

AN ORDINANCE

NO.

An Ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the Columbus Code to revise provisions pertaining to rabies vaccination and animal registration; and for other purposes.

THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1.

In Section 5-5 of the Columbus Code, paragraphs (9) and (13) are hereby deleted in their entirety and replaced by new paragraphs (9) and (13) to read as follows:

“Sec. 5-5. - Definitions.

(9) *One-stop rabies vaccination—Pet registration* shall mean and any veterinarian or veterinary clinic licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Columbus, Georgia, which provides rabies vaccinations certificates and tags and certificates of exemption and which must also issue city animal registration permits in conjunction with those services.

(13) *Responsible pet ownership* shall mean:

- (a) Care of a pet in such a manner as to provide humane living conditions for the pet;
- (b) Control of the pet so that the pet does not cause a nuisance or unsanitary conditions for the neighborhood or community;
- (c) Such a pet would have a current rabies registration tag or a city registration tag.”

SECTION 2.

Section 5-8 of the Columbus Code is hereby deleted in its entirety and replaced by a new code section to read as follows:

“Sec. 5-8. - Rabies vaccination.

(a) *Responsibility.* The owner or person having custody or control of any dog or cat four months of age or older shall be responsible for having each dog or cat vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Dogs and cats shall be revaccinated within ten days of the "rabies expiration date" recorded on the certificate of rabies vaccination issued for the animal. Three-year rabies vaccinations are authorized and encouraged.

(b) *Certificate of rabies vaccination.* The veterinarian administering rabies vaccinations set forth in this chapter shall execute a certificate of rabies vaccination which has been approved by the Georgia Department of Human Resources and furnished to the veterinarian by the animal control and enforcement division. No other rabies vaccination certificates are authorized for use for dogs and cats that are residents of Columbus, Georgia. The certificate of rabies vaccination shall be executed in accordance with administrative instructions issued by the chief of the animal control and enforcement division. There shall be three copies of the certificate. The original copy shall be given to the owner of the animal; the second copy shall be forwarded to the animal control and enforcement division within 15 days of vaccinating the animal; and the third copy shall be retained by the veterinarian. In the following specially exempted circumstances, a veterinarian may issue a certificate of exemption from the vaccination requirement:

(1) A licensed veterinarian has examined the animal and certified that at the time of registration such vaccination would endanger the animal's health because of age, infirmity, debility, illness, or pregnancy. The exemption certificate must include the date when a rabies vaccination can be administered.

(2) The owner shall be required to have the exempted dog or cat vaccinated within ten days of the expiration date of the veterinarian's certificate.

(3) Veterinarians issuing exemption certificates are authorized to charge the pet owner a medical examination fee.

(4) Veterinarians registering animals under the provision of this exemption authorization shall attach a copy of the certificate to the animal registration form which shall be forwarded to the animal control and enforcement division in accordance with administrative instructions issued by the animal control and enforcement division. The owner of the animal will be provided with a copy of the certificate of exemption and the owner will be required to present the certificate for inspection on request of an animal control officer.

(c) *Out-of-state certificates of rabies vaccinations recognized.* The valid certificates of rabies vaccination issued by licensed veterinarians of any of the 50 states will be accepted as evidence of vaccinations which is prerequisite to registration of the dog or cat with the animal control and enforcement division. In these cases the owner of a dog or cat is required to register the pet at the animal control and enforcement division's main office.

(d) *Records.* In addition to maintaining a computerized data file of rabies vaccinations and pet registrations, the animal control and enforcement division shall maintain an orderly indexed file of certificates of rabies vaccination for three years.

(e) *Rabies vaccination tag:*

(1) The term "rabies vaccination tag" shall mean a tag approved by the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

(2) Concurrent with the issuance of the certificate of rabies vaccination, the person authorized to issue the certificate shall also furnish to the owner of the vaccinated dog or cat the serially numbered rabies vaccination tag described above. The serial number of the tag shall be entered in the appropriate space of the corresponding certificate of rabies vaccination.

(f) *Requirement to display rabies vaccination tag:*

(1) *Dogs.* The rabies vaccination tag issued for a dog shall be attached to a collar or harness and worn by the dog at all times, except under the special circumstances listed below:

a. A dog, while within the confines of the walls of the owner's house or apartment, is exempted from wearing the rabies tag.

b. Hunting or stock dogs and show dogs while being worked, conditioned, groomed and/or shown under the direct supervision and control of their owner, agents or employees of the owner are exempted from wearing the rabies tag. The rabies certificate must be available at the site of such activity for inspection on the request of an animal control officer.

c. A dog, which for medical or physical reasons is unable to wear a collar or harness, is exempted from wearing the rabies tag. Documentation from a licensed veterinarian must be presented as proof for this exemption.

(2) *Cats.* The wearing of rabies tags by cats shall be left to the discretion of the owners. If tags are not worn, evidence of vaccination must be produced upon the request of an animal control officer.

(g) Effective October 1, 2017, any veterinarian issuing a certificate of rabies vaccination or a certificate of exemption in accordance with this code section will also issue a certificate of registration as required by Sec. 5-9 below and remit the required fees to the animal control and enforcement division.”

SECTION 3.

Section 5-9 of the Columbus Code is hereby deleted in its entirety and replaced by a new code section to read as follows:

“Sec. 5-9. - Registration of dogs and cats.

A) *Registration required.* In addition to the requirement for rabies vaccination, owners of dogs and cats four months of age and older and permanently kept in Columbus, Georgia are required to obtain a City registration each such dog and/or cat either at the main office of the animal care and control facility, in the case where the animal is already covered by a current rabies certificate but not registered, or at the office of the Veterinarian where the rabies vaccination is given and a rabies certificate is issued. No veterinarian may issue a certificate of vaccination or a rabies vaccination tag or a certificate of exemption as defined (in Sec. 5-8 above, unless he or she also completes the City registration process for the animal. The dog and/or cat must be vaccinated for rabies before registration is authorized and valid certificate of rabies vaccination must be presented before a dog or cat may be registered unless the veterinarian has issued a certificate of exemption in accordance with Sec. 5-8 above. The dog shall wear the rabies vaccination tag as required by paragraph 5-8(f) above as evidence of city registration. A dog receiving a certificate of exemption will receive a city registration tag to be replaced by a vaccination tag when a dog is vaccinated after expiration of the exemption certificate.

(B) *One-year and three-year registration:*

(1) One-year permits are valid from the date of registration and expire on the date of expiration of the one-year rabies vaccination pursuant to subsection (E) below.

(2) Three-year permits may be issued only in conjunction with a three-year rabies vaccination. The three-year permit shall be valid from the date of registration and expire on the date of expiration of the three-year rabies vaccination.

(C) *Certificate of registration.* The certificate of rabies vaccination, when authenticated by the addition of the city registration tag number issued to a particular animal, shall serve the dual purpose of "certificate of rabies vaccination" and "animal registration."

(D) *Requirement to display rabies vaccination or animal registration tag:*

(1) *Dogs.* The tag issued for each dog shall be attached to a collar or harness and worn by the dog at all times, except under the special circumstances listed below; however, the owner shall be required to produce evidence of the registration upon the request of an animal control officer:

a. A dog, while within the confines of the walls of the owner's house or apartment, is exempted from wearing the registration tag.

b. Hunting or stock dogs and show dogs and cats, while being worked, conditioned, groomed and/or shown under the direct supervision and control of their owner, or agents or employees of the owner are exempted from wearing the animal registration tag while engaged in the exempted activity. The animal registration tag must be available at the site of such activity for inspection on request by an animal control officer.

c. A dog, which for medical or physical reasons is unable to wear a collar or harness, is exempted from wearing the registration tag. Documentation from a licensed veterinarian must be presented as proof for this exemption.

(2) *Cats.* The wearing of registration tags by cats shall be left to the discretion of the owners. If tags are not worn, evidence of registration must be produced upon the request of an animal control officer.

(E) *Registration issuance; permit term, expiration; delinquent registration.* One-year registration will be issued in conjunction with the rabies certificate. The one-year permit shall be valid from the date of registration and shall expire on the date of expiration of the one-year rabies vaccination. The permit must be purchased within 15 days of the rabies vaccination date or it will be considered delinquent.

(1) *New residents.* Upon presentation of a valid rabies vaccination certificate with six months or less remaining before vaccination due date, a new resident may purchase a permit for one-half the regular registration fee.

(2) *Exceptions to delinquent registration.* When the following specific circumstances exist, a registration shall not be considered delinquent:

a. A new resident of the city who is registering a pet for the first time in Columbus and has a valid current certificate of rabies vaccination and/or a valid current animal registration from another city, county, or state. The new resident must register the pet within 30 days of establishing residency.

b. Any newly purchased or acquired dog or cat which is registered within 15 days of the date purchased or acquired. Documentation showing the date of purchase or acquisition and a description of the animal must be presented at the time of registration to be eligible for this exemption.

(F) *Registration fees.* All dogs and cats four months of age or older must be registered. Effective July 1, 2014, the registration fees shall be as follows:

(1) *Altered dogs and cats.* All dogs and cats which have been altered (spayed/neutered); or are less than nine months of age; or have a medical problem (certified by a licensed veterinarian) which would preclude surgery for a year or longer. A copy of the record from a licensed veterinarian

certifying the animal has been spayed/neutered and a valid certificate of rabies vaccination must be presented at the time of the registration.

- a. One-year registration \$ 10.00
- b. Three-year registration \$ 30.00

(2) *Non-altered dogs and cats* . All non-altered (spayed/neutered) dogs and cats nine months of age or older; or without a veterinarian-certified medical exemption:

- a. One-year registration \$ 40.00
- b. Three-year registration \$ 120.00

(3) *Free registration authorized* . Free city registration is hereby authorized and free registration permits may be issued for dogs trained specifically to assist a person with disability when such dog is actually being used by a disabled person as an aid for that disability. A valid certificate of rabies vaccination must be presented along with the application for a free registration.

(G) *Registration procedures; one-stop rabies vaccination—pet registration:*

(1) *Registration at veterinary clinic*. Effective October 1,2017, any veterinarian or veterinary clinic licensed to practice veterinary medicine in Columbus, Georgia, is authorized by this code section and required to issue an animal registration permit to any animal for whom they issue a rabies certificate or provide a certificate of exemption and collect and remit to animal control and enforcement division the fees required by paragraph (F) above. The veterinarians providing such services shall comply with all provisions of this chapter and administrative instructions of the animal control and enforcement division. A veterinarian or veterinary clinic that issues permits may collect a handling charge of up to \$5.00 from the animal owner for each registration permit issued.

(2) *Registration of Animals at animal control and enforcement* . Dogs and cats may be registered at the main office of the animal control and enforcement division in the following circumstances:

- a. A new resident of the city who is registering a pet for the first time in Columbus and has a valid current certificate of rabies vaccination and/or a valid current animal registration from another city, county, or state. The new resident must register the pet within 30 days of establishing residency.
- b. Any newly purchased or acquired dog or cat which is registered within 15 days of the date purchased or acquired which already possesses current certificate of vaccination or certificate of exemption. Documentation showing the date of purchase or acquisition and a description of the animal as well as the rabies certificate or certificate of exemption must be presented at the time of application.

Rabies vaccinations are not available at the animal control and enforcement division office.

(3) *Replacement of lost rabies tag or city registration tag*. Replacement of lost rabies tags or city registration tags is hereby authorized. Application for replacements shall be made at the veterinary clinic which issued the lost tag, and a fee of up to \$2.00 for each replacement tag is hereby authorized.

(4) *Notice of change of ownership required*. Registered dogs and cats sold, adopted, traded, or otherwise released to new owners, persons, kennels, or any other businesses or shelters shall be reported by such new owner to the animal control and enforcement division's main office within ten days of such sale or release.

(H) Animals which are in the custody of an animal rescue or shelter licensed by the State of Georgia shall be exempt from the city registration requirement and registration fees set forth in this code section until the animal is adopted or permanently placed with a private owner.”

SECTION 4.

All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held on the 22nd day of August, 2017; introduced a second time at a regular meeting of said council held on the ____ day of _____, 2017 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmation vote of ____ members of Council.

Councilor Allen	voting	_____
Councilor Baker	voting	_____
Councilor Barnes	voting	_____
Councilor Davis	voting	_____
Councilor Garrett	voting	_____
Councilor Henderson	voting	_____
Councilor Huff	voting	_____
Councilor Thomas	voting	_____
Councilor Pugh	voting	_____
Councilor Woodson	voting	_____

Tiny B. Washington
Clerk of Council

Teresa Pike Tomlinson
Mayor