

**ARTICLE 20**  
**Public Safety and Property**

**EXTRACT FROM BELMONT BYLAWS**

20.11 No person shall own or keep a dog or cat, four months of age or older, within the Town unless a license for such dog or cat is obtained from the Town Clerk. The licensing period shall be from January 1st through December 31st except that license renewals must occur by March 15th of each year. License fees shall be established from time to time by the Town Clerk, provided that a discounted fee, which shall be at least 25 percent less than the fee otherwise established, shall be established for dogs and cats owned or kept by residents who are aged 60 or older. Not more than three dogs over four months of age shall be kept in any household. The provisions of this Section 20.11 shall not apply to veterinary establishments that are subject to kennel licensing. All dogs and cats are required to wear their license tags at all times.

Article 20.11 amended at April 27, 2009, Annual Town Meeting. Approved by Attorney General Martha Coakley on October 1, 2009.

20.11.1 No dog or cat shall be licensed unless a valid rabies vaccination certificate is presented to the Town Clerk at the time of licensing.

20.11.2 No dog or cat six months of age or older shall be licensed unless there is presented to the Town Clerk at the time of licensing either:

- (a) proof that the dog or cat has been spayed or neutered; or
- (b) a statement signed by a veterinarian stating a reason why spaying or neutering has been delayed;
- or (c) a statement signed by the owner or keeper of the dog or cat that a decision has been made not to spay or neuter the dog or cat.

20.11.3 A special breeder's license shall be obtained for any dog or cat with respect to which a statement is presented that a decision has been made not to spay or neuter. The fee for such a breeder's license shall be \$25.00 for each dog or cat and such fee shall be in addition to the fee imposed pursuant to this Section 20.11.

20.11.4 The owner of any dog or cat that is sold or given away, or whose custody is otherwise transferred, to any other resident of the Town shall obtain from the Town Clerk and furnish to such other resident a copy of this Section 20.11 of the General By-Laws or a summary thereof.

20.11.5 No person shall own or keep in the Town any dog, cat or other household pets which by biting, barking, howling, scratching or crying, or in any other manner, disturbs the peace and quiet of any neighborhood, destroys private property or endangers the safety of any person.

20.11.6 No person who owns, keeps or controls a dog shall allow the dog to run free when not restricted to the premises of said person. When off premises, such dogs shall be leashed and curbed.

20.11.7 Each person who owns, keeps or controls a dog within the Town shall remove and dispose of any feces left by such dog on any sidewalk, street, park or other public area, or on any private property which is not owned or occupied by such person.

20.11.8 No person who owns, keeps or controls a dog within the Town shall permit such dog to be on any sidewalk, street, park or other public area unless such dog is accompanied by a person carrying a device which is suitable for picking up and containing feces, unexposed to such person and to the general public.

20.11.9 For purposes of Section 20.11.7, feces may only be disposed of at a place suitable and regularly reserved for the disposal of human feces or otherwise designated as appropriate by the Board of Health.

20.11.10 Sections 20.11.7, 20.11.8 and 20.11.9 shall not apply to a dog accompanying any handicapped person who, by reason of a handicap, is physically unable to comply with the requirements of such sections.

20.11.11 No person within the Town shall possess, maintain, propagate, cultivate or deal in wild or exotic animals within the meaning of Chapter 131, Section 23, of the General Laws unless notice thereof has been filed with the .....

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Board of Health and all permits required by said Section 23 or otherwise have been obtained.

20.11.12 No person within the Town shall feed any wild animals, including without limitation ducks, geese and raccoons, or any homeless dogs or cats, except birds through free standing bird feeders or bird feeders attached to a private residence. Persons feeding their own domestic animals shall do so only in a sheltered space inaccessible to wild or roaming animals. This Section 20.11.12 shall not apply to the feeding of homeless dogs or cats if done in a sheltered place inaccessible to wild or roaming animals with the express purpose of befriending the dog or cat in order later to have it vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and ultimately adopted.

Sections 20.11.1 to 20.11.12 amended at April 27, 1992, Annual Town Meeting. Approved by Attorney General Scott Harshbarger on June 2, 1992.

20.11.13 All bites by dogs, cats, other domestic animals or wild or exotic animals shall be reported to the Board of Health as soon as possible by the person bitten or by the owner or keeper of the animal, or both. Any person who owns, keeps or controls any dog which has been involved in two biting incidents will be required to appear before the Board of Health at a time and place determined by the Board. In the event that a dog is involved in a third biting incident, the Board of Health will petition the Board of Selectmen for a hearing. Whenever any dog attacks and causes serious injury to a person<sup>1</sup> or kills another domestic animal, it will be considered vicious and the Board of Health will petition the Board of Selectmen for a hearing and will recommend euthanasia.

Section 20.11.13 amended at April 23, 2001, Annual Town Meeting. Approved by Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly on August 24, 2001.

20.11.14 The operator of a motor vehicle that strikes and injures or kills a dog or cat within the Town shall report such incident to the owner or keeper of such dog or cat or to a police officer of the Town.

Section 20.11.14 amended at April 27, 1992, Annual Town Meeting. Approved by Attorney General Scott Harshbarger on June 2, 1992.

20.11.15 Except as the Board of Health may otherwise permit, no dogs will be allowed in the following areas of the Town: all cemetery land, all public school playgrounds and athletic fields and all recreation department playgrounds and athletic fields - nor will any dog be allowed inside food establishments, retail businesses or public buildings.

Section 20.11.15 amended at April 23, 2001, Annual Town Meeting. Approved by Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly on August 24, 2001.

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20.11.16 Violations of this Section 20.11 shall be disposed of, in the discretion of the Board of Health, either in the manner provided in Section 8.5 of the General By-Laws or if applicable, pursuant to the provisions of Section 173A of Chapter 140 of the General Laws. A non-criminal citation will be issued on the following schedule: First offense - written warning; Second offense - \$25; Third offense and each succeeding offense of the same section of the By-Law occurring within a 12 month period - \$50. The fines specified in the preceding sentence shall be in lieu of the schedule of fines specified in Section 173A. Article 20.11.16 amended at April 28, 2003, Annual Town Meeting. Approved by Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly on October 16, 2003.