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Leash/Restraint Laws

Guideline Statement

There can be no justification for allowing pets to roam. State and/or local statutes should prohibit owners from allowing their pets to go uncontrolled on or off the owner's premises.

Basis for Guideline

Free-roaming cats and dogs contribute enormously to the numbers of surplus, unwanted animals found in shelters everywhere. A free-roaming animal is exposed to such hazards as disease from other animals, injury or death from traffic, retaliation by irate property owners, or poisoning from the ingestion of garbage. Many of these animals are responsible for causing injury or death in traffic accidents, bites, or by indirect means. Free-roaming animals may attack livestock, other pet animals, or wildlife. Pet overpopulation is directly related to the free-roaming of cats and dogs. This results in the need for shelters to collectively destroy millions of these animals yearly.

Guideline Recommendation

Animal control officers should receive local or state powers to issue citations for violations. Progressive penalties should be clearly defined in the statutes, and should include provisions for totally striking all ownership privileges for specific violations or repetitive violations. Animals are not the violators, owners are. All efforts to return the animal to the proper owner in lieu of impoundments should be utilized, unless it is in the animal's best interest or other circumstances dictate. NACA recommends that laws clearly define "restraint/control", to include adequate physical confinement on the premises of the owner.

Reviewed/Revised by the NACA Corporate Office - 09/17/02

The foregoing Guideline has been affirmed as duly adopted by the NACA Board of Directors.

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