

## CHAPTER 56 VICIOUS ANIMALS

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#### 56.01 DEFINITIONS.

For use in this chapter, the following term is defined:

“Vicious animal” means any animal that has attacked, bitten or clawed a person while running at large and the attack was unprovoked, or any animal that has exhibited vicious tendencies in present or past conduct, including such that said animal: (i) has bitten or clawed a person or persons on two separate occasions within a 12-month period; or (ii) did bite or claw once causing injuries above the shoulders of a person; or (iii) could not be controlled or restrained by the owner at the time of the attack to prevent the occurrence; or (iv) has attacked any domestic animal or fowl on three separate occasions within a 12-month period.

#### 56.02 KEEPING OF VICIOUS ANIMALS PROHIBITED.

No person shall keep, shelter, or harbor for any reason within the City a vicious animal except in the following circumstances:

1. Animals under the control of a law enforcement or military agency.
2. The keeping of guard dogs; however, guard dogs must be kept within a structure or fixed enclosure at all times, and any guard dog found at large may be processed as a vicious animal pursuant to the provisions of this chapter. Any premises guarded by a guard dog shall be prominently posted with a sign containing the wording “Guard Dog,” “Vicious Dog” or words of similar import, and the owner of such premises shall inform the Mayor or peace officer that a guard dog is on duty at said premises.

#### 56.03 SEIZURE, IMPOUNDMENT AND DISPOSITION.

1. In the event that a vicious animal is found at large and unattended upon public property, park property, public right-of-way or the property of someone other than its owner, thereby creating a hazard to persons or property, such animal may, in the discretion of the Mayor or peace officer, be destroyed if it cannot be confined or captured. The City shall be under no duty to attempt the confinement or capture of a vicious animal found at large, nor shall it have a duty to notify the owner of such animal prior to its destruction.
2. Upon the complaint of any individual that a person is keeping, sheltering or harboring a vicious animal on premises in the City, the Mayor or peace officer shall cause the matter to be investigated and

if after investigation, the facts indicate that the person named in the complaint is keeping, sheltering or harboring a vicious animal in the City, the Mayor or peace officer shall order the person named in the complaint to safely remove such animal from the City or destroy the animal within three days of the receipt of such an order. Such order shall be contained in a notice to remove the vicious animal, which notice shall be given in writing to the person keeping, sheltering, or harboring the vicious animal, and shall be served personally or by certified mail. Such order and notice to remove the vicious animal shall not be required where such animal has previously caused serious physical harm or death to any person, in which case the Mayor or peace officer shall cause the animal to be immediately seized and impounded or killed if seizure and impoundment are not possible without risk of serious physical harm or death to any person.

3. The order to remove vicious animal issued by the Mayor or peace officer may be appealed to the Council. In order to appeal such order, written notice of appeal must be filed with the Clerk within three days after receipt of the order contained in the notice to remove the vicious animal. Failure to file such written notice of appeal shall constitute a waiver of the right to appeal the order of the Mayor or peace officer.

4. The notice of appeal shall state the grounds for such appeal and shall be delivered personally or by certified mail to the Clerk. The hearing of such appeal shall be scheduled within seven days of the receipt of the notice of appeal. The hearing may be continued for good cause. After such hearing, the Council may affirm or reverse the order of the Mayor or peace officer. Such determination shall be contained in a written decision and shall be filed with the Clerk within three days after the hearing or any continued session thereof.

5. If the Council affirms the action of the Mayor or peace officer, the Council shall order in its written decision that the person owning, sheltering, harboring or keeping such vicious animal remove such animal from the City or destroy it. The decision and order shall immediately be served upon the person against whom rendered in the same manner as the notice of removal. If the original order of the Mayor or peace officer is not appealed and is not complied with within three days or the order of the Council after appeal is not complied with within three days of its issuance, the Mayor or peace officer is authorized to seize, impound or destroy such vicious animal. Failure to comply with an order of the Mayor or peace officer issued pursuant to this chapter and not appealed (or of the Council after appeal) constitutes a simple misdemeanor.

#### 56.04 INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

At the discretion of city staff, a dog owner must provide proof that homeowners insurance policy does not bar this specific breed of dog. Dog breed identification is based on any formal documents the owner may have. If no breed identification documents can be obtained, it is on the best judgement of the administrator to identify the breed. Two events may initiate this process: 1. City workers observe the dog acting outside of what would be considered normal but does not meet the criteria for "Vicious Animal" and 2. Any complaints about said dog from members of the community.

#### 56.05 PENALTIES

Any person who violates this chapter shall be guilty of a municipal infraction and shall be penalized as set forth in Chapter 3 of the Municipal Code of the City of Ely, Iowa.