

## **TOWN OF RIVER FALLS ORDINANCES & POLICIES CONCERNING DOG CONTROL**

### **TOWN ORDINANCES**

Section 12.04 of River Falls Town Code contains many provisions that relate to dog control. The most common complaints that the Town Board receives concern dogs that are creating barking nuisances, dogs running at large, dogs that are unlicensed and the failure of dog owners to clean up dog excreta in areas that are used by other town residents.

Sections of Town Code that deal with these specific nuisance complaints include:

Licensing of Dogs	12.04 (1)(a)
Dogs Running at Large	12.04 (2)(a)
Barking Dogs	12.04 (2)(e)
Nuisance Dogs	10.01 & 12.04 (3)(a)(11)

Section 12.04 (1)(a) Licensing of Dogs: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 174.05 Wisconsin Statutes, the Town does hereby levy a dog license tax on every dog more than five (5) months of age on January 1 of any year or becoming five (5) months of age within any license year.

Section 12.04 (2)(a) Dogs Running at Large: No owner of any dog shall permit such dog to run at large within the Town. A dog shall not be considered to be at large if accompanied by the owner while hunting, walking or is secured to a leash, chain or rope, under the control of any person, or if confined within a fenced enclosure.

Section 12.04 (2)(e) Barking Dogs: No person shall harbor any dogs or any other animals within his care of custody which shall continuously bark or create a continuous or intermittent noise or disturbance, or allow such animals to make any unusual or unnecessary noise to the disturbance of the neighborhood, or to people passing upon the roadways.

Section 10.01 Public Nuisances: No person shall erect, contrive, cause, continue, maintain or permit to exist any public nuisance within the Town.

Section 12.04(3)(a)(11) Nuisance Dogs: Any dog which is at large or by frequent and habitual howling, yelping, barking, or other, shall cause serious annoyance or disturbance to persons or to a neighborhood or habitually pursues any vehicle upon any public street or highway.

**(over)**

## TOWN POLICIES

The River Falls Town Board has put the following policies in effect to deal with dog control problems:

**Policy 1:** When the board receives a complaint relating to dog barking, dog running, unlicensed dogs, dog excreta, etc. the board will send a letter to the dog owner notifying them that they have received a complaint and request that they take steps that will satisfactorily address the complaint.

**Policy 2:** If a second complaint is received the town board will send a second letter to the dog owner asking them to meet with the Town Board to devise a plan to deal with the complaint. The dog owner will receive notification in this letter that if the problem is not resolved the town board may issue citations if further complaints continue to be received or if the dog owner does not attend a meeting with the town board. (Note: In emergency situations the town board chair may issue a citation without the appearance of the violator at a Town Board meeting.

**Policy 3:** The Town Board may ask the Town's contracted animal control director to initiate a conversation regarding barking, off premises or unlicensed animals.

**Policy 4:** According to Section 25.04 of Town Code the River Falls Town Board has the authority to issue citations in the amount of \$150 to \$500 together with the cost of prosecution. In cases where a citation has been issued, the case will be heard in Pierce County Circuit Court in Ellsworth. Default of payment can result in more serious penalties.

Note Regarding Licensing of Dog Kennels: A special kennel license is required from the River Falls Town Board. A kennel is considered to be 6 or more dogs in most areas of the town, with the exception of the Extraterritorial Zone (the ETZ is a buffer area around the City of River Falls that is part of the Town, but is planned for expansion of the City at some future date). The ETZ has separate zoning and ordinances. In the ETZ residential areas, a kennel is considered to be four or more dogs of at least four months of age.

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