



## PENNSYLVANIA CONSIDERING NEW TETHERING STANDARDS

### The Issue:

Outdoor dog owners in Pennsylvania are facing possible new tethering standards. [Senate Bill 972](#) provides a list of tethering standards and restrictions and makes it a summary offense for anyone found in violation.

### The Impact:

This legislation purports to amend current animal cruelty laws by adding that “a person commits a summary offense if he/she tethers a dog outside and unattended to any stationary object by use of a restraint between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. or fails to satisfy the following:

- The tether used must be placed or attached so that the dog cannot become entangled with other objects and to allow the dog to roam the full range of the tether;
- The tether must be of a type commonly used for the size of dog involved. No tow chain may be used;
- The tether must be attached to the dog by means of a well-fitted collar or body harness that will not cause trauma or injury to the dog. (NOTE: No choke, pinch, prong or other chain collar may be used);
- The tether must be a minimum of six feet long or at least five times the length of the dog as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, whichever is longer, and must allow the dog convenient and unfettered access to shelter and food and water containers. The tether may not become wrapped around any appendage such that it restricts the dog's movement;
- While tethered, the dog must be provided with protection from the direct rays of the sun, and at least one area of shade other than the shelter must be provided;
- A tethered dog must be free of open sores or wounds on its body; and
- A dog may not be tethered outside during periods of temperature below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit or when a weather advisory or warning has been issued.

Exceptions include the following:

- Tethering a dog for a period not to exceed 15 minutes as long as the dog is not in danger or a nuisance or does not put the public in danger;

- Tethering a dog while actively engaged in or actively training for an activity that is conducted pursuant to a valid license issued by the Commonwealth if the activity for which the license is issued is associated with the use or presence of a dog;
- Tethering a dog that is used in the course of commercial agricultural production or is used for the protection of commercial farm property, agricultural supplies or products;
- Tethering a dog while actively participating in or attending an organized dog show, field trial, agility event, herding contest or other similar exposition or event, of a limited duration, that involves the judging or evaluation of dogs;
- Tethering a dog being raised, trained or utilized for sled racing so long as the dog is regularly untethered for exercise and training; and
- Tethering a dog pursuant to the requirements of a camping or recreational area.

#### Penalties.

Anyone found in violation of these standards is guilty of a “summary offense” which constitutes, as defined by Pennsylvania animal cruelty laws (Title 18 Section 5511), a fine of between \$50 and \$750 or imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or both.

#### **Recommended Action:**

Outdoor dog owners should read the provisions of this bill carefully to make sure they adhere to these requirements. Senate Bill 972 has been assigned to the [Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Affairs](#) where it awaits its first committee hearing. PIJAC will update the status of this bill on the Breaking News page of the PIJAC website.

If you have any questions, please contact PIJAC’s Bambi Nicole Osborne at 202-452-1525, ext. 105, or by email at [bambi@pijac.org](mailto:bambi@pijac.org).

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**On behalf of pets, responsible pet owners, and the pet industry, we thank you!**