



BELIZE

**DOGS ACT
CHAPTER 153**

REVISED EDITION 2000
SHOWING THE LAW AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2000

This is a revised edition of the law, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 1980 - 1990.

This edition contains a consolidation of the following laws-	Page
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Amendments in force as at 31st December, 2000.	



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CHAPTER 153

DOGS

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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SCHEDULE

CHAPTER 153

DOGS

[1st October, 1914]

Ch., 131,
R.L., 1958.
CAP. 115,
R.E., 1980-1990.
25 of 1960.
40 of 1963.

Short title. 1. This Act may be cited as the Dogs Act.

Interpretation. 2.-(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:-

“dog catcher” means a person authorised by a licensing authority to seize dogs;

“dog licence” means a licence to keep a dog or dogs in a town issued in accordance with the provisions of this Act by the licensing authority for that town;

“town” means any of the following towns, cities, villages or communities:

- (a) Belize City, the City of Belmopan, Corozal Town, Orange Walk Town, Dangriga, San Ignacio and Santa Elena, and Punta Gorda;
- (b) Benque Viejo del Carmen, and San Pedro;
- (c) Caye Caulker, and St. George's Caye; and
- (d) any other place which the Minister may, from time to time, by Order published in the *Gazette*, declare to be a town for the purpose of this Act;

“licensing authority” means, in the case of Belize City, the Belize City Council; San Pedro, the San Pedro Town Council; Caye Caulker, the Caye Caulker Village Council; St. George's Caye, the St. Georges Caye Community Council; Belmopan, the Belmopan City Council, and in the case of any other town, the Town Council responsible for administering that town;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for Local Government.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, any person in whose custody, charge, or possession, or upon whose premises any dog is found or seen shall be deemed to keep and to be the owner of that dog, unless the contrary is proved.

3.-(1) Except where no dog licence is required, every person who keeps a dog in town without being licensed for that purpose or who keeps in any town more dogs than the number he is licensed to keep shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten dollars for each period of seven days, or part of such period, during which he has so kept any dog.

Penalty for keeping a dog in a town without a licence.

(2) No dog licence shall be required-

- (a) for any person to keep a dog in a town if he has not kept a dog

in that town for more than forty days, whether consecutive or not, in the preceding twelve months; or

(b) in respect of a dog under the age of six months:

Provided that the burden of proving that a dog licence is not required shall lie on the person alleging the same.

Fees and charges and form of licence.

4. (a) The licensing authority, subject to the approval of the Minister, may by Order prescribe-

- (i) the fees to be paid for dog licences in their respective districts;
- (ii) the fees to be charged for the seizure of dogs by dog catchers under section 10;
- (iii) the charges pound keepers are authorised to collect in respect of dogs detained by them in dog pounds:

Provided that unless and until a licensing authority has prescribed the fee to be paid for a dog licence, the fee for each dog shall be five dollars in the case of licences issued by the Belize City Council and two dollars and fifty cents in other cases.

Schedule.

(b) Dog licences shall be in the form given in the Schedule and shall be issued by the licensing authority upon payment of the proper fee.

Register of licences to be kept.

5.-(1) Each licensing authority shall keep a separate register for each town showing the name, occupation and place of abode of each person to whom they issue a dog licence and the number of dogs he is licensed to keep by such licence.

(2) Registers kept under this section shall be open to inspection by the public at all convenient times.

6.-(1) Licensing authorities shall supply free of cost to the owner of every dog licensed by them a metal badge, in this Act called a licensing badge, which shall be of a distinctive pattern or design for each year.

Licensing badges to be issued when dog is licensed.

(2) For the purposes of the Criminal Code relating to forgery, a licensing badge shall be deemed to be an official document.

Forgery of licensing badges.
CAP. 101.

7. If a dog licence or licensing badge is lost or destroyed, the person to whom it was issued shall, on making a statutory declaration to that effect and paying a fee of one dollar, be entitled to obtain a certified copy of his dog licence or another licensing badge, as the case may be, from the authority which issued his dog licence.

Replacement of licences or badges lost or destroyed.

8. The production of a dog licence or of a certified copy of a dog licence purporting to be signed on behalf of a licensing authority shall be sufficient evidence that the licence was duly granted according to its purport.

Proof of licence.

9. Every person who, being licensed under this Act, after being requested to produce his dog licence by any police officer or person showing an authority to examine dog licences purporting to be signed on behalf of a licensing authority, refuses or fails or neglects, without reasonable excuse, to produce his dog licence to be examined and read by such police officer or person shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty dollars.

Penalty for failing to produce licence.

10.-(1) Whenever a dog is seen in a town, on a highway or in a place of public resort in any of the following cases-

Power to seize dogs in certain cases.

- (a) not having a collar with a licensing badge for the current year attached thereto; or

- (b) appearing to be a stray or ownerless dog; or
- (c) being a bitch in heat and being neither led nor carried; or
- (d) suffering from any contagious disease and not being carried;
or
- (e) suffering from any disease or injury which causes pain to the dog and being neither led nor carried,

that dog may be seized by any police officer or dog catcher and the owner of the dog shall in cases (a), (b) and (c) be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty-five dollars:

Provided that a person shall not be convicted under paragraph (a) if he proves that no licence is required in respect of the dog.

(2) Every dog catcher shall, while exercising the powers conferred by this section, wear a distinctive badge or uniform of a pattern approved by the Minister.

40 of 1963.

(3) For purposes of section 39 of the Police Act, a dog catcher exercising the power conferred by this section and wearing such badge or uniform specified in subsection (2) shall be deemed to be a police officer acting in the execution of his duty.

CAP. 138.

Disposal of dogs which have been seized.

11.-(1) If in the opinion of any police officer of higher rank than a constable or of any Justice of the Peace or of any person appointed by the licensing authority with the approval of the Minister to act for the purposes of this subsection, a dog seized under the powers specified in section 10 is suffering from a contagious disease or is in such pain that it is humane to destroy it, the police officer or dog catcher shall take the dog to the dog pound of the town in which it was seized and the keeper thereof shall destroy it forthwith.

(2) In every other case, the dog shall be taken to and detained in the dog pound of the town in which it was seized.

12.-(1) If, within three days from the seizure of a dog detained in a dog pound, any person satisfies the licensing authority of the town in which the dog was seized that he is the owner of the dog, and either that no licence is required for the dog, or that he is licensed to keep a dog in that town and does not keep in that town more dogs than the number he is licensed to keep therein, and pays to the keeper of the dog pound his authorised charges, and catcher's fees, the keeper shall deliver the dog to that person.

Disposal of dogs detained in a pound.

(2) In every other case, the keeper of the dog pound shall, at the expiration of three days from the seizure of a dog detained in a dog pound, either destroy the dog or dispose of it in such manner as the licensing authority may direct.

13.-(1) The licensing authority for any town may, from time to time by Order published in the *Gazette*, declare any place to be the dog pound for that town and appoint a keeper thereof.

Establishment of dog pounds.

(2) The keeper of a dog pound shall supply each dog detained by him with a sufficiency of wholesome food and water, and may retain for his own use his authorised charges, but shall pay to the licensing authority all catcher's fees paid to him.

(3) The authorised charges of the keeper of a dog pound, if not paid by the owner of the dog, shall, if the pound was established by the Belize City Council, be paid out of the general revenue of the Council and shall, in every other case, be paid out of the City, Town, Village or Community Fund of the City, Town, Village or Community Council.

Provision for payment of charges.

14.-(1) Whenever it appears to a magistrate on complaint being made to him under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts, that a dog is vicious or savage, whether to animals or human beings, or likely to spread any disease or, by reason of its habit of persistent barking or for any other reason, is a nuisance, the magistrate

Power of magistrate to order destruction of dogs.
CAP. 98.
CAP. 99.

may order the owner of the dog to keep it under proper control or in such a manner that it shall not be a nuisance, or may order the owner to destroy the dog.

(2) Every person who fails to comply with such order shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten dollars for each day or part of a day during which the order has not been complied with.

Provision for expenses.

15. Expenses incurred in connection with this Act shall be paid, in the case of the Belize City Council, out of the general revenue of the Council, and, in the case of any other City, Town, Village or Community, out of the general revenue of that City, Town, Village or Community.

Disposal of money received for licences and fines.

16.-(1) Money received for dog licences or licensing badges issued by the Belize City Council, and fines recovered under this Act on the information of the Council, shall form part of the general revenue of the Council.

(2) Money received for dog licences issued by any licensing authority other than the Belize City Council, and fines recovered under this Act on the information of any licensing authority, other than as aforesaid, shall form part of the general revenue of that licensing authority.

(3) Money received by the licensing authorities from the keeper of the dog pound shall in the case of the Belize City Council form part of the general revenue of the Council, and in the case of any other licensing authority, form part of the general revenue of that licensing authority.

(4) Nothing in this section shall prejudice the power of the Minister to remit any fine.

Prohibition on allowing dogs to be at large. 25 of 1960.

17. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, no owner of a dog shall permit that dog to be at large in any street or place of public resort in any town and any person who contravenes this section is guilty of an offence and is, on summary conviction, liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.

18.-(1) Subject to this section, the licensing authority of any city or town may place poison in any street or place of public resort in such city or town for the purpose of poisoning any dog which is at large therein.

Poisoning of dogs found at large.
25 of 1960.

- (2) (a) The poison used shall be a preparation of strychnine in capsule form.
- (b) The licensing authority shall obtain the poison from the Government pharmacist or from a Government officer who is a qualified chemist and druggist.
- (c) The Government pharmacist or such Government officer shall keep a special register of poisons supplied under this Act. He shall enter in such register the quantity of poison in stock and the date, quantity and name of the person to whom he issues the poison. He shall issue poison only to the chief executive officer or other similar officer of a licensing authority.
- (d) The chief executive officer or other similar officer of a licensing authority shall keep a register and shall enter therein the date and quantity of poison received by him and also the date, quantity and name of the person to whom he issues the poison.
- (e) The chief executive officer or other similar officer of a licensing authority shall issue poison only to a public health inspector who shall sign the register for it.
- (f) A public health inspector and a police officer shall accompany each team of a licensing authority which is engaged on a poisoning operation. The public health inspector shall ensure that-
 - (i) the poison is not scattered broadcast but thrown to individual dogs which are at large in any street or place

of public resort;

- (ii) the operation is conducted at such times as the streets and places of public resort are likely to be unfrequented; and
 - (iii) any poison which is not eaten by the dog or dogs to which it was thrown is recovered.
- (g) On the conclusion of the poisoning operation, the public health inspector shall return all unused or uneaten capsules of poison to the chief executive officer or other similar officer of the licensing authority who shall enter the number so returned and suitable for safe storage in his register and shall sign the entry in the presence of the public health inspector.
- (h) The chief executive officer or other similar officer of a licensing authority shall, in the presence of the public health inspector, destroy by fire any capsule of poison returned to him which is unsuitable for safe storage.

(3) No licensing authority shall incur any civil liability for any dog destroyed in accordance with this section.

(4) For the purposes of this section, “street” includes any highway, and any road, bridge, lane, mews, footway, square, court, alley, passage, whether a thoroughfare or not and any part of any such highway, road, bridge, lane, mews, footway, square, court, alley or passage.

Provisions for preventing the spread of rabies.

19.-(1) The Minister may, whenever it is shown to be expedient to do so, by Order in the *Gazette*, declare Belize or any district of Belize to be an area coming under the operation of this section.

(2) The Minister may, in and by such Order, make rules and regulations,

to have force and effect in the area so declared for preventing the spread of the disease known as rabies, and may from time to time repeal, alter and amend any such Order.

(3) The rules and regulations made under an Order referred to in subsection (2) may provide, *inter alia*, for all or any of the following matters-

- (a) the appointment, control and duties of officers carrying out the provisions of this section;
- (b) the mode of destruction of all animals whose destruction may be necessary under this section, and the disposition of the carcasses of animals so destroyed;
- (c) the removal of any animal from, and their introduction into, such area;
- (d) the muzzling, control, detention, isolation or custody of dogs or other animals which it shall not be necessary to destroy;
- (e) the prohibition or restriction of the removal of dogs within Belize,

generally for carrying out the provisions of this section and preventing the spread of rabies.

(4) The rules and regulations made under subsection (3) may provide that any person contravening any such rule or regulation shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars or to three months imprisonment.

(5) For the purposes of this section, the term “dog” includes any other animal subject to the disease known as rabies which the Minister may specify under any rules and regulations issued under this section.

SCHEDULE

[Section 4]

CAP. 153.

*The Dogs Act**Dog Licence*

(Name, occupation, and place of abode of licensee) having paid the fee of (state amount) is hereby licensed to keep (number) dog(s) in the town of (name of town) until the first day of January next.

Issued by me this (date)

(Signature of issuer of licence.)

on behalf of the

(state title of the licensing authority).