



Submitted by: Chair of the Assembly at the
Request of the Mayor
Prepared by: Dept. of Law, Anchorage Health
Department, and Anchorage Police
Department
For reading: February 17, 2026

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AO No. 2026-26

1 **AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 8.55**
2 **TO CLARIFY CONDUCT THAT QUALIFIES AS ANIMAL NEGLECT AND WHEN**
3 **OFFICERS MAY INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF A NEGLECTED ANIMAL AND TO**
4 **ESTABLISH A NEW CLASS A MISDEMEANOR BASED UPON REPEAT**
5 **VIOLATIONS OF TITLE 17 - ANIMALS; AMENDING TITLE 17 BY UPDATING**
6 **DEFINITIONS AND ADDING A NEW SECTION MAKING IT UNLAWFUL TO**
7 **LEAVE AN ANIMAL UNATTENDED INSIDE A VEHICLE FOR 8 CONSECUTIVE**
8 **HOURS OR MORE; ADDING A NEW SECTION TO TITLE 17 ESTABLISHING**
9 **COST OF CARE BONDS FOR ANIMALS TAKEN INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY**
10 **AND PROVIDING FOR FORFEITURE OF OWNERSHIP INTERESTS IN SUCH**
11 **ANIMALS UPON FAILURE TO POST THE COST OF CARE BOND; AND**
12 **AMENDING SECTION 17.70.020 CIVIL PENALTIES FOR ANIMAL CARE AND**
13 **CONTROL VIOLATIONS.**
14

15
16 **WHEREAS**, Assembly Resolution 2024-379 called for, "... a comprehensive review
17 of current laws regarding cruelty to and neglect of animals, with recommendations
18 for updates to address gaps in enforcement, define adequate standards of care, and
19 ensure stronger protections for animals in the Municipality."; and
20

21 **WHEREAS**, laws against animal cruelty and neglect fall under Anchorage Municipal
22 Code (AMC) Chapter 8—Penal Code and are enforced by the Anchorage Police
23 Department (APD); and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, laws defining standards of care for animals in the Municipality fall under
26 AMC Chapter 17—Animals and are enforced by the Anchorage Health Department
27 via Anchorage Animal Care and Control; and
28

29 **WHEREAS**, the Anchorage Health Department (AHD) formed a working group
30 comprising members from AHD, APD, the Department of Law, and the Municipal
31 Prosecutor's Office to conduct a review of animal cruelty and neglect laws and make
32 recommendations; and
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34 **WHEREAS**, AHD requested the Animal Control Advisory Board (ACAB) conduct a
35 review of animal cruelty and neglect laws and make recommendations; and
36

37 **WHEREAS**, recommended changes to AMC Chapters 8 and 17 from the working
38 group and ACAB were posted for public comment by ACAB on September 10, 2025;
39 and
40

41 **WHEREAS**, public comments were taken in person at the ACAB meetings on

1 September 25, 2025, and October 23, 2025, and in writing through October 24,
2 2025; and

3
4 **WHEREAS**, the recommended changes were updated based on public comments;
5 and

6
7 **WHEREAS**, the proposed changes to AMC Chapter 8.55.015—Animal Neglect
8 align definitions to those in AMC Chapter 17, detail conditions under which having
9 an animal within a motor vehicle would be considered neglect, and elevate violations
10 of AMC Chapter 17 related to animals in vehicles and regulation of classified
11 animals to animal neglect misdemeanors after repeated violations; and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, the proposed changes to AMC Chapter 17—Animals update the
14 definition of humane care, add regulations for the humane care of animals in
15 vehicles, and add a cost of care bond provision so that Anchorage Animal Care and
16 Control (AACC) could petition to require an owner charged with animal cruelty or
17 animal neglect whose animals are placed into the protective custody of AACC to
18 pay a bond to cover AACC’s costs to care for their animals; and

19
20 **WHEREAS**, the ACAB voted unanimously at their meeting on January 22, 2026, to
21 recommend these changes for approval by the Assembly; now, therefore,

22
23 **THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ORDAINS:**

24
25 **Section 1.** Anchorage Municipal Code section 8.55.015 is hereby amended to
26 read as follows:

27
28 **8.55.015 ANIMAL NEGLECT.**

29
30 A. It is unlawful for any person, with criminal negligence, to:

- 31
32 1. Fail to maintain an animal in a humane [MAINTAIN AN ANIMAL
33 IN AN INHUMANE] manner, including failure to provide
34 adequate food, water, shelter [HOUSING] and care; or
35
36 2. Keep an animal on vacant property or in an unoccupied
37 structure, unless the animal is cared for in a humane manner;
38 or
39
40 3. Have an animal within, on or attached to a motor vehicle under
41 conditions that could reasonably be expected to [MAY]
42 endanger the health, safety or welfare of the animal, including
43 but not limited to: [INSUFFICIENT CONTROL OR EXTREME
44 TEMPERATURE.]
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46 a. Extreme heat or cold; or
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48 b. Lack of adequate ventilation; or
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50 c. Without reasonable access to food or water for an

extended period of time; or

d. Without adequate space to allow the animal to turn around, sit, stand, and lie down; or

e. Insufficient control, such as an animal riding unrestrained in the bed of a pickup or restrained by a leash or tether long enough to permit the animal to put two or more limbs outside or off of a moving vehicle or its trailer; or

f. Other conditions that could reasonably be expected to cause the animal suffering, injury, or death.

4. Commit a violation of section 17.10.025 or section 17.40.040 after committing two or more violations of those same sections within the preceding 10 years.

a. For purposes of this subsection, a violation of section 17.10.025 or section 17.40.040 means a civil violation of either of the foregoing sections of the Anchorage Municipal Code for which a notice of violation was issued.

b. For purposes of this subsection, the two previous violations do not need to be violations of the same section or subsection.

c. The ten-year period is calculated retrospectively from the date of the most recent violation of section 17.10.025 or section 17.40.040.

B[A]. A peace officer or animal control officer is authorized to remove an animal from a motor vehicle or from [AT] any location when the officer reasonably believes there is a violation of this section and reasonably believes there is an imminent danger to the health, welfare or safety of the animal.

1. Any animal so removed shall be delivered to the animal care and control center after the removing officer leaves written notice of the removal and delivery, including the officer's name, in a conspicuous, secure location on or within the vehicle or at the location from which the animal was removed.

2[B]. No peace officer or animal control officer shall be held criminally or civilly liable for action taken under this subsection.

C. In this section “humane manner” and “shelter” have the same meaning as they are given in AMC 17.05.010.

D[B]. Violation of this section is a class A misdemeanor.

(AO No. 2014-42, § 8, 6-21-14)

Section 2. Anchorage Municipal Code section 17.05.005 is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.05.005 PURPOSE.

The purpose of this title is to promote public health and safety and to encourage responsible pet ownership and the humane care of animals. This code provides the minimum legal standard of care for animals within the Municipality of Anchorage.

(AO No. 2001-158(S-4), § 1, 1-1-03)

Section 3. Anchorage Municipal Code section 17.05.010 is amended by revising the following definition as follows (*the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore not set out*):

17.05.010 DEFINITIONS, GENERALLY.

* * * * *

Humane care or treatment or humane manner means the care and treatment of an animal, including but not limited to providing the animal with:

1. Safe and necessary control and[,] confinement; [AND APPROPRIATE SPACE];
2. Adequate space to allow the animal, when confined, to turn around, sit, stand, and lie down in a relaxed position;
3. [2.] Adequate veterinary treatment, wholesome food and water; and
4. [3.] Heat, ventilation, insulation, or [AND] sanitary shelter as required to protect the animal from wind, cold, heat [and temperatures], precipitation, and sun conditions detrimental to its health;

all of which are consistent with or dictated by the animal's normal requirements, veterinary needs, feeding habits, and its condition, size, species, age, and breed.

* * * * *

(AO No. 2001-158(S-4), § 1, 1-1-03; AO No. 2004-86, § 1, 5-18-04; AO No. 2009-88, § 1, 9-10-09; AO No. 2013-142, § 1, 12-17-13; AO No. 2016-55, § 2, 6-7-16; AO No. 2017-87, § 1, 6-13-17; AO No. 2018-112, § 1, 1-15-19; AO No. 2019-91(S-1), § 1, 12-3-19)

Section 4. Anchorage Municipal Code chapter 17.10 is amended by adding a

new section to read as follows (*requiring no legislative formatting*):

17.10.025 ANIMALS IN VEHICLES.

- A. It is unlawful for any animal to be left unattended inside a vehicle for longer than 8 consecutive hours.
 - 1. For purposes of this subsection, an animal is “unattended” when it is not within the owner or custodian’s visual or audible range of perception such that the owner or custodian would be unaware of distress, an emergency, or other sign the animal is need of immediate care.
- B. The owner or custodian of an animal inside of a vehicle must provide adequate supervision of the animal, which shall include:
 - 1. Regular welfare checks of the animal occurring no more than 8 hours apart.
 - a. Such welfare checks shall include allowing the animal to move outside of the confinement of the vehicle and providing the animal with an opportunity for excretion of its bodily waste.
 - 2. Maintaining the vehicle in a sanitary condition, free of the buildup of excretions or other waste material.
 - 3. Nothing in this section authorizes an owner or custodian to secure or store an animal in or attached to a vehicle which would be considered a violation of AMC 8.55.015 (Animal Neglect).

Section 5. Anchorage Municipal Code section 17.25.090 is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.25.090 Protective custody.

- A. An officer shall take an animal not subject to impoundment into protective custody when necessary to preserve the animal's health or safety and humane care and treatment.
- B. If an animal has been placed in protective custody due to charges of cruelty against the owner, the animal shall not be released to its owner until a final determination is made pursuant to chapter 8.55 (Cruelty to Animals).
- C. The animal care and control center shall hold an animal eligible for redemption in protective custody for a minimum of five days.
[MAINTAIN AN ANIMAL IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY WHICH IS SUBJECT TO REDEMPTION UNTIL THE ANIMAL IS REDEEMED

1 BY ITS OWNER OR FOR A MINIMUM OF FIVE DAYS,] after which
2 time the animal may be disposed of as an impounded animal except:

3
4 1. Where an animal was placed in protective custody because the
5 owner or custodian was [IS] arrested, [AND] charged with a
6 crime, and held in custody, the animal shall be held for a
7 minimum of ten days after the owner or custodian's release
8 from custody [AND IS UNABLE TO REDEEM THE ANIMAL IN
9 PERSON IN WHICH CASE THE MINIMUM PERIOD SHALL
10 BE TEN DAYS].

11
12 D. An animal that is in protective custody and which is subject to
13 redemption may be redeemed by the owner or the owner's designee
14 upon demand and payment of fees and costs. The owner shall not be
15 charged an impoundment fee, but shall be charged boarding fees as
16 set by regulation.

17
18 E. A person who owns an animal taken into protective custody and
19 disposed of as an impounded animal may obtain a review of that
20 disposition as provided in section 17.05.100.

21
22 (AO No. 2001-158(S-4), § 1, 1-1-03; AO No. 2004-86, § 6, 5-18-04)

23
24 **Section 6.** Anchorage Municipal Code chapter 17.25 is amended by adding a
25 new section to read as follows (*requiring no legislative formatting*):

26
27 **17.25.120 COST OF CARE BOND AND FORFEITURE OF ANIMALS IN**
28 **PROTECTIVE CUSTODY.**

29
30 A. *Purpose.* The municipality acknowledges that an animal's owner
31 retains a legal and moral duty to care for the animal even when the
32 animal has been seized by Anchorage Animal Care and Control or the
33 Anchorage Police Department. This section sets forth procedures for
34 the municipality to recover the costs associated with the care of
35 animals taken into protective custody by the municipality under section
36 17.25.090 due to alleged violations of animal welfare laws, such as
37 cruelty or neglect. It establishes mechanisms for cost of care bond
38 posting, reimbursement, and forfeiture, ensuring that the animal
39 receives humane care and that the animal's owner remains
40 responsible to the animal until a final disposition is determined.

41
42 B. *Petition for Cost of Care Bond.*

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44 1. Within 10 calendar days of an animal being taken into
45 protective custody under section 17.25.090, Anchorage Animal
46 Care and Control may petition the hearing officer for an order
47 requiring the owner to post a cost of care bond to cover the
48 reasonable costs of care for the animal for an initial period of
49 thirty days, starting from the time of seizure.
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2. The petition shall include the number of animals seized and an itemized estimate of the costs of daily care as well as the estimated costs of veterinary care or grooming the animal requires during the initial thirty-day period in protective custody.
3. The owner shall be provided written notice of the petition and hearing date either in person or by certified mail with return receipt to their last known address.
4. If the owner cannot be provided with written notice under subsection B.3 above, Anchorage Animal Care and Control may provide written notice by posting at the owner's last known residence, mailing to the last known address, posting at a conspicuous location near where the animal was seized, or by posting on Animal Care and Control's website.
5. A hearing shall be held within fifteen calendar days after the owner receives notice, or, if notice is made by posting, general mail or website post, within twenty-one calendar days after the notice is posted or sent.
6. The owner shall have the opportunity to contest the amount or necessity of the cost of care bond at the hearing. However, the hearing officer shall not consider the financial condition or ability of the owner to pay in determining whether to require the cost of care bond or in setting the amount. The cost of care bond amount shall be based solely on the reasonable and actual costs of care, as detailed in the petition.
7. The hearing office shall issue a ruling on the petition within fifteen calendar days of the hearing. The ruling shall clearly state the amount, in dollars, of the thirty-day cost of care bond.
8. If the hearing officer grants the petition, the owner shall be required to maintain an ongoing thirty-day cost of care bond obligation until final disposition of any criminal, civil, or administrative proceedings related to the seized animal(s).
 - a. If the hearing officer grants the petition, payment of the bond for the first thirty-day period, which began on the date the animal was taken into protective custody, is due within seven calendar days of the date the ruling on the petition is issued. If the animal has already been in custody for thirty days or more on the date the first payment is due, then the owner must also remit payment for all elapsed thirty-day periods and the current period at the same time.
 - b. Subsequent payments are due in advance for each successive thirty-day period.

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9. If there are changes to the costs of the animal's care, such as unforeseen veterinary expenses or other significant care costs, Anchorage Animal Care and Control may petition the hearing officer to adjust the cost of care bond amount accordingly. The petition for cost changes shall follow the same procedure as the initial petition for cost of care bond, including notice, hearing, ruling, and payment timelines.
10. Failure to post or maintain the cost of care bond as required shall result in forfeiture of the animal(s) as described in subsection C.
11. In lieu of posting a cost of care bond, the owner may request that custody of the animal be transferred to a third-party caregiver approved by Anchorage Animal Care and Control. The proposed third-party caregiver must:
 - a. Demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate care and shelter; and
 - b. Not be a member of the same household (as "household" is defined in Title 21) as the owner;
 - c. Agree in writing to assume responsibility for the animal for the duration of the legal proceedings; and
 - d. Not be under investigation or subject to prior violations related to animal welfare.
12. If four or more animals owned by the same person are taken into protective custody, the hearing officer may approve a third-party caregiver to house the animals at the defendant-owner's residence, facility, or place of business provided that:
 - a. Anchorage Animal Care and Control, after an interview with the proposed third-party caregiver and an inspection of the residence, facility, or place of business, determines that the caregiver can satisfy the standards of 17.10.030 (Care and sanitation) and 17.10.050A (Standards for operating animal facilities) and that the residence, facility, or place of business can satisfy the same; and
 - b. The defendant and caregiver submit to routine inspections of the location where the animals are being kept by Anchorage Animal Care and Control whether scheduled or unscheduled; and
 - c. The defendant remains 500 feet away from the location

1 where the animals in protective custody are being kept
2 and does not have contact with the animals aside from
3 approved supervised visitation with Anchorage Animal
4 Care and Control officers present.

5
6 d. Anchorage Animal Care and Control has the right to
7 revoke the third-party caregiver privilege at any time and
8 transfer the animals to the shelter or the care of a
9 different approved third-party caregiver due to the
10 caregiver or the residence, facility, or place of business
11 failing to satisfy the standards of 17.10.030 and
12 17.10.050A or substantiated concerns about the general
13 welfare of the animals.

14
15 e. Any contact with the animals by the defendant in
16 violation of this section may result in the animals'
17 immediate transfer to the Anchorage Animal Shelter by
18 Anchorage Animal Care and Control, which then has
19 authority to file for a cost of care bond under this section,
20 including any costs the municipality incurs transferring
21 the animals away from defendant's residence, facility, or
22 place of business.

23
24 13. Anchorage Animal Care and Control may maintain a list of third-
25 party caregivers and offer to place the animal with one of them
26 but is not obligated to do so and has sole discretion to
27 determine that no third-party caregiver suitable for the animal
28 is available.

29
30 14. If Anchorage Animal Care and Control approves the third-party
31 caregiver, the owner shall no longer be subject to the cost of
32 care bond obligation, and Sections C and D shall not apply
33 unless the third-party caregiver fails to comply with the terms of
34 care.

35
36 15. Anchorage Animal Care and Control reserves the right to
37 revoke the third-party caregiver's responsibility if it is
38 determined that they are not fulfilling their obligations. In such
39 cases, Anchorage Animal Care and Control may file a new
40 petition for the cost of care and require the owner to post the
41 cost of care bond as initially mandated.

42
43 C. *Failure to Post or Maintain Cost of Care Bond.* If the owner fails to post
44 or maintain a cost of care bond, as ordered by the hearing officer,
45 within the prescribed timeframes, and no third-party caregiver has
46 been approved under subsection B.11 or B.12, all rights and
47 ownership interests in the seized animal(s) shall be forfeited to the
48 municipality.

49
50 1. No further legal proceeding shall be required to transfer

ownership to Anchorage Animal Care and Control.

D. *Disposition of Forfeited Animals.* Animals forfeited under this section may be:

1. Placed for adoption;
2. Transferred to an animal rescue organization approved by Anchorage Animal Care and Control; or
3. Humanely euthanized, if deemed necessary for health, safety or behavioral reasons, as determined by Anchorage Animal Care and Control or a licensed veterinarian.

E. *Reimbursement upon Conviction.* If the owner is convicted of any offense related to the reason(s) the animal was taken into protective custody or any offense under chapter 8.55 for cruelty or neglect to the animal in protective custody, the court may order restitution to the municipality for all actual costs of care incurred, whether a cost of care bond was posted, or forfeiture occurred.

F. *Permanent Forfeiture.* The municipality may seek permanent forfeiture of an animal in protective custody by petitioning the administrative hearing officer at any time when:

1. The owner is unknown or cannot be located after reasonably diligent efforts by the municipality; or
2. There are repeated violations of Title 17 or Chapter 8.55 by the owner in relation the animal(s) in protective custody or other animals of the same species.

G. *Appeals.*

1. The owner may file an appeal of the cost of care bond within five calendar days of the issuance of the cost of care bond.
2. Filing an appeal shall not stay the obligation to post the initial cost of care bond or any subsequent cost of care bonds unless specifically ordered by the hearing officer.
3. The appeal shall be heard within thirty calendar days of the date the appeal is filed.

Section 7. Anchorage Municipal Code section 17.70.020 is amended to read as follows:

17.70.020 Civil penalties for animal care and control violations.

A. In addition to any other penalties provided by law, a person who

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violates any of the following provisions shall be subject to the applicable civil penalties stated below:

Anchorage Provision	Municipal Code	Civil Penalty
17.10.010	Animals in public places	\$100 first violation; \$200 second violation and \$300 for third and subsequent violations.
17.10.012	Unidentified cats	\$50 first violation; \$75 second violation and \$100 for third and subsequent violations.
17.10.015A.	Animal disturbance	\$50.00 first violation; \$100.00 second violation; and \$400.00 for third and subsequent violations within one year with a \$200.00 refund on voluntary debarking of the animal(s).
17.10.015B.	Animal nuisance	\$100.00 each violation.
17.10.015C.	Animal nuisance	\$50.00 first violation; \$75.00 second violation and \$100.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.10.020	Control and confinement	\$100.00 first violation; \$200.00 second violation and \$300.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.10.025	<u>Animals in vehicles</u>	<u>\$250.00 first violation; \$500.00 each subsequent violation.</u>
17.10.030	Care and sanitation	\$250.00 first violation per premise; \$500.00 each subsequent violation per premise.
17.10.050	Facility standards	\$100.00 first violation; \$150.00 second violation; \$175.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.10.090	Off-leash dog areas	\$75.00 first violation; \$100.00 second violation; \$150.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.10.100	Public areas where animals are prohibited.	\$75.00 first violation; \$100.00 second violation; \$150.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.15.010	Dog license required	\$100.00 first violation; \$200.00 second violation and \$300.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.15.060	Special purpose license	\$150.00 first violation; \$300.00 second and each subsequent violation.
17.25.060E.	Mandatory sterilization	\$125.00 first violation; \$150.00 each subsequent violation.
17.30.020	Rabies vaccination	\$100.00 first violation; \$200.00 second violation and \$300.00 for third and subsequent violations.
17.30.060	Report bite	\$100.00 first violation; \$250.00 each subsequent violation.

17.30.080 Quarantine	\$100.00 first violation; \$250.00 each subsequent violation.
17.40.040 Regulation of classified	\$300.00 first violation; animals \$600.00 second violation; \$1,250.00 third and subsequent violations.
17.40.090 Additional licensing fee	\$100.00 first violation; \$150.00 second violation; \$300.00 third and subsequent violations.
Violations of all other provisions of title 17	\$100.00 first violation, \$250.00 second violation, \$500.00 each subsequent violation.

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- B. A person who fails to resolve a notice of violation (NOV) issued for a violation of any provision of this title within the time stated on the NOV shall be subject to a civil penalty in the amount of \$25.00, in addition to any other penalty provided by law.
- C. If an agency is required to collect any outstanding money due the municipality, a collection fee shall be added, in addition to any other fees and penalties, in an amount not to exceed 40 percent of the debt.

(AO No. 2001-158(S-4), § 1, 1-1-03; AO No. 2003-152S, § 11, 1-1-04; AO No. 2009-88, § 11, 9-10-09; AO No. 2015-111(S-1), § 8, 1-1-16; AO No. 2019-34, § 3, 4-18-19)

Section 8. This ordinance shall be effective 14 days after passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM**

AM No. 112-2026

Meeting Date: February 17, 2026

1 **FROM: MAYOR**

2
3 **SUBJECT: AO 2026-26 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ANCHORAGE**
4 **MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 8.55 TO CLARIFY CONDUCT THAT**
5 **QUALIFIES AS ANIMAL NEGLECT AND WHEN OFFICERS MAY**
6 **INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF A NEGLECTED ANIMAL AND TO**
7 **ESTABLISH A NEW CLASS A MISDEMEANOR BASED UPON**
8 **REPEAT VIOLATIONS OF TITLE 17 - ANIMALS; AMENDING TITLE**
9 **17 BY UPDATING DEFINITIONS AND ADDING A NEW SECTION**
10 **MAKING IT UNLAWFUL TO LEAVE AN ANIMAL UNATTENDED**
11 **INSIDE A VEHICLE FOR 8 CONSECUTIVE HOURS OR MORE;**
12 **ADDING A NEW SECTION TO TITLE 17 ESTABLISHING COST OF**
13 **CARE BONDS FOR ANIMALS TAKEN INTO PROTECTIVE**
14 **CUSTODY AND PROVIDING FOR FORFEITURE OF OWNERSHIP**
15 **INTERESTS IN SUCH ANIMALS UPON FAILURE TO POST THE**
16 **COST OF CARE BOND; AND AMENDING SECTION 17.70.020**
17 **CIVIL PENALTIES FOR ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL**
18 **VIOLATIONS.**

19
20 On December 3, 2025, the Anchorage Assembly passed AR 2024-379 which called
21 for "... a comprehensive review of current laws regarding cruelty to and neglect of
22 animals, with recommendations for updates to address gaps in enforcement, define
23 adequate standards of care, and ensure stronger protections for animals in the
24 Municipality." In response to this request, the Anchorage Health Department (AHD)
25 took a 2-pronged approach to review Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) Chapter
26 8.55 – Cruelty to Animals and AMC Chapter 17 – Animals as detailed in AIM 063-
27 2025. First, AHD requested the Animal Control Advisory Board (ACAB) review these
28 portions of code and recommend changes to strengthen protections for animals and
29 align code to model animal cruelty and neglect laws. Second, AHD convened a
30 working group in March 2025 comprising representatives from AHD, the Anchorage
31 Police Department (APD), the Department of Law, and the Municipal Prosecutor's
32 Office to similarly provide a review of code and provide recommendations for
33 changes.

34
35 Through its Title 17 Committee, the ACAB drafted proposed changes during their
36 monthly meetings which are open to the public. These changes were combined with
37 those from the working group and posted for public comment on
38 September 10, 2025. The public had the opportunity to provide in person comments
39 at the ACAB meetings on September 25, 2025, and October 23, 2025, and to
40 provide written comments from the posting date through October 24, 2025. After this
41 public comment period, the ACAB's Title 17 Committee incorporated feedback from
42 the public into the draft code changes and put them back before the Board for
43 discussion. AHD provided the Assembly with updates on this process on December
44 16, 2025, via AIM 243-2025 as well as at the Assembly's Public Health and Safety

1 Committee meeting on December 18, 2025, where AHD's Director, Kimberly Rash,
2 and ACAB's Vice Chair, Matthew Hall, provided a summary of the proposed
3 changes. At the ACAB's meeting on January 22, 2026, the Board voted unanimously
4 to recommend the updated proposed changes for approval by the Assembly.

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6 The proposed changes focus on 2 areas of code, AMC Chapter 8.55.015 – Animal
7 Neglect which is part of the Penal Code and enforced by APD, and AMC Title 17 –
8 Animals which is enforced by Anchorage Animal Care and Control (AACC).

9
10 The changes to AMC Chapter 8.55.015 – Animal Neglect include:

- 11 • Aligning verbiage and definitions to those in AMC Chapter 17.
- 12 • Adding specific conditions under which keeping an animal in a vehicle would
13 be considered neglect. These conditions include keeping an animal in a
14 vehicle during extreme heat or cold, without adequate ventilation, without
15 access to food or water for an extended period of time, and without space to
16 allow the animal to turn around, sit, stand, and lie down.
- 17 • Making multiple violations of AMC Chapter 17 related to animals in vehicles
18 and the regulation of classified animals automatically violations under AMC
19 Chapter 8.55.015.

20
21 The changes to AMC Chapter 17 – Animals include:

- 22 • Updating the definition of humane care to detail that adequate space means
23 enough space for a confined animal to turn around, sit, stand, and lie down.
- 24 • Adding a section on animals in vehicles that makes it a violation of code to
25 leave an animal unattended inside a vehicle for over 8 consecutive hours,
26 requires welfare checks by animal owners or custodians at least every 8
27 hours that must include allowing the animal to move outside of the
28 confinement of the vehicle and a chance to go to the bathroom, and sets fines
29 for this violation.
- 30 • Adding a provision that allows AACC to petition for an owner to post a bond
31 to provide for the cost to AACC to care for their animals who have been
32 taken into AACC's protective custody due to the owner being charged with
33 animal cruelty or neglect. This provision includes requirements for adequate
34 notice to an owner, the right for an owner to contest the bond, and the right
35 of an owner to appeal the decision to require a bond. This provision also
36 allows for an owner to request a third-party caregiver in lieu of posting a
37 bond and allows for owners in large seizures (for example, a mushing
38 facility) to have third-party caregiver take care of the animals at the owner's
39 residence/facility as long as the owner leaves the premises for the duration
40 of the care. This provision provides that if an owner fails to post or maintain
41 a bond within required timeframes and no third-party caregiver is
42 established, the seized animals will become the property of AACC.

43
44 The outlined proposed changes better define adequate standards of care for
45 animals, provide animals with stronger protections, and provide more concrete
46 enforcement guidance to both Animal Control Officers and APD Officers. The
47 proposed cost of care bond provision for animals taken into protective custody will
48 help defray the oftentimes substantial costs incurred by AACC to care for the

1 animals. The provision shifts the financial burden of care from Anchorage taxpayers
2 back to an animal's owner which helps AACC maintain their capacity to care for
3 other animals in the community. This maintains an owner's responsibility to care for
4 their animal and if they do not pay the bond to maintain care for the animal, transfers
5 the animal's ownership to AACC so they can be rehomed.

6
7 There are no anticipated costs to implement this ordinance, and the local
8 government effect is under \$30,000; therefore, a summary of economic effects is
9 not attached.

10
11 **THE ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL.**

12
13 Prepared by: Tamiah Liebersbach, Anchorage Health Department
14 Approved by: Kimberly Rash, Director, AHD
15 Concur: Ona R. Brause, Director, OMB
16 Concur: Eva Gardner, Municipal Attorney
17 Concur: William D. Falsey, Chief Administrative Officer
18 Concur: Rebecca A. Windt Pearson, Municipal Manager
19 Respectfully submitted: Suzanne LaFrance, Mayor