

NUISANCES AND ANIMAL CONTROL

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CHAPTER 50

NUISANCE ABATEMENT PROCEDURE

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50.01 DEFINITION OF NUISANCE. Whatever is injurious to health, indecent, or unreasonably offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property so as essentially to interfere unreasonably with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property is a nuisance.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 657.1)

50.02 NUISANCES ENUMERATED. The following subsections include, but do not limit, the conditions that are deemed to be nuisances in the City:

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 657.2)

1. **Offensive Smells.** Erecting, continuing, or using any building or other place for the exercise of any trade, employment, or manufacture that, by occasioning noxious exhalations, unreasonably offensive smells, or other annoyances, becomes injurious and dangerous to the health, comfort, or property of individuals or the public.
2. **Filth or Noisome Substance.** Causing or suffering any offal, filth, or noisome substance to be collected or to remain in any place to the prejudice of others.
3. **Impeding Passage of Navigable River.** Obstructing or impeding without legal authority the passage of any navigable river, harbor, or collection of water.
4. **Water Pollution.** Corrupting or rendering unwholesome or impure the water of any river, stream, or pond, or unlawfully diverting the same from its natural course or state, to the injury or prejudice of others.
5. **Blocking Public and Private Ways.** Obstructing or encumbering, by fences, buildings or otherwise, the public roads, private ways, streets, alleys, commons, landing places, or burying grounds.
6. **Billboards.** Billboards, signboards, and advertising signs, whether erected and constructed on public or private property, that so obstruct and impair the view of any portion or part of a public street, avenue, highway, boulevard or alley or of a railroad or street railway track as to render dangerous the use thereof. **(See also Section 62.06)**
7. **Storing of Flammable Junk.** Depositing or storing of flammable junk, such as old rags, rope, cordage, rubber, bones and paper, by dealers in such articles within the fire limits of the City, unless in a building of fireproof construction. **(See also Chapter 51)**
8. **Air Pollution.** Emission of dense smoke, noxious fumes, or fly ash.
9. **Weeds, Brush.** Dense growth of all weeds, vines, brush, or other vegetation in the City so as to constitute a health, safety, or fire hazard. **(See also Chapter 52)**

10. Dutch Elm Disease. Trees infected with Dutch elm disease. (See also Chapter 151)

11. Airport Air Space. Any object or structure hereafter erected within one thousand (1,000) feet of the limits of any municipal or regularly established airport or landing place, which may endanger or obstruct aerial navigation including take-off and landing, unless such object or structure constitutes a proper use or enjoyment of the land on which the same is located.

12. Houses of Ill Fame. Houses of ill fame, kept for the purpose of prostitution and lewdness; gambling houses; places resorted to by persons participating in criminal gang activity prohibited by Chapter 723A of the *Code of Iowa* or places resorted to by persons using controlled substances, as defined in Section 124.101 of the *Code of Iowa*, in violation of law, or houses where drunkenness, quarreling, fighting or breaches of the peace are carried on or permitted to the disturbance of others.

50.03 OTHER CONDITIONS. The following chapters of this Code of Ordinances contain regulations prohibiting or restricting other conditions that are deemed to be nuisances:

1. Junk and Junk Vehicles (See Chapter 51)
2. Weeds (See Chapter 52)
3. Dangerous Buildings (See Chapter 145)
4. Storage and Disposal of Solid Waste (See Chapter 105)
5. Trees (See Chapter 151)

50.04 NUISANCES PROHIBITED. The creation or maintenance of a nuisance is prohibited, and a nuisance, public or private, may be abated in the manner provided for in this chapter or State law.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 657.3)

50.05 NUISANCE ABATEMENT. Whenever any authorized municipal officer finds that a nuisance exists, such officer has the authority to determine on a case-by-case basis whether to utilize the nuisance abatement procedure described in Section 50.06 of this chapter or the municipal infraction procedure referred to in Section 50.07.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3h])

50.06 ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE BY WRITTEN NOTICE. Any nuisance, public or private, may be abated in the manner provided for in this section:

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3h])

1. Contents of Notice to Property Owner. The notice to abate shall contain: †
 - A. Description of Nuisance. A description of what constitutes the nuisance.

† **EDITOR'S NOTE:** A suggested form of notice for the abatement of nuisances is included in the Appendix of this Code of Ordinances. Caution is urged in the use of this administrative abatement procedure, particularly where cost of abatement is more than minimal or where there is doubt as to whether or not a nuisance does in fact exist. If compliance is not secured following notice and hearings, we recommend you review the situation with your attorney before proceeding with abatement and assessment of costs. Your attorney may recommend proceedings in court under Chapter 657 of the *Code of Iowa* rather than this procedure.

- B. Location of Nuisance. The location of the nuisance.
- C. Acts Necessary to Abate. A statement of the act or acts necessary to abate the nuisance.
- D. Reasonable Time. A reasonable time within which to complete the abatement.
- E. Assessment of City Costs. A statement that if the nuisance or condition is not abated as directed and no request for hearing is made within the time prescribed, the City will abate it and assess the costs against the property owner.
2. Method of Service. The notice may be in the form of an ordinance or sent by certified mail to the property owner.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3h])
3. Request for Hearing. Any person ordered to abate a nuisance may have a hearing with the Council as to whether a nuisance exists. A request for a hearing must be made in writing and delivered to the Clerk within the time stated in the notice, or it will be conclusively presumed that a nuisance exists and it must be abated as ordered. The hearing will be before the Council at a time and place fixed by the Council. The findings of the Council shall be conclusive and, if a nuisance is found to exist, it shall be ordered abated within a reasonable time under the circumstances.
4. Abatement in Emergency. If it is determined that an emergency exists by reason of the continuing maintenance of the nuisance or condition, the City may perform any action that may be required under this chapter without prior notice. The City shall assess the costs as provided in subsection 6 of this section after notice to the property owner under the applicable provisions of subsection 1 and 2, and the hearing as provided in subsection 3.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3h])
5. Abatement by City. If the person notified to abate a nuisance or condition neglects or fails to abate as directed, the City may perform the required action to abate, keeping an accurate account of the expense incurred. The itemized expense account shall be filed with the Clerk, who shall pay such expenses on behalf of the City.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3h])
6. Collection of Costs. The Clerk shall send a statement of the total expense incurred by certified mail to the property owner who has failed to abide by the notice to abate, and if the amount shown by the statement has not been paid within one month, the Clerk shall certify the costs to the County Treasurer and such costs shall then be collected with, and in the same manner as, general property taxes.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3h])
7. Installment Payment of Cost of Abatement. If the amount expended to abate the nuisance or condition exceeds five hundred dollars (\$500.00), the City may permit the assessment to be paid in up to ten (10) annual installments, to be paid in the same manner and with the same interest rates provided for assessments against benefited property under State law.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.13)

8. Failure to Abate. Any person causing or maintaining a nuisance who shall fail or refuse to abate or remove the same within the reasonable time required and specified in the notice to abate is in violation of this Code of Ordinances.

50.07 MUNICIPAL INFRACTION ABATEMENT PROCEDURE. In lieu of the abatement procedures set forth in Section 50.06, the requirements of this chapter may be enforced under the procedures applicable to municipal infractions as set forth in Chapter 3 of this Code of Ordinances.

CHAPTER 51

JUNK AND JUNK VEHICLES

51.01 Definitions

51.02 Junk and Junk Vehicles Prohibited

51.03 Junk and Junk Vehicles a Nuisance

51.04 Exceptions

51.05 Notice to Abate

51.01 DEFINITIONS. For use in this chapter, the following terms are defined:

1. "Junk" means all old or scrap copper, brass, lead, or any other non-ferrous metal; old or discarded rope, rags, batteries, paper, trash, rubber, debris, waste or used lumber, or salvaged wood; dismantled vehicles, machinery and appliances or parts of such vehicles, machinery or appliances; iron, steel or other old or scrap ferrous materials; old or discarded glass, tinware, plastic or old or discarded household goods or hardware. Neatly stacked firewood located on a side yard or a rear yard is not considered junk.
2. "Junk vehicle" means any vehicle legally placed in storage with the County Treasurer or unlicensed and having any of the following characteristics:
 - A. Broken Glass. Any vehicle with a broken or cracked windshield, window, headlight or tail light, or any other cracked or broken glass.
 - B. Broken, Loose, or Missing Part. Any vehicle with a broken, loose, or missing fender, door, bumper, hood, steering wheel or trunk lid.
 - C. Habitat for Nuisance Animals or Insects. Any vehicle that has become the habitat for rats, mice, snakes, or any other vermin or insects.
 - D. Flammable Fuel. Any vehicle that contains gasoline or any other flammable fuel.
 - E. Inoperable. Any motor vehicle that lacks an engine or two or more wheels or other structural parts, rendering said motor vehicle totally inoperable, or that cannot be moved under its own power or has not been used as an operating vehicle for a period of thirty (30) days or more.
 - F. Defective or Obsolete Condition. Any other vehicle that, because of its defective or obsolete condition, in any other way constitutes a threat to the public health and safety.

Mere licensing of such vehicle shall not constitute a defense to the finding that the vehicle is a junk vehicle.

3. "Vehicle" means every device in, upon, or by which a person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway or street, except devices moved by human power or used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks, and includes without limitation a motor vehicle, automobile, truck, motorcycle, tractor, buggy, wagon, farm machinery, or any combination thereof.

51.02 JUNK AND JUNK VEHICLES PROHIBITED. It is unlawful for any person to store, accumulate, or allow to remain on any private property within the corporate limits of the City any junk or junk vehicle.

51.03 JUNK AND JUNK VEHICLES A NUISANCE. It is hereby declared that any junk or junk vehicle located upon private property, unless excepted by Section 51.04, constitutes a threat to the health and safety of the citizens and is a nuisance within the meaning of Section 657.1 of the *Code of Iowa*. If any junk or junk vehicle is kept upon private property in violation hereof, the owner or person occupying the property upon which it is located shall be prima facie liable for said violation.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3a])

51.04 EXCEPTIONS. The provisions of this chapter do not apply to any junk or a junk vehicle stored within a garage or other enclosed structure.

51.05 NOTICE TO ABATE. Upon discovery of any junk or junk vehicle located upon private property in violation of Section 51.03, the City shall within five (5) days initiate abatement procedures as outlined in Chapter 50 of this Code of Ordinances.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 364.12[3a])

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CHAPTER 52

WEEDS

52.01 When a Nuisance
52.02 Opportunity to Abate
52.03 Request for Hearing

52.04 Abatement
52.05 Fees

52.01 WHEN A NUISANCE. Whenever an officer of the City government determines that grasses and/or weeds within 300 feet of established buildings are more than eight inches high, those grasses and weeds shall constitute a public nuisance.

52.02 OPPORTUNITY TO ABATE. A written notice or a verbal notice shall be given to the landowner when it is determined that weeds and grasses constitute a nuisance. Said landowner shall have seven (7) days in which to cut the weeds and grasses or to request a hearing before the City officer giving notice.

52.03 REQUEST FOR HEARING. The landowner may request a hearing before the officer giving notice by either verbal or written request addressed to the said officer. The said officer may in his or her discretion deny an appeal of the hearing to the City Council.

52.04 ABATEMENT. If, after due notice, any weeds and/or grasses have not been cut, the City or its contractor shall cut the weeds and/or grasses.

52.05 FEES. The City shall bill the landowner for costs incurred by the City in cutting the grass or weeds and administrative costs as are reasonably assignable to providing for notice and hearing in accordance with a fee schedule set by the City Council by resolution. Fees not collected within 60 days of billing may be certified by the City Clerk to the County Treasurer and assessed against the property served and collected in the manner of property taxes.

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CHAPTER 55

ANIMAL PROTECTION AND CONTROL

55.01 Definitions
55.02 Animal Neglect
55.03 Livestock Neglect
55.04 Abandonment of Cats and Dogs
55.05 Livestock
55.06 At Large Prohibited
55.07 Damage or Interference
55.08 Annoyance or Disturbance

55.09 Rabies Vaccination
55.10 Owner's Duty
55.11 Confinement
55.12 At Large: Impoundment
55.13 Disposition of Animals
55.14 Impounding and Disposal Costs
55.15 Pet Awards Prohibited

55.01 DEFINITIONS. The following terms are defined for use in this chapter.

1. "Advertise" means to present a commercial message in any medium including but not limited to print, radio, television, sign, display, label, tag or articulation.
2. "Animal" means a nonhuman vertebrate.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 717B.1)
3. "At large" means off the premises of the owner and not under the control of a competent person, restrained within a motor vehicle, or housed in a veterinary hospital or kennel.
4. "Business" means any enterprise relating to any of the following:
 - A. The sale or offer for sale of goods or services.
 - B. A recruitment for employment or membership in an organization.
 - C. A solicitation to make an investment.
 - D. An amusement or entertainment activity.
5. "Fair" means any of the following:
 - A. The annual fair and exposition held by the Iowa State Fair Board pursuant to Chapter 173 of the *Code of Iowa* or any fair event conducted by a fair under the provisions of Chapter 174 of the *Code of Iowa*.
 - B. An exhibition of agricultural or manufactured products.
 - C. An event for operation of amusement rides or devices or concession booths.
6. "Game" means a "game of chance" or "game of skill" as defined in Section 99B.1 of the *Code of Iowa*.
7. "Livestock" means an animal belonging to the bovine, caprine, equine, ovine or porcine species, ostriches, rheas and emus; farm deer as defined in Section 170.1 of the *Code of Iowa*; or poultry.
(Code of Iowa, Sec. 717.1)
8. "Owner" means any person owning, keeping, sheltering or harboring an animal.

9. "Pet" means a living dog, cat, or an animal normally maintained in a small tank or cage in or near a residence, including but not limited to a rabbit, gerbil, hamster, mouse, parrot, canary, mynah, finch, tropical fish, goldfish, snake, turtle, gecko, or iguana.

55.02 ANIMAL NEGLECT. It is unlawful for a person who impounds or confines, in any place, an animal, excluding livestock, to fail to supply the animal during confinement with a sufficient quantity of food or water, or to fail to provide a confined dog or cat with adequate shelter, or to torture, deprive of necessary sustenance, mutilate, beat, or kill such animal by any means that causes unjustified pain, distress or suffering.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 717B.3)

55.03 LIVESTOCK NEGLECT. It is unlawful for a person who impounds or confines livestock in any place to fail to provide the livestock with care consistent with customary animal husbandry practices or to deprive the livestock of necessary sustenance or to injure or destroy livestock by any means that causes pain or suffering in a manner inconsistent with customary animal husbandry practices.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 717.2)

55.04 ABANDONMENT OF CATS AND DOGS. A person who has ownership or custody of a cat or dog shall not abandon the cat or dog, except the person may deliver the cat or dog to another person who will accept ownership and custody or the person may deliver the cat or dog to an animal shelter or pound.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 717B.8)

55.05 LIVESTOCK. It is unlawful for a person to keep livestock within the City except by written consent of the Council or except in compliance with the City's zoning regulations.

55.06 AT LARGE PROHIBITED. It is unlawful for any owner to allow an animal to run at large within the corporate limits of the City.

55.07 DAMAGE OR INTERFERENCE. It is unlawful for the owner of an animal to allow or permit such animal to pass upon the premises of another thereby causing damage to, or interference with, the premises.

55.08 ANNOYANCE OR DISTURBANCE. It is unlawful for the owner of a dog to allow or permit such dog to cause serious annoyance or disturbance to any person by frequent and habitual howling, yelping, barking, or otherwise, or by running after or chasing persons, bicycles, automobiles or other vehicles.

55.09 RABIES VACCINATION. Every owner of a dog shall obtain a rabies vaccination for such animal. It is unlawful for any person to own or have a dog in said person's possession, six months of age or over, which has not been vaccinated against rabies. Dogs kept in State or Federally licensed kennels and not allowed to run at large are not subject to these vaccination requirements.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 351.33)

55.10 OWNER'S DUTY. It is the duty of the owner of any dog, cat, or other animal that has bitten or attacked a person or any person having knowledge of such bite or attack to report this act to a local health or law enforcement official. It is the duty of physicians and

veterinarians to report to the local board of health the existence of any animal known or suspected to be suffering from rabies.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 351.38)

55.11 CONFINEMENT. If a local board of health receives information that an animal has bitten a person or that a dog or animal is suspected of having rabies, the board shall order the owner to confine such animal in the manner it directs. If the owner fails to confine such animal in the manner directed, the animal shall be apprehended and impounded by such board, and after ten (10) days the board may humanely destroy the animal. If such animal is returned to its owner, the owner shall pay the cost of impoundment. This section does not apply if a police service dog or a horse used by a law enforcement agency and acting in the performance of its duties has bitten a person.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 351.39)

55.12 AT LARGE: IMPOUNDMENT. Animals found at large in violation of this chapter shall be seized and impounded, or at the discretion of the peace officer, the owner may be served a summons to appear before a proper court to answer charges made thereunder.

55.13 DISPOSITION OF ANIMALS. When an animal has been apprehended and impounded, written notice shall be provided to the owner within two (2) days after impoundment, if the owner's name and current address can reasonably be determined by accessing a tag or other device that is on or part of the animal. Impounded animals may be recovered by the owner upon payment of impounding costs, and if an unvaccinated dog, by having it immediately vaccinated. If the owner fails to redeem the animal within seven (7) days from the date that the notice is mailed, or if the owner cannot be located within seven days, the animal shall be delivered to the Humane Society or similar shelter, or otherwise disposed of in accordance with law, or destroyed by euthanasia.

(Code of Iowa, Sec. 351.37, 351.41)

55.14 IMPOUNDING AND DISPOSAL COSTS. Impounding costs are \$25.00 for the first day or any part thereof, and the daily fee per day as charged by an approved veterinary clinic for the remainder of the time held in that facility, plus actual costs for disposal of the animal if the owner does not redeem the animal; or alternatively, \$25.00 for the first day or any part thereof, and \$7.00 per day thereafter if the animal is impounded in a City kennel. The second time the animal is picked up by the City and any subsequent time thereafter, the impoundment fee shall be \$50.00 for the first day or any part thereof, and the daily fee per day as charged by an approved veterinary clinic for the remainder of the time held in that facility, plus actual costs for disposal of the animal if the owner does not redeem the animal. If the owner is not known, the City shall bear the actual impounding and disposal costs.

55.15 PET AWARDS PROHIBITED.

(Code of Iowa, Ch. 717E)

1. Prohibition. It is unlawful for any person to award a pet or advertise that a pet may be awarded as any of the following:
 - A. A prize for participating in a game.
 - B. A prize for participating in a fair.
 - C. An inducement or condition for visiting a place of business or attending an event sponsored by a business.

- D. An inducement or condition for executing a contract that includes provisions unrelated to the ownership, care or disposition of the pet.
2. Exceptions. This section does not apply to any of the following:
- A. A pet shop licensed pursuant to Section 162.5 of the *Code of Iowa* if the award of a pet is provided in connection with the sale of a pet on the premises of the pet shop.
- B. Youth programs associated with 4-H Clubs; Future Farmers of America; the Izaak Walton League of America; or organizations associated with outdoor recreation, hunting or fishing, including but not limited to the Iowa Sportsmen's Federation.

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CHAPTER 56

DANGEROUS AND VICIOUS ANIMALS

56.01 Definitions

56.02 Keeping of Dangerous Animals Prohibited

56.03 Keeping of Vicious Animals Prohibited

56.04 Seizure, Impoundment and Disposition

56.01 DEFINITIONS. For use in this chapter, the following terms are defined:

1. "Dangerous animal" means[†]:
 - A. Badgers, wolverines, weasels, skunk and mink;
 - B. Raccoons;
 - C. Bats;
 - D. Scorpions.
2. "Vicious animal" means any animal, except for a dangerous animal per se, as listed above, which has bitten or clawed a person or persons while running at large and the attack was unprovoked, or any animal that has exhibited vicious tendencies in present or past conduct, including such that said animal: (i) has bitten or clawed a person or persons on two separate occasions within a 12-month period; or (ii) did bite or claw once causing injuries above the shoulders of a person; or (iii) could not be controlled or restrained by the owner at the time of the attack to prevent the occurrence; or (iv) has attacked any domestic animal or fowl on three separate occasions within a 12-month period.

56.02 KEEPING OF DANGEROUS ANIMALS PROHIBITED. No person shall keep, shelter, or harbor any dangerous animal as a pet, or act as a temporary custodian for such animal, or keep, shelter, or harbor such animal for any purpose or in any capacity within the City.

56.03 KEEPING OF VICIOUS ANIMALS PROHIBITED. No person shall keep, shelter, or harbor for any reason within the City a vicious animal except in the following circumstances:

1. Animals under the control of a law enforcement or military agency.
2. The keeping of guard dogs; however, guard dogs must be kept within a structure or fixed enclosure at all times, and any guard dog found at large may be processed as a vicious animal pursuant to the provisions of this chapter. Any premises guarded by a guard dog shall be prominently posted with a sign containing the wording "Guard Dog," "Vicious Dog," or words of similar import, and the owner of such premises shall inform the Mayor or peace officer that a guard dog is on duty at said premises.

[†] **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Certain other dangerous animals, listed in Chapter 717F.1, paragraph 5a, of the *Code of Iowa*, are specifically prohibited and regulated by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

56.04 SEIZURE, IMPOUNDMENT AND DISPOSITION.

1. In the event that a dangerous animal or vicious animal is found at large and unattended upon public property, park property, public right-of-way or the property of someone other than its owner, thereby creating a hazard to persons or property, such animal may, in the discretion of the Mayor or Police Chief, be destroyed if it cannot be confined or captured. The City shall be under no duty to attempt the confinement or capture of a dangerous animal or vicious animal found at large, nor shall it have a duty to notify the owner of such animal prior to its destruction.

2. Upon the complaint of any individual that a person is keeping, sheltering, or harboring a dangerous animal or vicious animal on premises in the City, the Mayor shall cause the matter to be investigated and if after investigation, the facts indicate that the person named in the complaint is keeping, sheltering, or harboring a dangerous or vicious animal in the City, the Mayor shall order the person named in the complaint to safely remove such animal from the City or destroy the animal within three (3) days of the receipt of such an order. Such order shall be contained in a notice to remove the dangerous or vicious animal, which notice shall be given in writing to the person keeping, sheltering or harboring the dangerous animal or vicious animal, and shall be served personally or by certified mail. Such order and notice to remove the dangerous animal or vicious animal shall not be required where such animal has previously caused serious physical harm or death to any person, in which case the Mayor shall cause the animal to be immediately seized and impounded or killed if seizure and impoundment are not possible without risk of serious physical harm or death to any person.

3. The order to remove a dangerous animal or vicious animal issued by the Mayor may be appealed to the Council. In order to appeal such order, written notice of appeal must be filed with the Clerk within three (3) days after receipt of the order contained in the notice to remove the dangerous or vicious animal. Failure to file such written notice of appeal shall constitute a waiver of the right to appeal the order of the Mayor.

4. The notice of appeal shall state the grounds for such appeal and shall be delivered personally or by certified mail to the Clerk. The hearing of such appeal shall be scheduled within seven (7) days of the receipt of the notice of appeal. The hearing may be continued for good cause. After such hearing, the Council may affirm or reverse the order of the Mayor. Such determination shall be contained in a written decision and shall be filed with the Clerk within three (3) days after the hearing or any continued session thereof.

5. If the Council affirms the action of the Mayor, the Council shall order in its written decision that the person owning, sheltering, harboring or keeping such dangerous or vicious animal remove such animal from the City or destroy it. The decision and order shall immediately be served upon the person against whom rendered in the same manner as the notice of removal. If the original order of the Mayor is not appealed and is not complied with within three (3) days or the order of the Council after appeal is not complied with within three (3) days of its issuance, the Mayor or Police Chief is authorized to seize, impound or destroy such dangerous or vicious animal. Failure to comply with an order of the Mayor issued pursuant to this chapter and not appealed, or of the Council after appeal, constitutes a simple misdemeanor.

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