

welcome home

Important information for dog owners in Tennessee

Congratulations on your new home! This guide offers helpful tips, regulations, and resources to keep your dog safe, happy, and thriving in your new community.

Tennessee Dog Laws to Know

- ✓ Rabies vaccination is required for all dogs 6 months and older, and the collar must have a current rabies tag. [TCA § 68-8-103](#)
- ✓ Female dogs in heat must be securely confined to prevent roaming or breeding. [TCA § 44-8-410](#)
- ✓ It is illegal for any dog to run at large. [TCA § 44-8-408](#)
- ✓ “Adequate shelter” for an outside dog **must**:
 - Be constructed of sound and substantial material sufficient to protect the dog from inclement weather.
 - Have a roof and be enclosed on all sides with an entrance of adequate size for the dog to enter.
 - Have a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floormat, or similar device large enough for the dog to lie on in a normal manner, and be maintained in a sanitary manner.
 - In the summer months, be properly shaded and in the winter months, fitted with a sufficient quantity of bedding material.
 - Have a structure(s) of sufficient size or number to provide shelter to each dog present. [TCA § 39-14-202](#)

Numbers For Noting

- In 6 years, one unspayed female dog and her offspring can produce **67,000** puppies¹
- A male dog can smell a female dog in heat from **3 miles** away² (that’s 44 football fields!)
- Caring for one responsibly bred litter of puppies can cost **\$7-\$12k**³
- A microchipped pet is **3x** more likely to get home⁴

Helpful Resources

- Spay/neuter assistance
www.spaytennessee.org
- County offices (*animal control, local codes, etc*)
www.tn.gov
- Veterinary finder tool
www.tvma.org

¹spayneuter.org; ²dogster.com; ³goldenretrieverakc.com; ⁴humananimalsupportservices.org

The latest data shows TN was ranked among the top 5 worst states for heartworm

-American Heartworm Society

YET

Nearly half of TN dogs don't receive consistent heartworm treatment

-'23 Cumberland Gap Region study

Helping Everyone Feel at Home

Whether you have a dog now or may welcome one in the future, it's helpful to know the basics for keeping pets safe and your community happy. Understanding local leash laws, keeping yards secure, and being mindful of neighborhood pets can prevent accidents and stray animals. Simple steps like providing safe spaces, regular exercise, and positive reinforcement help dogs feel comfortable and confident in a new home. Being aware and prepared not only protects pets but also keeps your neighborhood welcoming for everyone.

They stray. We all pay.

Stray and roaming dogs can wreak havoc on a community. Here are just a few ways:

- ✓ Increased taxpayer costs
- ✓ Livestock harassment
- ✓ Higher euthanasia risk
- ✓ Public safety concerns
- ✓ Traffic accidents

