



## Ohio Revised Code

### Section 955.16 Disposing of impounded dogs.

Effective: [March 20, 2026](#)

Legislation: [House Bill 247](#)

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(A) Dogs that have been seized by the county dog warden and impounded shall be kept, housed, and fed for three days for the purpose of redemption, as provided by section 955.18 of the Revised Code, unless any of the following applies:

(1) Immediate humane destruction of the dog is necessary because of obvious disease or injury. If the diseased or injured dog is registered, as 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 necessity of destroying the dog shall be certified by a licensed veterinarian or a registered veterinary technician. If the dog is not registered, the decision to destroy it shall be made by the warden.

(2) The dog is currently registered on the registration list maintained by the warden and the auditor of the county where the dog is registered and the attempts to notify the owner, keeper, or harbinger under section 955.12 of the Revised Code have failed, in which case the dog shall be kept, housed, and fed for fourteen days for the purpose of redemption.

(3) The warden has contacted the owner, keeper, or harbinger under section 955.12 of the Revised Code, and the owner, keeper, or harbinger has requested that the dog remain in the pound or animal shelter until the owner, harbinger, or keeper redeems the dog. The time for such redemption shall be not more than forty-eight hours following the end of the appropriate redemption period.

Any dog not so redeemed may be adopted out or donated to any person, including a nonprofit special agency that is engaged in the training of any type of assistance dogs or to a nonprofit teaching or research institution or organization that is certified by the director of health as being engaged in teaching or research concerning the prevention and treatment of diseases of human beings or animals. The county dog warden may charge an adoption fee for any dog that is adopted. Except as provided in division (B) of this section, no dog shall be discharged from the pound or animal shelter until the animal has been registered and furnished with a valid registration tag.



(B) Any dog that is donated to a nonprofit special agency engaged in the training of any type of assistance dogs in accordance with division (A) of this section and any dog that is sold to any nonprofit teaching or research institution or organization shall be discharged from the pound or animal shelter without registration and may be kept by the agency or by the institution or organization without registration so long as the dog is being trained, or is being used for teaching and research purposes.

Any institution or organization certified by the director that obtains dogs for teaching and research purposes pursuant to this section shall, at all reasonable times, make the dogs available for inspection by humane society agents, appointed pursuant to section 1717.06 of the Revised Code, in order that the agents may prevent the perpetration of any act of cruelty, as defined in section 1717.01 of the Revised Code, to the dogs.

(C) Any dog that the dog warden or poundkeeper is unable to dispose of, in the manner provided by this section and section 955.18 of the Revised Code, may be humanely destroyed, except that no dog shall be destroyed until twenty-four hours after it has been offered to a nonprofit teaching or research institution or organization, as provided in this section, that has made a request for dogs to the dog warden or poundkeeper.

(D) An owner of a dog that is wearing a valid registration tag who presents the dog to the dog warden or poundkeeper may specify in writing that the dog shall not be offered to a nonprofit teaching or research institution or organization, as provided in this section.

(E) A record of all dogs impounded, the disposition of the same, the owner's name and address, if known, and a statement of costs assessed against the dogs shall be kept by the poundkeeper, and the poundkeeper shall furnish a transcript thereof to the county treasurer quarterly.

A record of all dogs received and the source that supplied them shall be kept, for a period of three years from the date of acquiring the dogs, by all institutions or organizations engaged in teaching or research concerning the prevention and treatment of diseases of human beings or animals.

(F) No person shall recklessly destroy any dog by the use of a high altitude decompression chamber or by any method other than a method that immediately and painlessly renders the dog initially



unconscious and subsequently dead.

(G) Whoever violates division (F) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.