

Calgary



# Good Neighbour Practices

Reference guide



## Preface

**The Good Neighbour Practices Reference Guide is an overview of municipal bylaws governing neighbourhood issues. It has been written to advise residents, business owners and service providers of their rights and responsibilities as members of their community.**

This booklet provides general information about bylaws pertaining to your property. If you have any questions or require more information regarding specific bylaws, visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca) and search bylaws, or call 311.

While informal communication with neighbours is a simple way of addressing neighbourhood concerns, in situations where this is not a viable option, Calgarians can call 311 to make an inquiry or to file a complaint for investigation.

Alternatively, the Community Mediation Calgary Society offers support in resolving neighbourhood issues. Information may be obtained at [mediation.ab.ca](http://mediation.ab.ca).

Bylaws are created to protect:

- Public health and safety.
- The environment.
- Public and private property.

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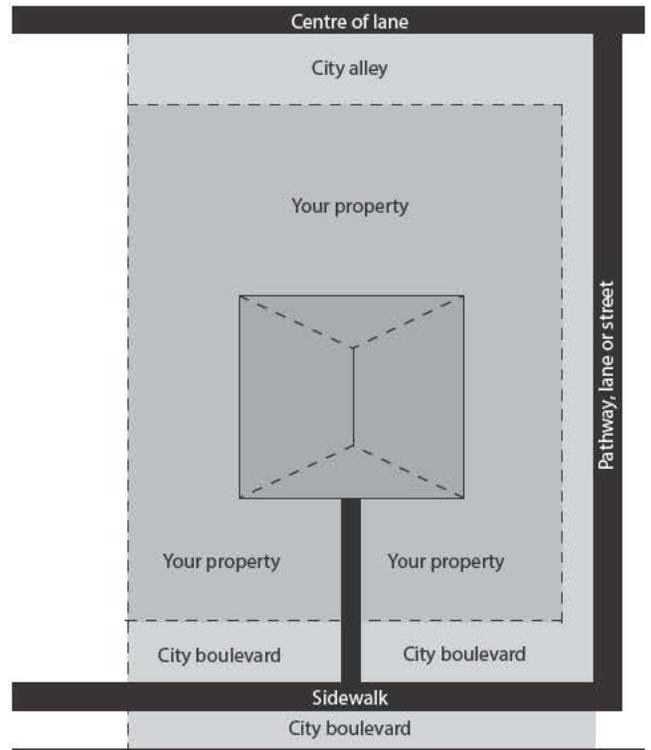
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## On and around your property

Owners/residents are generally responsible for their property, adjacent boulevards, sidewalks and the alley adjoining their property (See Diagram 1).

Diagram 1

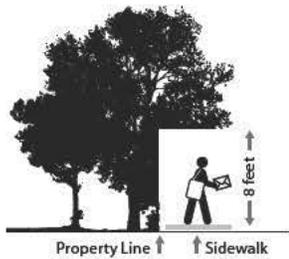


## Trees and shrubs

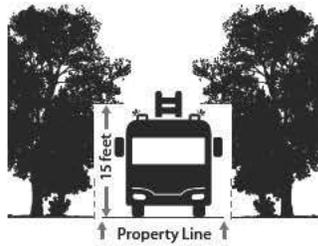
### Street Bylaw 20M88

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that hedges, trees and shrubs on their property are trimmed so as not to interfere with pedestrians using the sidewalk and vehicles accessing the street or alley.

#### Sidewalk clearance

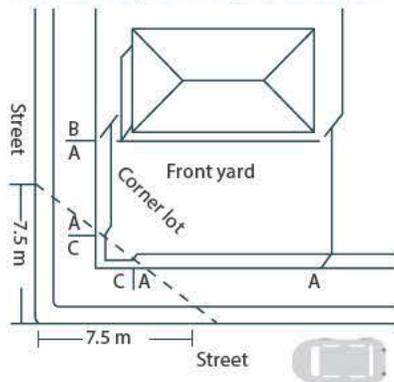


#### Alley clearance



In addition, owners of corner lots should be aware that the Calgary Traffic Bylaw 26M96 establishes a maximum height restriction of 0.75 metres (2.6 feet) for vegetation along the intersection of two streets.

#### Intersection plant height restriction



## Protecting City trees

### Tree Protection Bylaw 23M2002

Owners are strongly encouraged to call 311 if they are unsure as to whether or not the trees along the front of their properties are owned by The City of Calgary. Concerns regarding trees or shrubs that are known to be the property of The City can be directed through 311 to Urban Forestry or through email at [tree.protection@calgary.ca](mailto:tree.protection@calgary.ca).

The Tree Protection Bylaw prohibits:

- Cutting, removing, pruning or moving City trees.
- Removing or penetrating the bark or attaching any object or sign to City trees.
- Planting trees or shrubs on City land.
- Spraying City trees with any substance other than water.
- Attaching electrical cords or other objects to City trees.
- Unauthorized entry or interference with a Tree Protection barrier.

## Grass and weeds

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Owners of both developed properties and vacant lots are responsible for ensuring that grass and weeds are maintained to not exceed 15 cm (6 inches). Owners are encouraged to keep their grass at 7.5 cm long (3 inches). Longer grass shades its roots from the sun and chokes out weeds. Longer grass also helps create a healthier, hardier lawn by allowing longer roots to develop and it holds moisture better. Owners must be compliant with the *Alberta Weed Control Act*. If an owner has weeds listed as Prohibited Noxious, they must be destroyed. Weeds listed as Noxious must be controlled. Please refer to the Act for more information.

## Yard watering

### Water Utility Bylaw 40M2006

Lawns should not be watered if it is going to rain that week. During dry periods, it is recommended to water “slow and low” so it can sink into the soil and not run off the grass and other plantings. Watering between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. should be avoided, as this tends to be the hottest time of the day. The City also encourages native plants to both decrease water demand and to support biodiversity in the city. Native plants also tend to require less maintenance. For more information on native plants consult The City of Calgary’s YardSmart program or the Alberta Native Plant Council.

## Pesticide use

Pesticides are regulated by the federal and provincial governments and are often used to prevent, control, or destroy pests when other methods fail. Although pesticides are strictly regulated in Canada, they can be hazardous if not used carefully. Like many other chemical products, pesticides are toxic and can cause injury, like burns and poisoning. To use pesticides safely, the label directions must be followed. When buying a pesticide, always look for a Pest Control Products number on the label. This way you know the product has been tested and approved by Health Canada.



## Snow and ice

### Street Bylaw 20M88

Owners/residents are responsible for the complete removal of snow and ice, to the bare pavement, from all private and public sidewalks and driveways within 24 hours of a snow fall.

Snow or ice removed from a public sidewalk may be placed on the road or boulevard, provided that its placement does not create an obstruction. All snow and ice removed from private sidewalks must be placed within the property. As a best practice, shovelled snow and ice should not be stored in such a way that melting water will drain into your neighbour’s property.

Applying a sand de-icing mixture may help remove ice from sidewalks. Free sand is available to owners/residents, who provide their own containers, at many Calgary Fire Department stations and Calgary Roads depots throughout the city.

Sidewalks and streets must also be kept clear of electrical cords used to plug in vehicles.

## Untidy properties

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring their properties remain tidy. As a result, the storage of any materials on a residential lot must not be visible from outside the property. This includes loose garbage, yard waste, bottles, cans, household furniture, packaging materials, machinery, equipment or automobile parts and appliances. In addition, when stored outside, refrigerators and freezers must be locked or have the doors removed.

An accumulation of building materials may only be stored on a property if the owner can establish that construction or renovation is occurring or imminent. Owners are responsible for ensuring these materials are stacked in an orderly manner.

Materials that are prohibited on private property include:

- Any accumulation of offensive material such as animal remains, animal feces and materials that create unpleasant odours or are likely to attract pests.
- Open or exposed storage of industrial fluid such as engine oil, brake fluid, antifreeze or other hazardous materials.
- Dilapidated vehicles.

## Structure maintenance

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that structures on their property remain in good repair. These include:

- Fences.
- Foundation walls, exterior walls, roofs, windows and doors.
- Protective or decorative finishes of exterior structures.
- Exterior stairs, landings, porches, balconies and decks.



## Addressing

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that addresses on the front of their property are clearly visible from the roadway. To assist emergency services and other City operations, addresses must also be clearly displayed at the back of properties that are adjacent to alleys or public walkways.

## Noise

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Sound restrictions exist to address appropriate noise levels during the daytime and at night. Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that activities on their properties fall within the appropriate sound restrictions and do not disturb others on adjacent properties.

The operation of power tools (lawn mowers, motorized garden tools, snow clearing and leaf blowing devices) and the use of skateboard and sports ramps in residential areas may only occur:

- Between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.
- Between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. Sundays and statutory holidays.

## Fire pits

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Owners/residents are responsible for the appropriate use of fire pits on their properties. Fire pits must:

- Be constructed from non-combustible material (e.g. brick or stone), set upon or built into the bare ground or placed on non-combustible material.
- Be situated at least two metres from any building, fence or wooden structure.
- Be covered with a mesh screen or spark guard to reduce the spread of embers and sparks from wood-burning fire pits.
- Be located away from trees or branches.
- Burn only clean, dry firewood (materials that are strictly prohibited in fire pits include painted/treated lumber, yard waste, tires, plastics and animal parts).
- Ensure open flames do not exceed one metre in height and width to ensure that fire embers, sparks or dense smoke do not endanger anyone or cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties.
- Be attended to at all times, with a means to extinguish the fire on hand at all times.

Fire pit use on residential properties may occur:

- Between 10 a.m. and midnight, Monday to Friday.
- Between 10 a.m. and 1 a.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Owners/residents must also comply with fire bans that can be declared by the Fire Chief at any time as required.



## Household waste, recycling and composting

### Waste and Recycling Bylaw 20M2001

Black, blue and green carts are provided to single family homes for weekly/bi-weekly collection of household waste, recyclable materials and food and yard waste.

To ensure collection, carts need to be set out by 7 a.m. on collection day, and no earlier than 7 p.m. the evening before. Owners/residents can find out their collection days by visiting [calgary.ca/collection](http://calgary.ca/collection).

Between collection days, owners/residents must ensure that carts are stored on their property or as close to the back fence as possible, ensuring the carts do not block traffic. All carts must be returned to the property or against the back fence no later than 7 p.m. on collection day.

When setting carts out for collection, owners/residents are asked to:

- **Fill it:** fill carts and lower the lids. Ensure material can easily fall out when the cart is tipped and is not packed in too tightly.
- **Place it:** place carts on flat ground at road level. Carts will not be collected from enclosures, steps or raised platforms. For front street collection, place the wheels against the curb. For back lane collection, place the wheels with enough space away from back hedges, garages or fences. Arrange the carts so the arrows on the lid point towards the centre of the road or lane.
- **Space it:** Leave enough space to walk between and around the carts. Leave at least one metre (three feet) between your carts and objects such as parked cars, power poles and garages. There must be at least three metres (10 feet) of space directly above carts to enable the automated arms of the collection truck to lift the carts.

Owners/residents with specific questions about what can be placed in a black, blue or green cart can call 311 or visit [calgary.ca/whatgoeswhere](http://calgary.ca/whatgoeswhere) for waste, recycling or composting disposal options.

### Black carts

- If a black cart is full and another garbage bag will not easily fit inside, extra garbage bags may be set at least 30 cm (one foot) away from the cart for collection.
- Standard-sized garbage bags are recommended (66 cm x 91 cm). They should weigh no more than 20 kilograms (44 pounds) each when filled so that the bag can easily be lifted with one hand.
- Dusty materials must be double bagged and tied when placed in the black cart.
- Sharp objects must be placed in puncture-proof containers when placed in the black cart.
- Hazardous and biomedical waste, dead animals, tires, automotive parts and furniture are prohibited in black carts.



### Blue carts

- Place only recyclable material in the blue cart. Visit [calgary.ca/recycling](http://calgary.ca/recycling) for a full list of acceptable materials. In general, acceptable materials include paper, cardboard, plastic containers with recycling symbols 1-7, food cans, foil, glass jars and bottles, and beverage containers.
- Plastic bags, bubble wrap and plastic film should be bundled in one plastic bag and tied.
- Shredded paper should be placed in a see-through plastic bag and tied.
- If a blue cart is full, extra material can be taken to a community recycling depot or saved by the owner/resident to be placed in the blue cart on the next collection day. Extra recycling materials that do not fit into the blue cart will not be collected.
- Hazardous materials, propane or helium tanks, bear spray canisters, scrap metal, food and yard waste, foam packaging or containers, houseware items, electronics or mixed packaging are prohibited in blue carts.



### Green carts

- Compostable materials should be placed in a green cart, including food, yard waste and pet waste collected in a certified compostable bag or paper bag. Visit [calgary.ca/greencart](http://calgary.ca/greencart) for a full list of acceptable materials.
- Certified compostable bags or newspaper can be used to line a kitchen compost pail used to collect food waste.
- Look for the certified compostable logo when purchasing bags for use in the green cart.
- If a green cart is full, extra yard waste can be placed in paper yard waste bags and extra branches can be tied in 1.25 metre (4 foot) bundles with natural fibre string and placed at least 30 cm (1 foot) to the side of the green cart on collection day.
- Plastic or biodegradable bags, food or beverage containers, diapers or wipes, painted or treated wood, or plastic plates and cutlery are prohibited in green carts.

## Water drainage

### Drainage Bylaw 37M2005

### Lot Grading Bylaw 32M2004

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that drainage from their property drains to the front street or back lane and does not negatively impact neighboring properties and complies with all City bylaws and policies.

Owners/ residents must ensure that:

- Downspouts are directed toward the front and rear of the property ending at least two meters (6.5 feet) away from any sidewalk, road, parkway, alley, lane or surface drainage facility. Downspouts should be directed so as to encourage absorption of water into landscaped areas, prevent ice from forming on sidewalks and lanes in winter, and prevent water from entering onto neighboring properties.
- Hot tubs and swimming pools are to be drained using the sewer drain located in the basement of a residence to ensure that chemically treated water enters the sanitary sewer system for appropriate treatment at the wastewater treatment plants.
- Water hoses are not directed towards neighboring properties.
- Surface drainage facilities, including swales and catchbasins, are kept clear of any debris or obstructions that may restrict or prevent the flow of water. Fences that must be built over swales must provide a 15 cm (6 inch) clearance from the top of the swale. Sheds, stairs or other objects should not be placed on top of swales and minimum buffer zones need to be respected so that runoff can enter the swale and be directed safely through the network during a storm event.

When experiencing a drainage issue, always look for what you can do on your own property to correct the situation first. Ensure your property is graded for water runoff to travel away from your home and your neighbours to the street lane or swale, ensure your downspouts are not pointing towards your neighbor and maintain the drainage path on your property to limit new drainage problems.



If you or your neighbor are making changes to existing landscaping, you may need to work together to re-establish the drainage path in a way that works for both properties and City infrastructure. If you have a drainage challenge and cannot sort it out yourself, contact professional engineering or landscaping services who can help.

Soil, fecal matter, oils, yard waste, hazardous waste, automotive fluids, paint, soap, detergent (including runoff from vehicles washed on the street or in driveways) are prohibited from entering the storm sewer system to prevent this drainage from flowing into the river untreated.

Storm ponds have an important job to do as they clean the stormwater before it is released back into the river. Storm ponds are not pristine and may contain gravel, dirt, chemicals as well as other pollutants collected from the rain and excess runoff from the surround communities. As these contaminants settle out in the storm pond, cleaner water is released back into our rivers. With that in mind, citizens should not interact with the storm ponds in their community nor should they use the storm ponds for recreational purposes (e.g., swimming, fishing, boating, skating).

Neighbours who witness citizens interacting with storm ponds, infractions of prohibited materials entering the storm drains (catch basins), or vehicle and chemical spills are encouraged to report these activities to 311.

### **Water Utility Bylaw 40M2006**

Owners/residents are responsible for the water service connection from the edge of their property line to their plumbing system. No owner shall interfere or tamper with a neighbour's water system (e.g., redirect water, attach a device or water pipe, cause a pressure surge or contaminate the water system.)

All single-family and two-family residences are required to have a water meter. As a condition of water service, City of Calgary Water Services employees shall have access to all parts of the property and building or other premises in which water is delivered and consumed for the purpose of:

- Installing, maintaining, repairing or removing water meters.
- Installing, maintaining, repairing or removing parts of the water system.
- To conduct inspections to enforce the Water Utility Bylaw.

The City may declare outdoor water use restrictions. Water restrictions are imposed to manage water use to ensure that drinking water is available to all citizens in Calgary. In the event that water restrictions are imposed, owners/residents are responsible for complying. Neighbours who witness infractions to the imposed water use restrictions are encouraged to report all instances to 311.

Owners/residents with specific questions on the Water Utility Bylaw can call 311 or visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca) for more information.

### **Wastewater Bylaw 14M2012**

Fats, oils, grease, pharmaceuticals, dental floss, wipes and other similar items are not permitted to be flushed down the toilet or drained into the sink or otherwise disposed of to the wastewater system. They can cause damage to internal plumbing, and cause sewer backups along with damage to the wastewater system. For a full list of prohibited substances please refer to the Wastewater Bylaw and for more information on what not to flush or drain down sinks, drains or toilets refer to [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).



The City has restricted that no person shall reuse wastewater for any purpose without written approval in order to protect public health.

Owners/residents with specific questions on the Wastewater Bylaw can call 311 or visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca) for more information.

## Vehicle parking

### Calgary Traffic Bylaw 26M96

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that vehicles parked on their property and adjacent streets are registered, insured, operable and properly equipped. Owners/residents should ensure the following rules are met.

- Parked vehicles do not block access to driveways, waste containers, fire hydrants or streets.
- Any service work or minor repairs to vehicles occur only on private property unless emergency repairs are required to move the vehicle off the street.
- Unless allowed by specific markings or signs, always park with the vehicle's right side parallel to the curb or edge of the roadway.

- Some community streets may be designated and signed as a Snow Control Route. When a snow event is declared, all vehicles must be removed from those streets to allow for snow plows and equipment to do their work. Vehicles that are not moved may be ticketed and towed. Call 311 or visit [calgary.ca/snow](http://calgary.ca/snow) to find out if a snow event is currently in place.
- In communities where parking is restricted to residents, owners/residents require a permit to park on the street adjacent to their property

### Recreation vehicles

- Recreational vehicles or RVs (e.g. motor homes, campers, travel and tent trailers) can be parked on the street adjacent to the owner's or driver's residence for no more than 36 consecutive hours. After this point, the RV must be moved to an off-street location for at least 48 consecutive hours before it may be parked back on the street.
- RVs and utility trailers must not remain parked in an actual front setback area of a driveway for longer than 24 hours, as per Land Use Bylaw 1P2007. An actual front setback area typically ranges from  $\pm 3$  to  $\pm 6$  metres and is located between the front property line and the house.
- RVs may be parked to the side or rear of houses. For assistance please call the Planning Services Centre at 403-268-5311.
- RVs may be stored in some industrial and special districts where Vehicle Storage – Recreational is a listed use. **Land Use Bylaw 1P2007**, [calgary.ca/landusebylaw](http://calgary.ca/landusebylaw)
- Trailers or detachable camping vehicles should not be left on the street or in an alley if not connected to a vehicle.



## Nuisances escaping properties

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Owners/residents must take reasonable precautions to ensure that nuisances do not escape their property. This includes:

- Smoke, dust or other airborne matter.
- Articles such as papers, flyers and loose debris.

Owners/residents must also ensure that outdoor lights do not shine directly into the living or sleeping areas of neighbouring properties.

## Graffiti

### Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004

Graffiti includes words, figures, letters, drawings or stickers applied, scribbled, scratched, etched, sprayed or attached to a surface. Removing graffiti promptly (e.g. within 24 hours) has been found to reduce the chance of additional graffiti being re-applied in the same area.

Owners/residents are responsible for ensuring that graffiti placed on their property is removed, painted over or otherwise permanently blocked from public view.

## Garage sales

### Temporary Signs on Highways Bylaw 29M97

Owners/residents must comply with bylaws when using temporary signs for personal sales. These temporary signs must not be placed:

- Within 15 metres (49 feet) of an intersection.
- On a traffic sign.
- In playground and school zones.
- On roadways identified on the Prohibited Roads list.

All temporary signs must also include the sign owner's name, address, phone number and the posting date. The signs must be removed within 24 hours following the garage sale. Owners/residents with specific questions on the use of temporary signs can call 311 or visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).

## Home-based businesses

### Business Licence Bylaw 32M98

#### Land Use Bylaw 1P2007

Operating a business out of a home in a residential neighbourhood may require a Home Occupation Permit and/or a Business Licence. If a permit or business licence is required, other development and building approvals may also need to be in place before a home-based business is allowed to operate.

Owners/residents can use The City of Calgary's online Business Registration System to determine what approvals, permits and business licences may be required to operate a business out of a home. Planning Service Centre and Licence Division staff are also available to help and can be contacted at 403-268-5311.

For more information on home-based businesses, visit: [calgary.ca/PD](http://calgary.ca/PD).



## Property development/ home improvements

### Land Use Bylaw 1P2007

The City of Calgary's **Land Use Bylaw 1P2007** has been in effect since June 1, 2008. It outlines the rules for Calgary land development. Each property in Calgary has a district (zone) that describes what type of development (residential, commercial, industrial) is appropriate on that property and what the rules are specific to that development type. Some developments require more information, while some are more straightforward.

For home improvements, other bylaws and regulation might apply and other permits may be required. This could include electrical, plumbing and gas, or building permits.

The most common home improvements are:

- Detached garages and sheds.
- Uncovered decks and balconies.
- Fences and retaining walls.
- Garden boxes.
- Basement development.
- Sunrooms and other types of additions to house.
- Fireplaces.
- Hot tubs, pools and ponds.
- Playhouses.
- Air conditioning equipment.
- Driveways.

Homeowners are responsible for ensuring that all developments comply with the appropriate City bylaws and policies. Visit [calgary.ca/homeimprovement](http://calgary.ca/homeimprovement) to learn more about the requirements for each project, or contact the Planning Services Centre at 403-268-5311.



## Public behaviour

### Public Behaviour Bylaw 54M2006

The Public Behaviour Bylaw was established to regulate problematic social behaviours that may have a negative impact on the enjoyment of public spaces in Calgary.

The following are prohibited in public places:

- Fighting.
- Defecating and urinating (also prohibited in public while on private property).
- Spitting (also prohibited in public while on private property).
- Loitering that obstructs others.
- Standing or placing one's feet on tables, benches, planters or sculptures.
- Carrying a visible knife.



## Wildlife

### Parks and Pathway Bylaw 20M2003

It is illegal to feed wildlife in a park. Feeding habituates wildlife to humans; causing them to lose their natural fear. This can cause conflict in encounters between animals, humans and pets. It also creates dependence on unnatural food sources – meaning animals can lose their ability to survive in the wild.

You may even feed wildlife by accident: improper disposal of garbage in parks, or residential areas near parks can be a food source. Deposit all garbage in a tightly closed bin.

Remember: do not approach or feed wildlife, keep outdoor cooking areas clean in both parks and your yard, keep compost and waste in appropriate receptacles and, if possible, pick up any fallen fruit in your garden. Always remember to clean up after your dog. And keep them on leash, unless in a designated off-leash area.



## Responsible pet ownership

### Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw 23M2006

The Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw enables The City to work with Calgarians to ensure that cats, dogs, their owners and neighbours live together in safety and harmony.

### Licensing your pet

Both cat and dog owners are responsible for licensing their pets at three months of age and for keeping pets on their property. Dogs must wear their current City of Calgary licence tag. Cats must wear their tag only if they do not have a visible tattoo or microchip.

For more information on licensing your pet, call 311 or visit [pets.calgary.ca](https://pets.calgary.ca).

### Pets in public spaces

Cats and dogs must remain on their owner's property or be under their control at all times. Pet owners are responsible for ensuring that:

- Cats do not roam freely off their property.
- Dogs are kept under control by means of a leash.
- In designated off-leash areas, dogs remain within the owner's sight and respond promptly to owner's commands.
- On a pathway, dogs are walked on the right hand side, are attached to a leash no more than two metres (6.6 feet) in length and do not interfere with or obstruct other pathway users.
- Owners are required to pick up and properly dispose of their animal's feces immediately.

Animals are prohibited in school grounds, playgrounds, sports fields, golf courses, cemeteries, wading and swimming areas, and other areas prohibited by signs.



## Responsibilities of pet owners

Owners are responsible for keeping their pets safe. This includes ensuring that:

- Owners do not rollerblade, ride a bicycle or skateboard on a pathway with a leashed dog.
- Animals are not left unattended while tethered or tied on public or private property.
- Animals are not left unattended in a vehicle unless there is suitable ventilation and weather conditions are appropriate. The pet's movement must also be restricted to prevent access to people outside the vehicle.
- Animals are secured while in a moving vehicle, whether in a secured kennel or in a harness and specialized pet seatbelt.
- When riding in the back of a pickup truck, dogs are secured in either an enclosed topper, a ventilated kennel or similar device fastened to the truck bed or tethered in such a manner that protects the animal from harm.

## Lost pet

Owners are encouraged to take the following measures when a pet is missing:

- Immediately file a lost pet report with 311.
- View the impounded animals at [calgary.ca/animalservices](http://calgary.ca/animalservices) and visit the Animal Services Centre, located at 2201 Portland Street S.E.
- Check in with the Calgary Humane Society, nearby vet clinics and other rescue organizations.

An up-to-date pet licence can reunite pets with their owners quickly. Pet owner contact information on pet licenses can be updated at [calgary.ca/pets](http://calgary.ca/pets) and through microchip companies and/or tattoo providers.

## Livestock

### Land Use Bylaw 1P2007

Livestock includes, but is not limited to, chickens, pheasants, ducks, swine, horses, llamas, sheep and goats.

Generally, livestock is prohibited within city limits except where permitted.



If you are new to the city, a long-term Calgarian, homeowner or tenant looking for more information about your responsibilities within your neighbourhood, this quick reference guide will get you started.

**Visit [calgary.ca/goodneighbour](https://calgary.ca/goodneighbour) for more information.**

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