

Subject: New changes to Surprise City Ordinances

Dear resident,

On December 4, 2015, the City of Surprise adopted several changes to ordinances related to animal ownership. In an effort to ensure all citizens are made aware of the new changes, the Surprise Police provided the following review of the effected ordinances or city codes.

To begin with, the definition of “at large” was changed in Surprise City Code 10-19. The code also requires a dog owner to contain their pet within a structure (home), an enclosure (fenced rear yard), or restrain and control the animal (leash) at all times. While away from their premises, the dog owner has the same requirements; however there continues to be an exemption for a dog park.

Within the same city code, there was also a change for homeowners in gated communities. A previous exception stating dogs were not at large anywhere within a gated community has been deleted. At this time, gated communities are treated the same as any other location within the City of Surprise.

Surprise City Code 10-24 also was modified. The code penalizes all owners: who do not get their dog licensed, who counterfeit a dog license, and those who remove a valid license from a dog, or place a license for another animal on their dog which is not valid.

Also, the Surprise Police would like to remind citizens of Surprise City Code 10-26. This code states an owner who wants to continue keeping an animal previously declared vicious by a court must obtain liability insurance, have the animal spayed or neutered, and muzzle the animal when taking it off the owner’s premises.

Other changes were also made to Surprise City Code 10-56. The change states an animal found running around a neighborhood may cause the owner to have to pay food and housing charges, if the owner was negligent in allowing the animal to get out. Proof of negligence is more than just a dog getting out – it would come from the dog getting out multiple times or proof the owner is not taking reasonable steps to keep the animal contained.

Additionally, in regard to Surprise City Code 10-79, the code now requires only one person to file a formal complaint with the police about a barking dog prior to enforcement action being taken.

If you have additional questions in regard to these city ordinances, please contact the Surprise Police Department at 623.222.4000.

Best Regards,

City of Surprise