

**§3913. Procedure for stray dogs**

**1. Persons finding stray dogs.** A person finding a stray dog and taking control of that dog shall take that dog to its owner if known or, if the owner is not known, to the animal shelter designated by the municipality in which the dog was found.

[PL 1993, c. 657, §14 (RPR).]

**2. Dog shelters.**

[PL 1991, c. 779, §20 (RP).]

**2-A. Animal shelter.** An animal shelter, as defined in section 3907, to which a stray dog is taken shall accept the dog for a period of 6 days unless the shelter is in quarantine or has a bona fide lack of adequate space. Except as provided in subsection 2-B, the acceptance entitles the animal shelter to receive from the department the sum of \$4 a day for the period for which food and shelter are furnished to the dog. An animal shelter may refuse to accept dogs from municipalities not contracting with that animal shelter.

[PL 2009, c. 343, §9 (AMD).]

**2-B. Adoption policy.** Beginning January 1, 2010, to be eligible for reimbursement under subsection 2-A, an animal shelter must have an adoption policy. An adoption policy must provide for a dog to be available for adoption for a minimum of 24 hours except as provided in subsection 6.

[PL 2009, c. 343, §10 (NEW).]

**3. Claims; fees.** The procedure for filing claims and calculating fees is as follows.

A. On the business day next following the date of acceptance of a dog that is not delivered by an animal control officer or person acting in that capacity, the animal shelter shall notify the animal control officer or person acting in that capacity of the respective municipality of the acceptance of the dog, its description and the circumstances of its finding. [PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

B. An animal shelter that accepts a dog under this section, within 45 days of acceptance of the dog, shall submit a claim on a department-approved form to the department for fees incurred in providing food and shelter and the animal shelter shall forward a copy of the claim to the clerk of the respective municipality. [PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

C. If the owner claims the dog within the 6-day period, the owner may have and receive the dog upon payment of all department-approved fees as provided in subsection 2-A, the municipal impoundment fee and actual fees incurred for food, shelter, veterinary care and any other fees required by this chapter for each day that the dog has been sheltered, provided that the dog is licensed in accordance with chapter 721. [PL 1991, c. 779, §22 (AMD).]

[PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

**4. Ownership of dog.** Upon expiration of the 6-day period, ownership of the dog is vested in the animal shelter. The animal shelter may then:

A. Except as provided in section 3938-A, sell or give away the dog, but not to a research facility, if a license is first obtained in accordance with chapter 721; or [PL 2007, c. 439, §6 (AMD).]

B. Otherwise dispose of the dog humanely in accordance with Title 17, chapter 42, subchapter IV. Except as provided in this section, an animal shelter must hold a dog at least 8 days before euthanasia. [PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

Notwithstanding this subsection, ownership of a dog for the purposes of adoption is immediately vested in an animal shelter if the animal shelter makes a determination that the dog is obviously abandoned. An obviously abandoned dog does not include a dog roaming at large.

An animal shelter shall establish and collect fees for reclaimed or adopted animals to offset costs of keeping a dog beyond 6 days.

None of the proceeds obtained from the sale, donation, adoption or other disposition of the dog may be deducted from the fee claimed.

Notwithstanding subsection 3, paragraph C, the previous owner may reacquire the dog at any time prior to its sale, donation or disposal upon payment of the municipal impoundment fee and actual fees incurred for food, shelter, veterinary care and any other fees required by this chapter for each day that the dog has been sheltered. In this case, no fee may be allowed by the department.

[PL 2007, c. 439, §6 (AMD).]

**5. Euthanasia for sick or injured dogs.**

[PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (RP).]

**6. Euthanasia for severely sick, severely injured or extremely vicious dog.** A humane agent, an animal control officer or an animal shelter within the State may authorize in writing immediate euthanasia of a severely sick, severely injured or extremely vicious dog upon determining that the following conditions are met:

A. The clerk or animal control officer of the municipality where the dog was found has been notified of the dog's presence and the owner of the dog, if known, has been notified; and [PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

B. [PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (RP).]

C. A veterinarian states in writing that the dog's recovery from its injury or illness, given reasonable time and reasonable care, is doubtful or that the dog presents a danger to the public. [PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

Notwithstanding paragraphs A to C, a veterinarian may authorize immediate euthanasia if, in the veterinarian's judgment, there is no possibility of recovery for a severely injured or sick animal.

[PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

**7. Immunity from civil liability.** A veterinarian, a humane agent, an animal control officer or an animal shelter is not civilly liable to any party for authorization made in accordance with subsection 6 nor is any person performing euthanasia under that authorization.

[PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD).]

**8. Regulation and inspection.**

[PL 1991, c. 779, §23 (RP).]

**9. Violation.**

[PL 1991, c. 779, §23 (RP).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 622, §§FF12-14 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 779, §§19-23 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 779, §52 (AFF). PL 1993, c. 468, §§6,7 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 657, §§14-17 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 268, §1 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §11 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 439, §6 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 343, §§9, 10 (AMD).

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