses under section 3923-A. The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this

section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The rules must provide a process for identifying animal shelters and veterinarians who are willing to serve as dog licensing agents for distributing license blanks, tags and stickers, and for the collection, distribution and deposit of license fees into the appropriate state accounts. [PL 2013, c. 115, §12 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2001, c. 422, §10 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 343, §14 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 115, §12 (AMD).

§3923-G. Internet licensing project

1. Procedure developed; municipality participation. The commissioner may develop and implement a procedure by which a dog owner can electronically apply for and be issued a dog license using a publicly accessible site on the Internet. A municipality may choose to participate in the electronic dog licensing project by contacting and working with the commissioner. Electronic licensing is available only to residents of a municipality that requests and is accepted by the commissioner to participate in the electronic licensing project. The commissioner may limit the number of municipalities that participate in the project.

[PL 2003, c. 405, §15 (NEW).]

2. Forms; verification of rabies immunization. The commissioner shall develop a form to be used for electronic licensing under this section. The commissioner shall consult with the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to establish the information needed to verify rabies immunization.

[PL 2003, c. 405, §15 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 689, Pt. B, §7 (REV).]

3. Payment of licensing fee. The commissioner shall establish a mechanism for accepting payment of license fees by credit card. An owner or keeper who applies for a dog license using the publicly accessible site on the Internet developed pursuant to subsection 1 shall pay the fee required under section 3923-A and an additional service fee of \$1 for each license to cover administrative costs and pay the Internet service provider.

[PL 2003, c. 405, §15 (NEW).]

4. Distribution of licensing fee. The commissioner shall deposit all fees received under this section into the Animal Welfare Fund. The commissioner shall establish procedures for participating municipalities to periodically receive the appropriate credit or payment for license fees collected by the department under this section. A municipality is entitled to a payment or credit of \$3 for each dog licensed under this section. All payments or credits received by a municipality must be deposited or credited to the municipality's animal welfare account established in accordance with section 3945.

[PL 2003, c. 405, §15 (NEW).]

5. Sticker requirement.

[PL 2007, c. 439, §17 (RP).]

6. Exclusion of wolf hybrids, dangerous dogs and nuisance dogs. This section does not apply to the licensing of a wolf hybrid, a dangerous dog or a nuisance dog. A person owning a wolf hybrid, a dangerous dog or a nuisance dog shall obtain a license from the municipal clerk or the dog recorder for the municipality, plantation or unorganized territory in which the person owning the wolf hybrid, the dangerous dog or the nuisance dog resides.

[PL 2021, c. 99, §8 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 405, §15 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 689, §B7 (REV). PL 2007, c. 439, §17 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 100, §12 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 99, §8 (AMD).

§3924. Violation

1. Civil violation. Any person who violates any section of this chapter commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture not to exceed \$100 may be adjudged.

[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

2. Unlawful use of collar or tag. A person who removes a tag or who places a tag on a dog for which the license was not issued commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture of not more than \$100 may be adjudged.

[PL 1997, c. 690, §23 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW). PL 1995, c. 409, §8 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §23 (AMD).

§3925. Dog licensing database

The department shall develop and implement a dog licensing database in coordination with any electronic dog licensing project implemented pursuant to section 3923-G. The database must track all dog licensing throughout the State and allow municipalities and animal control officers to reunite lost dogs with owners and track dogs that have been determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be dangerous dogs and nuisance dogs pursuant to chapter 727. The department shall provide all municipalities and dog licensing agents with access to the database at no cost. [PL 2017, c. 404, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2017, c. 404, §7 (NEW).

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