

Health Officer

The Hazleton City Health Department is responsible for a number of programs including garbage collection, recycling and animal control.

To report complaints or for more information, contact City Health Officer Mark Thompson - 570-459-4980 (phone) or 570-459-4992 (fax).

Animals

Hazleton has a City Code which includes rules for animal owners and their responsibility in regards to their animals.

Residents of Hazleton are allowed to keep domestic animals, by definition, those that are tame and adapted to living with humans. These include "dogs, cats, domestic fowl, poultry, domesticated hares, rabbits, mink and members of the equine and bovine families," according to City Code.

Exotic Animals

The ownership and/or sale of wild or exotic animals is prohibited by federal and state statutes. These include "any animal which is wild, fierce, dangerous, noxious or naturally inclined to do harm." Animals such as these, no matter how tame an owner may believe them to be, are prohibited in the City of Hazleton:

1. Dog family - Any non-domesticated dog, including wolf, fox, coyote, dingo and wolf hybrids.
2. Cat family - Any non-domesticated cat, including lions, pumas, panthers, mountain lions, leopards, jaguars, ocelots, margays, tigers and wild cats.
3. Bears - All bears including, grizzly bears, brown bears and black bears.
4. Raccoons - All raccoons and civets.
5. Porcupines - All porcupines.
6. Skunks.
7. Snakes - All venomous and constricting snakes
8. Venomous lizards.
9. Venomous fish and piranha.
10. Venomous invertebrates.

Animal Regulations

Hazleton pet owners are required by City Code to be responsible for the care and handling of their animals, including cleaning up after pets, having them vaccinated and licensed and assuring they do not create a disturbance to other residents.

1. Animal Noise

Section 89-4 of the Hazleton City Code says "it shall be unlawful to own, harbor or keep in custody any animal which disturbs the peace by barking, howling or making other loud noises to the annoyance and discomfort of any person in the City of Hazleton. Continual barking, howling or the making of other loud noises by such an animal for more than any one-half-hour time period from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., or continual barking, howling or making of other loud noises for more than fifteen minutes after 8 p.m. or before 8 a.m. on weekdays, or after 8 p.m. and before 9 a.m. on weekends and holidays, which periods occur on two or more consecutive days or nights and/or which occurs three or more days or nights in any seven-day period, shall be deemed to disturb the peace and to cause the annoyance and discomfort of persons in the City of Hazleton."

Any city resident may request that the Health Department or the Police Department warn animal owners who allow their animals to disturb the peace. If complaints are received from two separate households regarding the same animal disturbance, the owner of that animal will be considered in violation of the City Code and may be prosecuted.

2. Injury to Humans

All animal owners are responsible for controlling their animals. It is unlawful for any animal to cause injury to a person by biting, jumping on, knocking down or attacking him. The only exception to this regulation is if the animal is reasonably protecting the owner or the owner's property from unlawful invasion.

3. Nuisances; responsibility for cleanup

Animal owners must not allow their pets to soil public areas such as sidewalks, roads, play area, parks or any other public or private property, without the permission of the owner of the property.

These restrictions do not apply to the public area between the curblineline and sidewalk, which may be used to curb pets as long as any fecal matter is collected by the owner and disposed of in a sanitary manner as approved by the Board of Health. Likewise, if owners allow their animals to soil on their own private property, such as a yard, the owner must also collect and sanitarily dispose of any fecal matter.

4. Keeping an animal outdoors

The outdoor facilities where animals are housed must be located at least 25 feet from any neighboring residential structure or ½ the distance from the outdoor facility to the next residential structure, whichever is greater, so as not to offend neighboring residents.

5. Limitation on number of animals

If more than four animals, six months of age or over, are kept on any property, regardless of the number of pet owners on the property, the owner of the premises must notify and register with the Hazleton City Health Department.

6. Impounding

If any animal is found running at large, either on public streets or private property - other than that of the animal owner - the animal may be seized and detained at the Hazleton Animal Shelter. Owners will be notified if their licensed animal has been seized and will have three days after notification to retrieve their animal. All fines and penalties must be paid.

In addition, any animal running at large that has been deemed a danger to public health, safety and/or welfare may be killed by city police officers.

7. Vaccinations

All owners of dogs, cats or monkeys must have the animal vaccinated against rabies if the animal is three months or older. All animals which have been vaccinated must wear rabies collars showing proof of the date of vaccination.

8. Injury or abandonment

No person, except a police officer, may kill or injure any animal bearing a current license, except if the animal is in the act of attacking a person. It is against the law to abandon or attempt to abandon any animal within the City of Hazleton.

9. Minimum standards for animal care

All animals must have sufficient food and water, which is free from contamination, to provide for the proper health of that animal. Proper shelter must be provided to protect the animal from extreme heat and cold and adequate exercise must be provided for the animal. Leashes or chains must be at least 10 feet long or no less than three times the length of the animal measured from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail.

(For complete information on the responsibilities and regulations regarding pets and farm animals in the City of Hazleton, please refer to the City Code)