

Waunakee Police Department Newsletter May 2020



The Waunakee Police Department would like to thank our residents for continuing to be calm and patient during the current COVID-19 pandemic. These are difficult and strange times. We know it's even more difficult as the weather continues to get better and people want to be outside enjoying our parks and other outdoor recreation areas. Believe us when we say it's painful for our officers to have to remind people about social distancing and that playgrounds, ball fields and other common areas are closed. This is not a fun task but we have to remember this is for the greater good and the health and safety of all of our residents. This pandemic will end and life will go back to normal. Please continue to stay safe and healthy!



Peace Officers Memorial Day May 15th

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation which designated May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as National Police Week. During Police Week we honor Peace Officers who have died in the line of duty. In 2018, 165 Law Enforcement Officer died in the line of duty in the United States. In addition 28 Law Enforcement K9's died in the line of duty.

For more information visit the Officer Down Memorial Page at: <https://www.odmp.org/>



If We Can't Find You We Can't Help You

It is a terrible feeling for a police officer, or any first responder when they are called to someone in dire need of help but we cannot figure out where they are on arrival in the area. One big way you can help first responders find you is to make sure your address is visible on the front of your residence. Some residences within the village are confusing to responders and we lose valuable seconds or minutes trying to figure out where your address is. You never know when you may need help quickly. Making sure your address is highly visible now could ensure your safety later. Having your address properly labeled is actually a village ordinance. See Waunakee ordinance 58-9 for more information.

Animals Ordinances

We often get questions and complaints regarding domestic animals. Below we have listed a few of our ordinances regarding animals to hopefully answer some questions and also help to understand the ordinances and why they are in effect.

The entire Waunakee Municipal Ordinance Code can be found by copy/past this link into you search browser: https://library.municode.com/wi/waunakee/codes/code_of_ordinances

Running at Large

Dogs and cats that are not secured and run away within the village are one of our most frequent animal related complaints. Most commonly people think this ordinance applies to situations where a dog or cat has run out of a yard or house and is now running free but we'd also like to point out this ordinance applies to any dog or cat who is on public property such as on a walk or in a park. In Waunakee your animal must be controlled by a leash when on public property regardless of how well they may listen or be friendly. Recently we have received complaints of people walking their dog, for example, without a leash or their dog is in a park off leash. When the owner is contacted by an officer they often say they know their dog is friendly and will listen to their commands. Officers must then explain that it isn't necessarily that you feel comfortable but that others may not. Some people are afraid of dogs and it makes them very uncomfortable to see a dog running free. Even if you believe you have control of your animal others may not know that and animals can be unpredictable. Below are 2 village ordinances regarding the control of animals:

Ordinance 14-5 (a) (1) states the following:

(1) No person having the possession or ownership of any animal or fowl shall allow the animal or fowl to run at large within the village. The owner of any animal, whether licensed or unlicensed, shall keep the animal tied or enclosed in a proper enclosure so as not to allow the animal to interfere with the passing public or neighbors. Any animal running at large unlicensed and required by state law or this chapter to be licensed shall be seized and impounded by a humane officer or law enforcement officer.

(2) A dog or cat shall not be considered to be running at large if it is on a leash and under control of a person physically able to control it.

Ordinance 50-22(2) states the following:

(2)Pets. Except as provided in Wis. Stats. § 106.52(3)(am):

a. No person shall allow pets to enter any public building, picnic shelter/area, ball field or playground,

b. Leashed pets shall be allowed on sidewalks, trails and pathways within the parks. All persons shall secure their animal on a leash six feet or shorter in length and maintain their animal under control, meaning connected to a leash held by a person at all times.

c. All pet waste must be immediately picked up and disposed of. Bags, scoops or other appropriate implements for the removal of pet waste must be carried by any person bringing a pet onto park property.

d. Pets must display current rabies tag and current registration tags.

e. This subsection shall not apply to any canine or police work dog that is assisting the village police department.

***Owners can be held liable for damages their animals cause to others property. The fine amount for an animal running at large is \$98.80 for a first offense, and \$124.00 for second and subsequent offenses.

Animal Noise Disturbances

Another common complaint police get are referred to as “Barking Dog” or “Crying Cat” complaints. Below is the village ordinance regarding animal noise disturbances:

Ordinance 14-5(a)(3) states the following:

(3) Allow the animal to habitually bark, howl, yelp, or cry to the great discomfort of the peace and quiet of the neighborhood or in such manner as to materially disturb or annoy persons in the neighborhood who are of ordinary sensibilities. An animal is considered to be in violation of this subsection if:

a. Two written complaints are filed with the police department in a four-week period regarding the animal's conduct; or

b. A city police officer or municipal official witnesses an animal acting in violation of this subsection and reports the conduct to the police department.

***The fine amount is \$98.80 for a first offense, and \$124.00 for second and subsequent offenses.

Animal Waste Removal

Occasionally officers will be called to complaints of people, most commonly walkers, who allow their animal to defecate in someone else's yard and not clean up after them. Below is the village ordinance regarding animal feces:

Ordinance 14-5(4) states the following:

(4) Allow the animal to deposit solid fecal matter on any street, alley or other public or private property, unless such matter is immediately removed there from by the owner or person in possession of the animal. This subsection shall not apply to a person who is visually or physically handicapped.

***The fine amount is \$98.80 for a first offense, and \$124.00 for second and subsequent offenses.

Animal Licensing

The Village of Waunakee requires all dogs living within the village limits to be licensed each year. Animal licenses must be obtained prior to March 31st of each year or an additional \$5 late fee applies, with exceptions for new animals or if someone moves to the village later in the year. To register your pets online go <http://www.petdata.com> or call toll free 1-855-312-9070. License(s) will be mailed within 10 business days of PetData's receipt of payment and documentation. The village ordinance regarding animal licensing is 14-5(a)(6).

***The fine amount is \$187.00 for a first offense, and \$313.00 for second and subsequent offenses.

Exotic Animal Prohibitions

Village ordinance 14-8(c) addresses which animals are prohibited in the village, spoiler alert; you cannot keep your elephant, rhinoceroses, tiger (for you Tiger King fans) or shark in Waunakee! For the complete list of prohibited animals, please see the ordinance.

**No, exotic animal complaints are not a frequent issue!



Fox Sightings Are Normal in Waunakee

This time of year fox sightings increase. This is largely because baby foxes, known as kits, are born in March and April and both the mother and father fox hunt and provide food for the kits. Police occasionally get questions or concerned citizens who are fearful of a fox sighting. Foxes are not dangerous to humans and have always been around. There are many urban foxes in Waunakee, just ask a night shift officer we see them everywhere. Fox sightings during the day are also very normal as they hunt for squirrels, rabbits, birds and rodents, some of which are most active during the day. Seeing a fox during the day does not mean it is sick. Foxes pose almost no danger at all even to pets. Foxes will not try to attack an animal similar to their size or bigger so they are of very little risk to domestic pets unless they are very small and unattended- even then there is little risk. Because a fox does not seem scared of a human also is not necessarily an indication the fox is sick. Usually when a fox is not afraid of a human it's because this is learned behavior, meaning another human probably gave it a snack.

For more information on urban foxes and for information on how to deter foxes from coming in your yard see these resources:

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/what-do-about-foxes>
<https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/wm/wm0583.pdf>

If you need additional information you can contact Julie Widholm at 608-516-3895 or via email at Julie.widholm@wisconsin.gov Julie is the wildlife biologist for Dane County



TURN YOUR LIGHTS ON FOR SAFETY!

Dense fog, snow, rain or other environmental factors can significantly reduce visibility. You may be able to see where you are going but other vehicles may not be able to see you! The headlight visibility law (effective 2/16) requires drivers to turn on their headlights when weather conditions “limit visibility.”

Limited visibility is defined as “objects that are not clearly visible 500 feet from the vehicle.” In other words, turn your lights on in heavy rain, snow and fog.

Governor Scott Walker signed into law a bill that requires drivers to turn on headlights when weather conditions limit visibility. Under the previous law, if it was dark outside, drivers were required to activate their headlights. Now if it's raining, snowing, foggy or if there's any condition that limits visibility and prevents you from seeing 500 feet in front of your vehicle, drivers must turn on their headlights. This law can be found in Wisconsin State Statute 347.06(1).



Please “like” our Waunakee Police Department Facebook page. We provide information regarding local events, safety tips and press releases for major incidents. You can also send us your questions through private messages and tips on any recent crimes that have taken place.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Waunakee-Police-Department/349673238430794>

Newsletter ideas or topics

If you have a topic or idea you would like us to consider for future Waunakee Police Newsletter, please email the idea for consideration to the address below.

Questions can be sent to newsletter@waunakeepd.org. Questions submitted may be featured in future newsletters. The person submitting the question will not be identified.