



# DELAWARE DOG LAWS



## TETHERING



It is against the law to tether (tie up or chain) your dog if any of the following is true:

- Your dog is less than four months old.
- Your dog is a nursing mother while puppies are present.
- Longer than nine consecutive hours while owner or responsible adult is home.
- Longer than two hours when the owner or responsible adult is not home.
- The tether is attached to a choke, pinch, prong or martingale collar, or ill-fitting collar.
- The tether is less than 10 feet in length.
- The tether is entangled, or will not allow dog easy access to dog house, food, and/or water.

## EXTREME WEATHER

Your dog may not be left outside and unattended\* when:

- There is a National Weather Service hazardous weather Advisory or Warning for your area.
- Weather conditions pose a serious adverse risk to the dog's health and safety.
- Food and water must be provided in a way that it will not freeze. Heated or insulated water bowls or frequent changing of water is recommended.
- It is recommended to provide extra food during cold months.

\*Outside and unattended means exposed to the elements for longer than 15 minutes when not in visual range and physical presence of owner.

## SHELTER



Your dog must have access to a shelter that is:

- Structurally sound, with no sharp points or edges.
- Moisture proof and windproof walls and floors, with abundant clean, dry bedding such as straw.
- Raised above the ground.
- A suitable size, small enough for the dog to maintain body heat, but large enough to allow the dog to stand to its full height, turn around freely, and stretch out when lying down.

During the winter months, extra precautions must be taken to ensure safety of the dog:

- Additional bedding is required between Nov. 1 to Mar. 31 or when the temperature is 35 degrees or below.
- Windbreak - Such as a flap or tarp, must be provided at the entrance between Nov. 1 to Mar. 31 or when the temperature is 35 degrees or below to protect the dog from cold winds and precipitation.

## SHADE

In addition to the shelter structure, one or more separate outside areas of shade must be provided to allow protection from sunlight. In warmer months, a dog house can be hot inside.

## PRIMARY ENCLOSURES

If your dog is kept in an enclosure, such as a kennel or pen, it must meet the following requirements:

- Allow sufficient space for your dog to turn about freely and stand erect, sit, and lie down in a comfortable normal position.
- Height must be at least 6 inches higher than head of your dog in normal standing position.
- Enclosure may not have only wire flooring.

## GENERAL

- Fresh drinking water.
- Food that is wholesome, free from contamination, and adequate amounts to maintain good health. Must be fed at least once a day.
- A clean, sanitary environment free of excrement and food waste, with proper drainage.

## LEASH LAWS

**All dogs must be secured by a leash** that is capable of physically restraining the movement of the dog, unless the dog is on the owner's private property or other private property with permission, in a vehicle, or in a designated off-leash area.

Exemptions exist for working service dogs. Leash size and material should be based on size and weight of dog. Leash should not be so long that there is no control and retractable leashes are discouraged.

Questions? Contact Delaware Animal Services at:  
[delawareanimalservices@delaware.gov](mailto:delawareanimalservices@delaware.gov) or call 302-255-4646.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health  
Office of Animal Welfare

Delaware Code references:  
Title 16, Chapter 30F, Subchapter IV  
Title 11, Chapter 5, §1325

