

**“Wichita’s ordinance ... has been a very useful tool in our efforts to improve the lives of the dogs in our city. . . . This is a welcome and enforceable tool ... [and] has made it possible for our officers to educate pet owners about the importance of interacting with their pets, proper activity, and exercise. It has also given us the ability and ‘the teeth’ to prosecute those individuals that refuse to comply. . . . I highly recommend that other jurisdictions consider passing similar ordinances if they have issues with animal neglect, continuous chaining, and illegal dog fighting. Our ordinance has served us well.”**

**—Dennis Graves, animal control supervisor, Wichita, Kansas**

**Officials Recommend and Praise Chaining Laws as Enforceable and Effective**

“[The tethering ordinance in Washington, D.C.] has given the [Washington Humane Society] Humane Law Enforcement Division an excellent tool in improving the lives of dogs in the District of Columbia. . . . [The anti-chaining law] makes for safer neighborhoods and happier dogs all without adding burden to our enforcement division. Passing this law has reduced our work load rather than increased it. For these reasons we are strong proponents of the anti-chaining law and feel it has been a success here in the nation’s capital.”

**—Adam Parascandola, director of humane law enforcement, Washington (D.C.) Humane Society**

“I encourage any city or county (hopefully states someday) to [pass] a similar ... ordinance to improve the lives of dogs and protect their citizens.”

**—Elaine Modlin, animal control officer, Laurinburg, North Carolina**



**Resources**

PETA stands ready to meet with and provide interested officials with further information about ways to improve the welfare of communities and animals through anti-tethering and other legislation. Please feel free to contact us for statistics, studies, expert statements, and sample ordinances:

PETA Headquarters  
501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

[HelpingAnimals.com](http://HelpingAnimals.com)

**PETA**



**“Chaining dogs makes them more aggressive  
—the shorter the chain, the greater the aggression.”**

**— Dr. Nicholas H. Dodman  
Professor, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine**

# DOG ATTACKS

A resource guide to  
keeping your community safe

**PETA**

**“Chaining dogs creates unsafe neighborhoods. Chaining dogs creates communities in which our children, our elderly, or anyone unlucky enough is at risk for injury or death.”**

**—Animal behaviorist Sue Sternberg**

## The Dangerous, Cruel Practice of Chaining Dogs and a Community’s Answer

Since 2003, at least 130 Americans have been injured or killed by chained dogs. Nearly 75 percent of those victims were children, and 17 died in the attacks. Chaining dogs, or “tethering” as it is sometimes called, is a national public- and animal-welfare crisis. More than 85 American cities and counties (as well as the state of California) have recognized the dangerous consequences of tethering—both for the community and for dogs—and they have passed laws restricting or banning it. With this publication, PETA hopes to help you keep your community safe by introducing and passing your own law.

### Chaining Dogs Endangers Citizens, Especially Children

A study partly authored by two Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) physicians found that chained dogs were 2.8 times more likely to attack than dogs who were not tethered.

Dog attacks are a serious public safety issue. In many cases, the attacking animals are tethered, have broken loose from their tethers, or have generally been kept chained.

The most common victims in these attacks are young children. According to Karen Delise, author of *Fatal Dog Attacks*, 79 percent of the 431 people killed by dogs in the United States between 1965 and 2001 were children under the age of 12.

In 2002, chained dogs killed more American children than did fireworks accidents and falls from trees and playground equipment combined, and they killed as many kids as did gun accidents. A 1996 study partly authored by CDC officials found that of 38 children between the ages of 1 and 9 who were killed by dogs in the United States between 1989 and 1994, nearly 30 percent died after “wandering too close to a chained dog.”

Passing a law restricting or banning the continuous chaining of dogs following such tragedies helps ensure that no more lives will be claimed. In July 2005, Orange County, Florida, officials severely restricted the tethering of dogs and named the law for Myles Leakes, an Orlando boy who was fatally mauled by chained dogs the previous December. Vanessa Bouffard-Fehl, a spokesperson for Orange County’s Animal Services Division, explained, “We’re trying to reduce the number of people [bitten] by dogs.”



**“Children are the most common victims of serious dog bites.”**

**—The American Veterinary Medical Association**

**“We [passed] this ordinance for two main reasons: (1) the safety of our citizens and (2) for the humane treatment of the animals. Our records indicated that 51 percent of our dog bites were from dogs [who] were confined on chains or had been chained and had broken loose. ... I observed that most of our dogs [kept] chained were receiving inhumane treatment.”**

**—Elaine Modlin, animal control officer, Laurinburg, North Carolina**



### Animal Behaviorists Agree: Chaining Makes Dogs Dangerous

British animal behaviorist Dr. Roger Mugford states, "Dogs, just like human beings who get locked up for no reason, will get mean and bitter." According to animal behaviorist Shelby Marlo, "[D]ogs who are forced to live their lives at the end of a chain suffer from severe psychological, emotional, and behavioral effects."

### Chaining ruins dogs' nature as social pack animals.

According to syndicated pet columnist and veterinarian Dr. Michael Fox, "Dogs are pack animals and need frequent contact with their own kind or with human beings." The Washington (D.C.) Humane Society states, "Chaining, by definition, keeps a dog in solitary confinement, continually thwarting [the animal's] pack instinct to be with other animals or with [his or her] human 'pack.'" As undersocialized animals, tethered dogs develop behavioral problems, which often result in attacks. As animal behaviorist Dr. Temple Grandin writes in her latest book, *Animals in Translation*, "An animal who hasn't been properly socialized to his peers isn't dangerous only to other animals. He can be dangerous to humans, too."

### Chaining heightens dogs' natural territoriality.

Tethers limit dogs' space and make the boundaries of those few square feet of territory much more distinguished. Regarding chained dogs, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists President Elizabeth Shull states, "In addition to frustration, the constant physical restraint promotes excessive territoriality, which may be manifested as aggression. These attacks are completely unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment."

### Dogs are 'fight or flight' animals.

When confronted with a threat, a dog will either flee from the danger or confront it. Tethered dogs have no ability to flee and escape from danger, so they must attack. Karen Delise explains: "[T]he natural fight or flight response afforded to most animals in most stressful situations is denied to a chained animal. The dog is cognizant of the fact that he can only retreat the length of the chain and will often opt to 'stand his ground.' Removing the option of flight for any animal will always increase the chance of a physical encounter (or fight response) to a perceived threat."

**"In addition to frustration, the constant physical restraint promotes excessive territoriality, which may be manifested as aggression. These attacks are completely unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment."**

**—Elizabeth Shull, president, American College of Veterinary Behaviorists**



**"The ordinance was originally passed because putting an animal on a [tether] was deemed cruel for a variety of reasons. ... We had seen a number of instances where animals ... wound up choking themselves when they tried to escape by jumping over items in the yard, such as cars or motorcycles."**

**—Pat Mehrhoff, senior assistant prosecuting attorney, Tucson, Arizona**

### Chaining Dogs Is Cruelty to Animals

While the fatal consequences to humans of chaining dogs are what most often capture public attention and officials' response, continuous chaining is also detrimental to the physical well-being of any dog. Many chained dogs are deprived of adequate food and water, shelter, and veterinary care, and their social needs are ignored. They frequently die of heatstroke throughout the summer and succumb to exposure during the winter. Internal and external parasites feed on these animals year-round. In the summer, flea and tick infestations and suffering brought on by flystrike are especially severe for chained dogs, who have no escape from them.

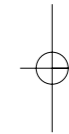
### Chained dogs often choke to death or are attacked.

Chained dogs hang or choke to death after they become entangled or try to leap over fences or other items. Collars put on dogs as puppies become painfully embedded in the animals' skin as they grow older and the collars are not enlarged. Many dogs who are left to fend for themselves at the end of a chain fall victim to attacks by other animals or cruel people. Chained dogs are tortured, poisoned, shot, stabbed, set on fire, stolen to be used as "bait" for fighting dogs, and abused in countless other ways.

These animals' fates have prompted many cities and counties to pass anti-tethering legislation. For example, Fairhope, Alabama, banned chaining after the city's animal control officer rescued a chained dog who was so starved that his ribs were clearly visible. After the remains of a Burleigh, New Jersey, woman's chained dog were found in her back yard in January 2004, at least six cities in Cape May County adopted anti-tethering ordinances. Tucson, Arizona, restricted tethering after "animals [who] had been tied out wound up choking themselves" by "jumping over items," according to the City Attorney's Office.



Photo: Mike Dries/The Enquirer-Journal





### Make Your Community and Its Dogs Safer by Banning Chaining

Whether you are considering legislation to restrict or ban the continuous chaining of dogs in response to an incident in your community—such as a tragic dog attack or a cruelty-to-animals case involving chained dogs—or you hope to prevent one, taking this initiative on behalf of your constituents and their animals will save lives. According to the CDC, “[S]trategies to encourage responsible pet ownership and reduce dog bites include regulatory measures ... and legislation.”

The text of every American anti-tethering ordinance can be read at [HelpingAnimals.com](http://HelpingAnimals.com). The majority of ordinances either ban chaining or allow it for only limited periods of time, provided that certain conditions are met.

Effective bans on tethering prohibit the fastening, tying, or chaining of dogs to all stationary objects by any means.

Vital elements of ordinances that allow limited tethering include stringent limits on how long dogs may be tethered in a 24-hour period and the length and weight of such tethers. Such ordinances should require that tethers remain tangle-free and attach to a properly fitted harness and allow dogs free access to food, water, adequate shelter, and the maximum available exercise area, kept free of feces. Tethering should be prohibited during extreme weather and when the dogs are not spayed or neutered or under conditions whereby the dog could strangle or become injured.

**“What kind of life is it to live on the end of a chain 24 hours a day? ... [A tethering law] is something that needs to be done for the safety of the public and the animals.”**

**—Kenny Beasley, mayor, South Roxana, Illinois**

**In September 2006, the state of California banned the tethering of dogs for more than three hours.**

**“This bill helps protect dogs from cruelty and enhances public safety by preventing aggressive animal behavior that can result from inhumane tethering.”**

**—Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger**

### Here are three sample ordinances:

#### •Orange County, Florida

##### Section 5-29. Definitions.

Restraining Device shall mean a chain, cord, or cable, with a minimum length of ten feet, used to confine an animal on an owner's property. This device must provide for humane, unrestrained range of movement for the animal to [ensure] that the animal is not exposed to hazard or injury and shall not prevent the animal from having food, water, shelter, adequate ventilation, protection from the elements or other care generally considered to be normal and usual. This device shall be proportional in size, weigh no more than 1/8 of the dog or puppy's body weight, and designed for use with the specific breed of animal with an appropriate collar. These devices shall not be used to confine a dog on an owner's property between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, 365 days a year and during times of extreme weather, e.g., hurricanes, below freezing conditions.

#### •Los Angeles, California

##### Section 53.70. Care and Maintenance of Dogs

D. Tethering. It shall be unlawful for any person to tether, fasten, chain, tie, restrain or cause a dog to be fastened, chained, tied or restrained to houses, trees, fences, garages or other stationary or highly immobile objects by means of a rope, chain, strap or other physical restraint for the purpose of confinement, except in circumstances where all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) The tethering shall not be for more time than is necessary for the dog owner or custodian to complete a temporary task that requires the dog to be physically restrained for a reasonable period.
- (2) The dog must be tethered by a non-choke type collar or a body harness to a tether that is at least three (3) times the body length of the dog, measured from the dog's nose to the back of the hindquarters and which tether is free from entanglement.
- (3) The dog must have access to food, water and shelter as described above.
- (4) The dog shall be monitored periodically.

#### •Louisville, Kentucky

##### Section 91.001. Definitions. Restraint.

1) For all animals except puppies and dogs, restraint shall mean on the premises of the owner or, if off the premises of the owner, under restraint by means of a lead or leash and under the control of a responsible person.

2) For puppies and dogs, restraint shall mean on the premises of the owner and confined in a secure enclosure as previously defined, or accompanied by the owner on the owner's property and under his/her direct control. If off the premises of the owner, the animal must be restrained by a lead or leash and under the control of a responsible person, or accompanied by a responsible person into an enclosed "off-leash" area designated by the Kentucky Department of Parks and in conformance with all regulations and/or requirements imposed as a condition of utilizing such "off-leash" area by such Department of Parks, or its designee.

(a) It is prohibited to exclusively restrain a dog or puppy by a fixed-point chain or tether. A fixed-point restraint may be used temporarily but not to exceed one (1) hour in a twenty-four (24) hour period.

(b) A dog may be exclusively restrained by a chain or tether provided that it is at least ten (10) feet in length and attached to a pulley or trolley mounted on a cable which is also at least ten (10) feet in length and mounted no more than seven (7) feet above ground level.

c) Any tethering system employed shall not allow the dog or puppy to leave the owner's property.

(d) No chain or tether shall weigh more than 1/8 of the dog or puppy's body weight.

(e) Any chain or tether shall be at least ten (10) feet in length and have swivels on both ends.

(f) Any chain or tether must be attached to a properly fitting collar or harness worn by the animal.