

# Town reminding dog owners of their responsibilities and liabilities

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The Town of Halton Hills issued an announcement last week on its website aimed at reminding residents of the legislation governing dog ownership within town limits.

The announcement titled "Keep your dogs on a leash!" links to the town's canine control information page, which offers a number of resources for residents.

Owners are required to keep their dogs on leash at all times while in public spaces and are responsible for their dog's actions under the province's Dog Owner's Liability Act, enacted in 2005.

The legislation restricts pit bulls and is aimed at irresponsible dog owners who own dangerous dogs that bite, attack or pose a threat. The act provides for increased fines, penalties, seizures of dogs by municipal and animal control staff.

"In Halton Hills, all dogs must be kept on a leash and under the control of their owner unless in a designated off-leash area. Dog

owners share parks, trails and open spaces with many other residents, visitors and wildlife, and must abide by the dog regulations set out in Bylaw 94-077 to help protect these users and the natural environment," writes the town on its website.

"While many dogs are obedient, there is a possibility that they may forget some of their training in unfamiliar surroundings with enticing scents or wildlife. Owners and dog walkers are responsible for any injuries or damage caused by any dog in their care as a result of being off-leash."

"Owners who fail to keep their dog on a leash in the Town of Halton Hills are subject to fines that could reach \$5,000. And while we make every effort to return your dog, we have to impound any stray that doesn't have a licence tag," adds the town.

Residents encountering strays should contact Halton Hills Canine Control at 905-877-6235

There are two off-leash sites open to residents in Halton Hills: Cedarvale Park Leash-



Staff file photo/Nick Perry

**Halton Hills reminding dog owners of their responsibilities and the penalties which may follow if not adhered to.**

Free Zone at 135 Maple Ave. in Georgetown and in Acton at the Prospect Park Leash-Free Zone located at 30 Park Ave.

Regulations also stipulate residents may only own a maximum of three dogs and that all dogs must be vaccinated for rabies and licensed through the town. The annual licensing fee is \$34 with other options available. Visit [haltonhills.ca/forms/pdf/DogLicenceApplication.pdf](http://haltonhills.ca/forms/pdf/DogLicenceApplication.pdf) to access the application form.

According to the town's website, southern Ontario has the highest concentration of animal rabies in all of North America and can be fatal for both animals and people.

"Fifty per cent of persons coming in contact with rabies are exposed to it by their household pets. Rabies is a fatal disease for which there is no cure once the disease takes hold. It is caused by a virus carried in the saliva of a rabid animal which attacks the nervous system," it says.

All dogs (and cats) older than three months old must be vaccinated for the disease and vaccinations are available at your local veterinarian. Dogs must be vaccinated before the town will issue dog tags - which must be updated annually.

"You will receive an immunization certificate and a rabies

vaccination identification tag. The due date for revaccination is marked on the certificate, adds the site. "Failure to comply may result in a fine of up to \$5,000."

Residents are also required to "stoop and scoop" after their dogs both on public and private property.

"Town of Halton Hills parks and streets can become a 'minefield' because owners fail to clean up after their pet.

But besides being a nuisance, dog droppings may harm your family's health because roundworm and other diseases are passed to humans by pet feces," says the town.

"Young children are especially susceptible because they play and crawl in parks. To prevent the spread of disease, stoop and scoop and have your pet checked regularly by a veterinarian."

"The bylaw covers private property too - you have to clean dog droppings from your own yard," add town regulations.

Failure to comply can result in a set fine of \$100, with a maximum penalty of up to \$5,000.

Visit [haltonhills.ca/canine-services](http://haltonhills.ca/canine-services) for more information.

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