

TOO MANY CATS? DOGS VISITING UNANNOUNCED? SOME INSIGHT INTO THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING OUR PETS



The State mandates that, in rabies endemic areas, all dogs over the age of 4 months be vaccinated against the rabies virus and must also be contained or controlled by an owner. San Joaquin County is considered to be a rabies endemic area. This gives Animal Services the authority to impound a stray or uncontrolled dog. It also gives Animal Services the authority to issue citations for violating these laws. In Lathrop, as in other cities, dogs are not allowed to run free off of your property, nor are they allowed to be on your property unrestrained, unless the dog is in a completely fenced yard. This means that your dog must be tethered or leashed, even in your front yard, if the yard is not completely enclosed.

These laws are in place to protect your neighbors, other citizens and other animals from dogs wandering off their own property. Not only can wandering dogs be considered a threat to some people and other animals, but they are also a nuisance to those who choose not to have dogs. This holds true for cats as well.

SHOULD I FEED STRAY CATS? NO. It may be a lot of fun and it may make you feel good, but it will always result in an overpopulation of unhealthy and suffering animals. We've seen it too many times - people feed stray cats, the population explodes, and the whole lot ultimately ends up underfed, flea-ridden and diseased. If you want a pet cat and choose to take in a stray, you must be willing to take responsibility for vaccinations, spay/neuter, and any and all other care that the cat may require. Otherwise do not feed wild/feral/stray cats or any other wildlife. Lathrop city ordinance defines "Ownership" as: any person, keeping, harboring, controlling, having custody of, or possessing one or more animals for a period of not less than seventy-two (72) hours. If an animal has been reported to Animal Services as sick or injured and you meet the definition of "Ownership" (ie: by feeding the animal for 72 hrs) you will be held responsible for any fees incurred by that animal, ie: veterinary fees, impound fees, emergency fees etc.

Unlike dogs, there are no State laws governing cats. In the absence of any State regulations, Animal Services has no authority to impound stray cats; cats are considered to be free-roaming. We can, and do, however, provide the general public a place to take stray and unwanted cats – our contract shelter located in Manteca at 208 E. Wetmore St. Shelter hours are 10:00am -4:45pm daily. Some cats are not as easy to catch as others so cat traps are available to rent or purchase at Old McGowan's Feed, 398 Lathrop Rd., Manteca. The trap rental fee is \$5.00 per day with a refundable \$50.00 deposit. You can also call other pet supply businesses to see if they too have traps available. Once trapped, the trapper is legally obligated to take the cat to the shelter within their jurisdiction. All Lathrop animals are to be taken to the Manteca shelter.

PLEASE HELP CONTROL THE STRAY CAT PROBLEM:

- 1) DO NOT FEED STRAY CATS**
- 2) DO NOT ABANDON YOUR PET CAT**
- 3) HAVE YOUR CAT SPAYED OR NEUTERED**

If you own pets, please be considerate of your neighbors and let's keep our neighborhoods safe.