



Ohio Revised Code

Section 959.132 Impounding and disposition of companion animal.

Effective: March 31, 2021

Legislation: House Bill 24 - 133rd General Assembly

(A) As used in this section:

"Companion animal" has the same meaning as in section 959.131 of the Revised Code.

"Impounding agency" means a county humane society organized under section 1717.05 of the Revised Code, an animal shelter, or a law enforcement agency that has impounded a companion animal in accordance with this section.

"Offense" means a violation of Chapter 959. of the Revised Code or an attempt, in violation of section 2923.02 of the Revised Code, to violate Chapter 959. of the Revised Code.

"Officer" means any law enforcement officer, humane society agent, or other person appointed to act as an animal control officer for a municipal corporation or township in accordance with state law, an ordinance, or a resolution.

(B) An officer may seize and cause to be impounded at an impounding agency an animal that the officer has probable cause to believe is the subject of an offense. No officer or impounding agency shall impound an animal that is the subject of an offense in a shelter owned, operated, or controlled by a board of county commissioners pursuant to Chapter 955. of the Revised Code unless the board, by resolution, authorizes the impoundment of such an animal in a shelter owned, operated, or controlled by that board and has executed, in the case when the officer is other than a dog warden or assistant dog warden, a contract specifying the terms and conditions of the impoundment.

(C) The officer shall give written notice of the seizure and impoundment to the owner, keeper, or harborer of the animal not later than twenty-four hours after the animal was seized and impounded. If the officer is unable to give the notice to the owner, keeper, or harborer of the animal, the officer shall post the notice on the door of the residence or in another conspicuous place on the premises at which the animal was seized. The notice shall include a statement that a hearing will be held not later



than ten days after the notice is provided or at the next available court date to determine whether the officer had probable cause to seize the animal and, if applicable, to determine the amount of a bond or cash deposit that is needed to provide for the animal's care and keeping for not less than thirty days beginning on the date on which the animal was impounded.

(D) An animal that is seized under this section may be humanely destroyed immediately or at any time during impoundment if a licensed veterinarian determines it to be necessary because the animal is suffering.

(E)(1) Not later than ten days after notice is provided or at the next available court date, the court shall hold a hearing to determine whether the officer impounding an animal had probable cause to seize the animal. If the court determines that probable cause exists, the court shall determine the amount of a bond or cash deposit that is necessary and reasonable to provide for the animal's care and keeping for not less than thirty days beginning on the date on which the animal was impounded.

(2) If the court determines that probable cause does not exist, the court immediately shall order the impounding agency to return the animal to its owner if possible. If the animal cannot be returned because it has died as a result of neglect or other misconduct by the impounding agency or if the animal is injured as a result of neglect or other misconduct by the impounding agency, the court shall order the impounding agency to pay the owner an amount determined by the court to be equal to the reasonable market value of the animal at the time that it was impounded plus statutory interest as defined in section 1343.03 of the Revised Code from the date of the impoundment or an amount determined by the court to be equal to the reasonable cost of treatment of the injury to the animal, as applicable. The requirement established in division (E)(2) of this section regarding the payment of the reasonable market value of the animal shall not apply in the case of a dog that, in violation of section 955.01 of the Revised Code, was not registered at the time it was seized and impounded.

(3) If the court determines that probable cause exists and determines the amount of a bond or cash deposit, the case shall continue and the owner shall post a bond or cash deposit to provide for the animal's care and keeping for not less than thirty days beginning on the date on which the animal was impounded. The owner may renew a bond or cash deposit by posting, not later than ten days following the expiration of the period for which a previous bond or cash deposit was posted, a new bond or cash deposit in an amount that the court, in consultation with the impounding agency,



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determines is necessary and reasonable to provide for the animal's care and keeping for not less than thirty days beginning on the date on which the previous period expired. If no bond or cash deposit is posted or if a bond or cash deposit expires and is not renewed, the impounding agency may determine the disposition of the animal unless the court issues an order that specifies otherwise.

(F) If a person is convicted of committing an offense, the court may impose the following additional penalties against the person:

(1) A requirement that the person pay for the costs incurred by the impounding agency in caring for an animal involved in the applicable offense, provided that the costs were incurred during the animal's impoundment. A bond or cash deposit posted under this section may be applied to the costs.

(2) An order permanently terminating the person's right to possession, title, custody, or care of the animal that was involved in the offense. If the court issues such an order, the court shall order the disposition of the animal.

(G) If a person is found not guilty of committing an offense, the court immediately shall order the impounding agency to return the animal to its owner if possible and to return the entire amount of any bond or cash deposit posted under division (E) of this section. If the animal cannot be returned because it has died as a result of neglect or other misconduct by the impounding agency or if the animal is injured as a result of neglect or other misconduct by the impounding agency, the court shall order the impounding agency to pay the owner an amount determined by the court to be equal to the reasonable market value of the animal at the time that it was impounded plus statutory interest as defined in section 1343.03 of the Revised Code from the date of the impoundment or an amount determined by the court to be equal to the reasonable cost of treatment of the injury to the animal, as applicable. The requirements established in this division regarding the return of a bond or cash deposit and the payment of the reasonable market value of the animal shall not apply in the case of a dog that, in violation of section 955.01 of the Revised Code, was not registered at the time it was seized and impounded.

(H) If charges are filed under section 959.131 of the Revised Code against the custodian or caretaker of a companion animal, but the companion animal that is the subject of the charges is not impounded, the court in which the charges are pending may order the owner or person having



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custody of the companion animal to provide to the companion animal the necessities described in division (D)(2), (D)(3), (E)(2), (E)(3), (F)(2), or (F)(3) of section 959.131 of the Revised Code until the final disposition of the charges. If the court issues an order of that nature, the court also may authorize an officer or another person to visit the place where the companion animal is being kept, at the times and under the conditions that the court may set, to determine whether the companion animal is receiving those necessities and to remove and impound the companion animal if the companion animal is not receiving those necessities.