

DANGEROUS DOGS

BARC receives nearly 40,000 service requests a year involving dogs. In most cases the situation does not involve an immediate threat to public safety, and can be resolved with education, warnings, or citations to owners of dogs that violate the law. In some cases, however, the dog or dogs involved do present a serious threat to the public.

The State of Texas Health and Safety Code defines a Dangerous Dog as one that either:

- 1. makes an unprovoked attack on a person that causes bodily injury and occurs in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own, or;***
- 2. commits unprovoked acts in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own and those acts cause a person to reasonably believe that the dog will attack and cause bodily injury to that person.***

The City of Houston has an Article in Chapter 6 of the Code of Ordinances that created a procedure to address Dangerous Dogs.

- To begin the process, a person must make a sworn complaint to BARC, in the form of a notarized affidavit, that an owned dog (or dogs) living within the city limits is dangerous.
- The complaint is reviewed by the Animal Control Managers. If the case meets the state definition for a Dangerous Dog, the managers will cause an investigation to be conducted.
- If, upon completion of the investigation, the Animal Control Manager believes that grounds exist to declare a dog dangerous, he will issue a written order to the dog owner for the dog to be impounded at the city facility pending a hearing.
- The Hearing Officer will weigh the evidence from both the city and the dog owner, and make a determination on the case.
- If the decision is that the dog is not dangerous, it will be returned to the owner.
- If the dog is determined to be dangerous and killed or caused serious bodily injury to a human being, it may be ordered euthanized.
- If the dog is determined to be dangerous, and not euthanized, the dog will be held at the city facility and the owner given thirty days to comply with the conditions ordered by the Hearing Officer. If the owner fails to comply, the dog's disposition is decided by the Animal Control Managers and Veterinary staff.
- Affidavits may be mailed to 3200 Carr Street, Houston, 77026 Attn. Animal Control. Please contact BARC at 311 or 713-229-7300 for questions and assistance