

# **PROPOSED LIFETIME DOG LICENSES**

**Presented to the  
Northumberland County Board of Supervisors**

**Thursday, August 10, 2023**

**Prepared by Ellen Booker Kirby, Treasurer**

## **DOCUMENTS:**

Proposed Lifetime Dog Licenses Information

Additional Information:

Dog License Sales Comparison

Revenue Impact of Lifetime Dog Licenses

15 Year Dog Tag Revenue Report

Proposed Changes to Northumberland County Ordinance 34-1

Code of Virginia Sections 3.2-6524, 3.2-6528, 3.2-6530

# Proposed Lifetime Dog License

## Recommendation

Replace the annual individual dog license with a lifetime dog license of \$20.00 effective January 1, 2024. New lifetime tags would go on sale in the fall of 2023. Other licenses (kennel, vicious and dangerous dog, replacement tag) will remain the same. This would make getting a dog license more convenient for County residents. The cost of administering the dog licenses would decrease. While revenue would double the first year, it would decline in subsequent years; however, the costs associated with administering the dog tags would also be reduced.

## Provision for a Lifetime Dog License

Virginia Code section 3.2-6524 requires that all dogs four months of age or older be licensed. Section 3.2-6528 of the Code of Virginia gives localities the option of providing a lifetime license to dog owners. The lifetime license is valid for the lifetime of the dog, as long as the dog's rabies vaccination remains up to date. If the rabies inoculation expires, the dog owner would have to purchase a new lifetime dog license. Annual licenses would no longer be available.

## Proposed Cost of Lifetime Dog License

Code of Virginia section 3.2-6528 provides for a maximum of \$50 for the lifetime license. The treasurer proposes a license fee of \$20 for the lifetime dog tag which is in line with most of the jurisdictions now issuing lifetime tags. There would be no refund or proration of the license fee.

## Proof of Rabies Vaccination is Required

To purchase a lifetime license, the dog owner will need to provide the dog's current rabies certificate. Veterinarians are also required by law to send a copy of all dog vaccinations performed and all relevant information to the Treasurer's office. We will use these to update the dog's record. We may also request proof of re-vaccination if the veterinarian fails to send us a report or omits the dog's record.

## No change to the 20 Dog Kennel Licenses

The lifetime license does not affect kennel licenses. Kennel tags are available for annual purchase at a cost of \$ 40 for a kennel with up to 20 dogs. There would be no change to kennel licenses.

### Enforcement Remains the Same

The Animal Control Division of the Northumberland County Sheriff's Office is responsible for enforcement of licensing of animals. The Treasurer's office would continue to provide reports to Animal Control to aid in their enforcement. Failure to comply constitutes a Class 4 misdemeanor and may result in possible confiscation of the dog by the court.

### Benefits of a Lifetime Tag:

- Less burden on citizens by saving time and money over the life of the dog.
- Reduces staff time and the expense of yearly renewal mailings.
- Tag inventory will be less expensive, easier to store and manage.
- Revenue has been steadily on the decline. An uptick may occur initially and then will level off. Eventual revenue loss will be offset by reduced annual processing costs of tags and mailing annual and renewal notices. Annual cost (not including staff time) average \$3,000.

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**DOG LICENSE SALES IN  
NORTHERN NECK COUNTIES  
DATA COMPARISON**

<b>FY22</b>	<b>Number of TAGS SOLD</b>	<b>FEES - Male/Female</b>	<b>FEES - Spayed/ Neutered</b>	<b>FEES-Kennel 20 dog/50 dog</b>	<b>REVENUE</b>
Northumberland	2300	\$ 8.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 14,721
Lancaster	1235	\$ 8.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 4,869
Westmoreland	741	\$ 10.00	\$ 5.00	\$40/\$50	\$ 5,655
Richmond	470	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 2,766

Note: Revenue is from FY22 audited financial statements except Lancaster County (FY21)

**REVENUE IMPACT OF LIFETIME LICENSE FEES**

<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>Number of TAGS SOLD</b>	<b>LICENSE FEE</b>	<b>TOTAL CURRENT REVENUE</b>	<b>REVENUE @ \$20 LIFETIME FEE</b>
Male/Female	393	\$ 8.00	\$ 3,144	\$ 7,860
Spayed/Neutered	1633	\$ 5.00	\$ 8,165	\$ 32,660
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2026</b>		<b>\$ 11,309</b>	<b>\$ 40,520</b>

XPRT BROWSE PRINTOUT  
 Module [FINMGT] Screen [REVENUE ACCOUNTS YEAR BROWSE]  
 NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
 Executed By: ellen

FISCAL ACCOUNT CODE	ACTIVE	AMENDED	ESTIMATED	REVENUE	POSTED	REVENUE	UNREALIZED	REVENUE	BUDGET	AMENDMENTS
2009 10-1300-130100	Yes	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	16,713.00	\$	1,713.00-	\$	0.00
2010 10-1300-130100	Yes	No	\$	28,835.00	\$	18,661.00	\$	10,174.00	\$	0.00
2011 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	18,000.00	\$	18,788.00	\$	788.00-	\$	0.00
2012 10-1300-130100	Yes	No	\$	18,000.00	\$	17,714.00	\$	286.00	\$	0.00
2013 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	19,000.00	\$	18,656.00	\$	344.00	\$	0.00
2014 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	18,000.00	\$	17,173.00	\$	827.00	\$	0.00
2015 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	18,000.00	\$	16,308.00	\$	1,692.00	\$	0.00
2016 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	17,000.00	\$	15,690.00	\$	1,310.00	\$	0.00
2017 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	17,000.00	\$	15,254.00	\$	1,746.00	\$	0.00
2018 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	17,000.00	\$	15,229.00	\$	1,771.00	\$	0.00
2019 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	18,184.00	\$	3,184.00-	\$	0.00
2020 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	16,072.00	\$	1,072.00-	\$	0.00
2021 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	15,951.00	\$	951.00-	\$	0.00
2022 10-1300-130100	No	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	14,721.00	\$	279.00	\$	0.00
2023 10-1300-130100	Yes	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	13,227.00	\$	1,773.00	\$	0.00
2024 10-1300-130100	Yes	No	\$	15,000.00	\$	69.00	\$	14,931.00	\$	0.00

ACTIVE TOTAL: 5  
 AMENDED TOTAL: 0  
 RECORD COUNT: 16  
 ESTIMATED REVENUE AMENDMENTS TOTAL: \$ 0.00  
 ANNUAL ESTIMATED REVENUE TOTAL: \$ 275,835.00  
 ANNUAL POSTED REVENUE TOTAL: \$ 248,410.00  
 ANNUAL UNREALIZED REVENUE TOTAL: \$ 27,425.00

# Northumberland County, VA

## Part II: General Legislation / Animals

### **Article I: Licensing of Dogs**

[Adopted 12-15-1958]

#### § 34-1 License required; duration; license tax; rabies certificate required.

##### A.

It shall be unlawful for any person to own a dog four months old or over in Northumberland County, Virginia, unless such dog is licensed as provided by the provisions of this article.

[Amended 8-13-1998]

##### B.

~~A dog license shall run by the calendar year from January 1 to December 31, inclusive, and the license tax, which shall be the only license tax on dogs in this County, shall be payable at the office of the County Treasurer and shall be as follows:~~

~~[Amended 11-1-1965; 7-10-1975; 8-29-1977; 10-11-1979; 3-9-1982; 11-1-1989]~~

##### ~~(1)~~

~~Neutered: \$5.~~

##### ~~(2)~~

~~Unneutered: \$8.~~

##### ~~(3)~~

~~Kennel for 20 dogs: \$40.<sup>(1)</sup>~~

##### ~~(1)~~

~~*Editor's Note: The fee for a kennel holding 50 dogs or more, which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 8-13-1998.*~~

##### ~~(4)~~

~~Duplicate tags: \$1.~~

##### C.

No license shall be issued unless the rabies certificate is still valid after June 30 of the license year.

B.

Effective **September 14, 2023**, dog licenses shall be valid for the lifetime of the licensed dog, as long as the dog's rabies vaccination is kept current. Upon expiration of a rabies vaccination, a dog license is no longer valid. The lifetime license will once again be valid upon renewal of the dog's rabies vaccination.

Kennel licenses shall be valid for one (1) calendar year, namely from January 1 to December 31, inclusive.

[1]

*Editor's Note: The fee for a kennel holding 50 dogs or more, which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 8-13-1998.*

### § 34-2 **Payment of license tax.**

~~License tags on dogs shall be due and payable as follows:~~

~~**A.**~~

~~On or before January 1 and not later than January 31 of each year, the owner of any dog four months old or older shall pay a license tax as prescribed in this article.~~

~~**B.**~~

~~If a dog shall become four months of age or come into the possession of any person between January 1 and November 1 of any year, the license tax for the current calendar year shall be paid forthwith by the owner.~~

~~**C.**~~

~~If a dog shall become four months of age or come into possession of any person between October 31 and December 31 of any year, the license tax for the succeeding calendar year shall be paid forthwith by the owner, and such license shall protect such dog from the date of purchase.~~

**A.**

Effective **September 14, 2023**, a license tax is hereby imposed on dogs required to be licensed under this division, in the following amounts:

1. For each individual dog: Lifetime license \$20.00.
2. Private or commercial kennel for twenty (20) dogs or less, for the period of one (1) calendar year: \$ 40.00.
3. Duplicate tags: \$1.00.

**B.**

The kennel license shall be in lieu of the tax on individual dogs therein.

C.

No license tax shall be levied under this section on any dog that is trained and serves as a guide dog for a blind person, that is trained and serves as a hearing dog for a deaf or hearing-impaired person, or that is trained and serves as a service dog for a mobility-impaired person or person who has a physical, sensory, intellectual, developmental or mental disability or mental illness.

D.

Refunds for portions of the license tax shall not be permitted.

#### § 34-3 **Payment of tax subsequent to a summons.**

Payment of the license tax subsequent to a summons to appear before a trial justice or other court for failure to do so within the time required shall not operate to relieve such owner from the penalties provided.

#### § 34-4 **Dogs without license tags deemed to be unlicensed.**

Any dog not wearing a collar bearing a license tag of the proper calendar year shall prima facie be deemed to be unlicensed, and in any proceeding under this article, the burden of proof of the fact that such dog has been licensed, or is otherwise not required to bear a tag at the time, shall be upon the owner of the dog.

#### § 34-5 **Applications for dog license; issuance of receipt and tag or plates.**

[Amended 8-13-1998]

Any person may obtain a dog license by making oral or written applications to the Treasurer of Northumberland County, accompanied by the amount of the license tax. Upon receipt of proper application and the proper amount of license tax, the Treasurer, or other officer charged with the duty of issuing dog licenses, shall issue a license receipt for the amount, on which he or she shall record the name and address of the owner or custodian, the date of payment, the year for which issued and the serial number of the tag, and deliver the metal license tag or plates.

#### § 34-6 **Statutory authority.**

[Amended 8-13-1998]

This article is pursuant to § ~~3-1-796.84~~ **3.2-6521-6536** of the Code of Virginia and its amendments thereto.

#### § 34-7 **Violations and penalties.**

[Amended 8-13-1998; 3-14-2002]

A civil penalty of \$25 for the first violation, \$75 for the second violation and \$150 for the third or subsequent violation shall be imposed upon any person who shall make a false statement in order to secure a dog license to which he or she is not entitled. A civil penalty in the amount of the license tax for the first violation and in the amount of the license tax plus \$10 for a second or subsequent violation shall be imposed upon any person who fails to pay the license tax prior to February 1 of any year or is otherwise provided in this article on any dog owned by him or her, and said person shall be required to obtain the proper license forthwith; and unless the penalty and license tax is immediately paid, a court of competent jurisdiction may order the dog killed by the Animal Warden or some other officer; but the killing of such dog shall not relieve its owner of payment of the penalty and license tax already due. A civil penalty of \$150 shall be imposed for any other violation of this article for which a specific penalty is not provided.

**§ 34-8 Impoundment; reclaiming fee; boarding fee.**

[Added 8-14-1975; amended 8-13-1998]

**A.**

The Board of Supervisors shall cause to be constructed and maintained a pound or enclosure of a type approved by the County Health Department, and shall require dogs running at large without tags as herein provided to be confined therein by the Animal Warden.

**B.**

As provided in the Code of Virginia § 3.1-796.96, the court may turn over a dog for disposition to the Animal Control Officer.

[Amended 9-11-2003]

**C.**

As provided in the Code of Virginia § 3.1-796-94, the owner must claim any dog picked up by the Animal Control Officer for running at large after notice is given from said Officer. A reclaiming fee will be assessed in the amount of \$25 for the first incident, \$50 for the second incident and \$100 for each incident thereafter.

[Added 9-11-2003]

**D.**

As provided in the Code of Virginia § 3.1-796.94, after notice to the owner any dog not picked up from the pound within 24 hours will be charged a boarding fee of \$15 per day.

[Added 9-11-2003]

Code of Virginia  
Title 3.2. Agriculture, Animal Care, and Food  
Chapter 65. Comprehensive Animal Care

**§ 3.2-6524. Unlicensed dogs prohibited; ordinances for licensing cats.**

A. It shall be unlawful for any person other than a releasing agency that has registered as such annually with local animal control to own a dog four months old or older in the Commonwealth unless such dog is licensed, as required by the provisions of this article.

B. The governing body of any locality may, by ordinance, prohibit any person other than a releasing agency that has registered as such annually with local animal control from owning a cat four months old or older within such locality unless such cat is licensed as provided by this article.

1984, c. 492, § 29-213.55; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.85; 1988, c. 538; 1993, c. 817; 2007, c. [640](#); 2008, c. [860](#).

Code of Virginia  
Title 3.2. Agriculture, Animal Care, and Food  
Chapter 65. Comprehensive Animal Care

**§ 3.2-6528. Amount of license tax.**

The governing body of each county or city shall impose by ordinance a license tax on the ownership of dogs within its jurisdiction. The governing body of any locality that has adopted an ordinance pursuant to subsection B of § [3.2-6524](#) shall impose by ordinance a license tax on the ownership of cats within its jurisdiction. The governing body may establish different rates of taxation for ownership of female dogs, male dogs, spayed or neutered dogs, female cats, male cats, and spayed or neutered cats. The tax for each dog or cat shall not be more than \$10 for each year or \$50 for a lifetime license issued pursuant to subsection B of § [3.2-6530](#). If the dog or cat has been spayed, the tax shall not exceed the tax provided for a male dog or cat. Any ordinance may provide for an annual license tax for kennels of 10, 20, 30, 40, or 50 dogs or cats not to exceed \$50 for any one such block of kennels.

No license tax shall be levied on any dog that is trained and serves as (i) a guide dog for a blind person, (ii) a hearing dog for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, or (iii) a service dog for a mobility-impaired or otherwise disabled person.

As used in this section, "hearing dog," "mobility-impaired person," "otherwise disabled person," and "service dog" have the same meanings as assigned in § [51.5-40.1](#).

1984, cc. 248, 492, § 29-213.57; 1986, c. 169; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.87; 1993, c. 817; 1994, c. [108](#); 2006, c. [836](#); 2008, c. [860](#); 2014, c. [616](#); 2017, cc. [559](#), [567](#); 2019, c. [288](#).

Code of Virginia  
Title 3.2. Agriculture, Animal Care, and Food  
Chapter 65. Comprehensive Animal Care

**§ 3.2-6530. When license tax payable.**

A. The license tax as prescribed in § 3.2-6528 is due not later than 30 days after a dog or cat has reached the age of four months, or not later than 30 days after an owner acquires a dog or cat four months of age or older, and each year thereafter.

Licensing periods for individual dogs and cats may be equal to and may run concurrently with the rabies vaccination effective period.

B. The governing body of a county or city may by ordinance provide for a lifetime dog or cat license. Such a license shall be valid only as long as the animal's owner resides in the issuing locality and the animal's rabies vaccination is kept current.

C. Any kennel license tax prescribed pursuant to § 3.2-6528 shall be due on January 1 and not later than January 31 of each year.

1984, cc. 248, 492, § 29-213.58; 1986, c. 169; 1987, c. 488, § 3.1-796.88; 1990, c. 365; 1993, c. 817; 2006, c. 836; 2008, c. 860; 2017, cc. 559, 567.