



## Ohio Revised Code Section 955.12 Dog wardens.

Effective: March 20, 2026

Legislation: House Bill 247

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(A) Except as provided in section 955.121 of Revised Code, a board of county commissioners shall appoint or employ a county dog warden and deputies in such number, for such periods of time, and at such compensation as the board considers necessary to enforce sections 955.01 to 955.27 and 955.50 of the Revised Code.

(B) Except as otherwise provided in section 3.061 of the Revised Code, the warden and deputies shall give bond in a sum not less than five hundred dollars and not more than two thousand dollars, as set by the board, conditioned for the faithful performance of their duties. The bond or bonds may, in the discretion of the board, be individual or blanket bonds. The bonds shall be filed with the county auditor of their respective counties.

(C) The warden and deputies shall make a record of all dogs owned, kept, and harbored in their respective counties. They shall patrol their respective counties and seize and impound on sight all dogs found running at large and all dogs more than three months of age found not wearing a valid registration tag, except any dog that wears a valid registration tag and is: on the premises of its owner, keeper, or harborer, under the reasonable control of its owner or some other person, hunting with its owner or its handler at a field trial, kept constantly confined in a dog kennel registered under this chapter or one licensed under Chapter 956. of the Revised Code, or acquired by, and confined on the premises of, an institution or organization of the type described in section 955.16 of the Revised Code. A dog that wears a valid registration tag may be seized on the premises of its owner, keeper, or harborer and impounded only in the event of a natural disaster.

(D) If a dog warden has reason to believe that a dog is being treated inhumanely on the premises of its owner, keeper, or harborer, the warden shall notify, in writing, the humane society or the appropriate law enforcement authority that has jurisdiction to enforce Chapter 959. of the Revised Code.

(E) The warden and deputies shall also make weekly reports, in writing, to the board in their



respective counties of all dogs seized, impounded, redeemed, and destroyed.

(F) The wardens and deputies shall have the same police powers as are conferred upon sheriffs and police officers in the performance of their duties as prescribed by sections 955.01 to 955.27 and 955.50 of the Revised Code. They shall also have power to summon the assistance of bystanders in performing their duties and may serve writs and other legal processes issued by any court in their respective counties with reference to enforcing those sections. County auditors may deputize the wardens or deputies to issue dog licenses as provided in sections 955.01 and 955.14 of the Revised Code.

(G) Whenever any person files an affidavit in a court of competent jurisdiction that there is a dog running at large that is not kept constantly confined either in a dog kennel registered under this chapter or one licensed under Chapter 956. of the Revised Code or on the premises of an institution or organization of the type described in section 955.16 of the Revised Code or that a dog is kept or harbored in the warden's jurisdiction without being registered as required by law, the court shall immediately order the warden to seize and impound the dog. Thereupon the warden shall immediately seize and impound the dog complained of. The warden shall give immediate notice by certified mail to the owner, keeper, or harborer of the dog seized and impounded by the warden, if the owner, keeper, or harborer can be determined from the current year's registration list maintained by the warden and the county auditor of the county where the dog is registered, that the dog has been impounded and that, unless the dog is redeemed within fourteen days of the date of the notice, it may thereafter be sold or destroyed according to law. If the owner, keeper, or harborer cannot be determined from the current year's registration list maintained by the warden and the county auditor of the county where the dog is registered, the officer shall post a notice in the pound or animal shelter both describing the dog and place where seized and advising the unknown owner that, unless the dog is redeemed within three days, it may thereafter be sold or destroyed according to law.

(H) No county dog warden shall knowingly fail to perform the warden's duties under this section.

(I) Whoever violates division (H) of this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor.