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Table of State Dog Tether Laws

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Summary:

This brief overview describes state laws that concern the tethering or chaining of dogs. It also includes a table of those state laws dealing with tethering with links to the text of the laws.

“In which states is it illegal to chain or tether your dog?”

Tethering or chaining a dog under most state laws means that a person ties a dog with a rope or line to a stationary object. While the laws themselves vary from state to state, they do have several consistent features. Some laws that address tethering allow a dog to be tethered for a reasonable period of time. California prohibits tethering a dog to a stationary object, but allows a dog to be tethered “no longer than is necessary for the person to complete a temporary task that requires the dog to be restrained for a reasonable period.” Connecticut makes it illegal for a dog to be confined or tethered for an unreasonable period of time. What constitutes an “unreasonable period” is not defined by statute in Connecticut. However, Texas law states that a reasonable period is one that does not exceed three hours in a 24-hour period, and is “no longer than is necessary for the owner to complete a temporary task that requires the dog to be restrained.”

Other states include tethering as part of their anti-cruelty chapters. Indiana defines “neglect” as restraining an animal for more than a brief period in a manner that endangers the animal's life or health by the use of a rope, chain, or tether. West Virginia and the District of Columbia include “cruelly chains” in its list of activities that constitute misdemeanor animal cruelty.

Some states specify the manner as to how a dog must be tethered or chained. For example, Delaware law provides that a tether shall be 6 feet or at least 3 times the length of the dog as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail. Likewise, Indiana and Michigan also require that the tether be three times the length of the dog. Many states require that the tether allow the dog unencumbered access to food, water, and shelter. States that do allow some form of tethering usually require that the tethering must be done in a manner that does not endanger the dog's welfare.

The table below provides a summary of each state law that addresses tethering. A link is provided in the citation that goes to the actual text of the law.

State	Citation and Link	Summary of Law	Penalty
Alabama			
Alaska			
Arizona			
Arkansas			
California	West's Ann. Cal. Health & Safety Code § 122335	No person shall tether, fasten, chain, tie, or restrain a dog to any dog house, tree, fence, or other stationary object. A person may temporarily tether a dog "no longer than is necessary for the person to complete a temporary task."	Infraction or misdemeanor Animal control may issue a warning to a person who violates this chapter, requiring the owner to correct the violation, in lieu of an infraction or misdemeanor, unless the violation endangers the health or safety of the animal, or the animal has been wounded as a result of the activity.
Colorado			
Connecticut	C.G.S.A. §§ 22-350a	No person shall tether a dog to a stationary object or to a mobile device, including, but not limited to, a trolley or pulley by means of:	Fine of no more than \$100 for 1 st offense \$100-250 for 2 nd offense \$250-500 for any subsequent offenses

1. A tether that does not allow such dog to walk at least eight feet, excluding the length of such dog as measured from the tip of such dog's nose to the base of such dog's tail, in any one direction,
2. a tether that does not have swivels on both ends to prevent twisting and tangling, unless a person is in the presence of such dog,
3. a coat hanger, choke collar, prong-type collar, head halter or any other collar, halter or device that is not specifically designed or properly fitted for the restraint of such dog,
4. a tether that has weights attached or that contains metal chain links more than one-quarter of an inch thick, or
5. a tether that allows such dog to reach an object or hazard, including, but not limited to, a window sill, edge of a pool, fence, public road or highway, porch or terrace railing that poses a risk of injury or strangulation to such dog if such dog walks into or jumps over such object or hazard, unless a person is in the presence of such dog.

Also prohibits tethering dog outdoors to a stationery object or to a mobile device (i.e., trolley or pulley) when a weather advisory or warning is issued by authorities, or when outdoor conditions (extreme heat, cold, wind, rain, snow or hail) pose an adverse risk to the health or safety of particular dog unless tethering is for a duration of not longer than fifteen minutes.

- Outdoor dog houses: tethers shall be attached so that dog cannot become entangled with other objects or come into physical contact with other dogs
- Tether shall be 6 feet long or at least 3 times the length of the dog
- Must allow the dog convenient access to dog house and to food and water

D.C.

[DC Code § 22.1001](#)

"Cruelly chains" means attaching an animal to a stationary object or a pulley by means of a chain, rope, tether, leash, cable, or similar restraint under circumstances that may endanger its health, safety, or well-being.

Imprisonment up to 180 days and/or fine up to \$250

Cruelly chains includes a tether that:

- Causes the animal to choke
- Does not permit the animal to reach food, water, shade, dry ground
- Does not permit the animal to escape harm

Florida

Georgia

Hawaii

[HRS § 711-1109](#)

A person commits the offense of cruelty to animals in the second degree if the person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly tethers, fastens, ties, or restrains a dog to a doghouse, tree, fence, or any other stationary object by means of a choke collar, pinch collar, or prong collar.

Misdemeanor offense results in forfeiture of animal and reimbursement for costs incurred for care of animal

Idaho

Illinois

[510 ILCS](#)

[70/3](#)

70/3 (b) To lawfully tether a dog outdoors, an owner must ensure that the dog:

(e) A person convicted of violating subsection (b) of this Section is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

(1) does not suffer from a condition that is known, by that person, to be exacerbated by tethering;

(2) is tethered in a manner that will prevent it from becoming entangled with other tethered dogs;

(3) is not tethered with a lead that (i) exceeds one-eighth of the dog's body weight or (ii) is a tow chain or a log chain;

(4) is tethered with a lead that measures, when rounded to the nearest whole foot, at least 10 feet in length;

(5) is tethered with a properly fitting harness or collar other than the lead or a pinch, prong, or choke-type collar; and

(6) is not tethered in a manner that will allow it to reach within the property of another person, a public walkway, or a road.

Indiana

[I.C. § 35-46-](#)

[3-05](#)

"Neglect" means restraining an animal for more than a brief period in a manner that endangers the animal's life or health by the use of a rope, chain, or tether that:

Not specifically listed

- is too heavy
- causes the animal to choke

- is less than 3x the length of the animal
- seriously endangers the animal's life or health

Iowa			
Kansas			
Kentucky			
Louisiana	LSA-R.S. 14:102.26	It shall be unlawful to tie, tether, or restrain any animal in a manner that is inhumane, cruel, or detrimental to its welfare.	Violation: fine up to \$300
Maine	7 M. R. S. A. § 3971	Unlawful to tie, tether or restrain any animal in a manner that is inhumane or detrimental to its welfare	Civil violation: forfeiture up to \$100
Maryland	MD Code, Criminal Law, § 10-623	A person may not leave a dog outside and unattended by use of a restraint that unreasonably limits the movement of the dog; Or one that uses a collar that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is made primarily of metal • is not at least as large as the circumference of the dog's neck plus 1 inch • that restricts the access of the dog to suitable and sufficient clean water or appropriate shelter • in unsafe or unsanitary conditions • that causes injury to the dog 	Misdemeanor subject to imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both
Massachusetts	M.G.L.A. 140 § 174E	No person owning or keeping a dog shall chain or tether a dog to a stationary object including, but not limited to, a structure, dog	1st offense: issued a written warning or punished by a fine of not more than \$50

<p>house, pole or tree for longer than 24 consecutive hours.</p> <p>The tether used must not allow the dog to leave the owner's, guardian's or keeper's property.</p> <p>Tether must be designed for dogs (no logging chains or other lines or devices not designed for tethering dogs).</p> <p>No chain or tether shall weigh more than 1/8 of the dog's body weight.</p> <p>No dog under the age of 6 months shall be tethered outside for any length of time.</p> <p>A trolley system or a tether attached to a pulley in a cable run is allowed provided listed conditions are met.</p> <p>No person owning or keeping a dog shall subject the dog to cruel conditions or inhumane chaining or the tethering at any time (i.e., exposure to filth, taunting or harassing tethered dog, or subjecting dog to dangerous conditions like animal attacks).</p>	<p>2nd offense: a fine of not more than \$100</p> <p>3rd or subsequent offense: a fine of not more than \$300, and subject to impoundment of the dog in a local shelter at the owner's or guardian's expense pending compliance with this section, or loss of ownership of the dog.</p>
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Michigan	M.C.L. § 750.50	An owner, possessor, or person having custody shall not tether a dog unless the tether is at least 3 times the length of the dog and is attached to a harness or nonchoke collar designed for tethering.	<p>1 animal: 93 days imprisonment and/or \$1,000 fine (misdemeanor)</p> <p>2 or 3 animals or the death of an animal: 1 year/\$2,000 fine (misdemeanor)</p> <p>4-10 animals or at least one previous conviction: 2 years/\$2,000 fine (felony)</p> <p>10 or more animals: 4 years/\$5,000 fine (felony)</p>
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Minnesota			
Mississippi			
Missouri			
Montana			
Nebraska			
Nevada	N.R.S. 574.100	<p>A person shall not restrain a dog using a tether, chain, tie, trolley, or pulley system that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is less than 12 ft. in length • fails to allow the dog to move at least 12 ft. • allows the dog to reach a fence or other object in which it could become entangled • uses a prong, pinch, or choke collar • for more than 14 hrs. in a 24-hr. period 	<p>1st offense: misdemeanor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • city or county jail for 2 days to 6 months • perform 48 - 120 hours community service • fine: \$200-1,000 <p>2nd offense: jail time from 10 days - 6 months with increased fines and service.</p> <p>3rd or subsequent offense: felony</p>
New Hampshire			
New Jersey			
New Mexico			
New York			
North Carolina	N.C.G.S.A. § 362.3	<p>A person who maliciously restrains a dog using a chain or wire grossly in excess of the size necessary to restrain the dog safely violates this law.</p> <p>For purposes of this section, "maliciously" means the person imposed the restraint</p>	Class 1 misdemeanor

intentionally and with malice or bad motive.

North Dakota			
Ohio			
Oklahoma			
Oregon	<p>ORS § 167.343</p> <p>ORS § 167.325</p> <p>ORS § 167.330</p>	<p>In 2013, the state enacted a new law called "Unlawful Tethering."</p> <p>A person commits the offense of unlawful tethering if the person tethers a domestic animal in the person's custody or control:</p> <p>(a) With a tether that is not a reasonable length given the size of the domestic animal and available space and that allows the domestic animal to become entangled in a manner that risks the health or safety of the domestic animal;</p> <p>(b) With a collar that pinches or chokes the domestic animal when pulled;</p> <p>(c) For more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period; or</p> <p>(d) For more than 15 hours in a 24-hour period if the tether is attached to a running line, pulley or trolley system.</p> <p>Note that if the tethering causes physical injury or death, a person can be charged with animal neglect in the first or second degree (see next column).</p>	<p>Penalty under Unlawful Tethering Law:</p> <p>Unlawful tethering is a Class B violation.</p> <p>Penalty under Animal Neglect in the Second Degree:</p> <p>Under 167.325, a person commits the crime of animal neglect in the second degree if he or she intentionally, knowingly, recklessly or with criminal negligence tethers a domestic animal in the person's custody or control and the tethering results in physical injury to the domestic animal.</p> <p>Animal neglect in the second degree is a Class B misdemeanor</p> <p>Animal neglect in the second degree is a Class C felony if:</p> <p>(a) The person committing the offense has previously been convicted of two or more offenses under this section, ORS 167.330 or the equivalent laws of another jurisdiction;</p> <p>(b) The offense was part of a criminal episode involving 11 or more animals; or</p>

(c) The person knowingly commits the offense in the immediate presence of a minor child and the person has one or more previous convictions for an offense involving domestic violence.

Penalty under Animal Neglect in the First Degree:

Under 167.330, a person commits the crime of animal neglect in the first degree if the person intentionally, knowingly, recklessly or with criminal negligence tethers a domestic animal in the person's custody or control and the tethering results in serious physical injury or death to the domestic animal.

Animal neglect in the first degree is a Class A misdemeanor.

Animal neglect in the first degree is a Class C felony if:

(a) The person committing the offense has previously been convicted of one or more offenses under this section, ORS 167.325 or the equivalent laws of another jurisdiction;

(b) The offense was part of a criminal episode involving 10 or more animals; or

(c) The person knowingly commits the offense in the immediate presence of a minor child.

Pennsylvania			
Rhode Island	Gen. Laws 1956, § 4- 13-42	<p>It is a violation for an owner or keeper to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep any dog on a permanent tether that restricts movement of the tethered dog to an area less than one hundred thirteen square feet (113 sq. ft.), or less than a six foot (6') radius at ground level. 2. Tether a dog with a choke-type collar or prong-type collar. 3. Keep any dog tethered for more than ten (10) hours during a twenty-four (24) hour period or keep any dog confined in a pen, cage or other shelter for more than fourteen (14) hours during any twenty-four (24) hour period. 	<p>Any person in violation of this section shall be given a warning for a first violation. Second and subsequent violations of this subsection can be considered a violation of § 4-1-2. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense.</p> <p>Any person in violation of this section shall be imprisoned not exceeding eleven (11) months, or fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500), or both. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense.</p>
South Carolina			
South Dakota			
Tennessee	T.C.A. § 39-14-202	Offense to knowingly tie, tether, or restrain a dog in a manner that results in the dog suffering bodily injury.	<p>1st offense: Class A misdemeanor</p> <p>2nd or subsequent conviction: Class E felony</p>
Texas	TX HEALTH & §§ 821.076 - 081	<p>Owner may not leave a dog outside and unattended by use of a restraint that unreasonably limits the dog's movement during certain times of day or during extreme weather</p> <p>A restraint unreasonably limits a dog's movement if the restraint is a length shorter than the greater of 5x the length of the dog or 10 feet.</p>	<p>Class C misdemeanor</p> <p>Class B misdemeanor if previously convicted</p>

Also if it s in an unsafe condition or causes injury to the dog.

Law does not apply to running line, pulley, or trolley system if the collar meets requirements.

Utah

Vermont	<u>13 V.S.A. § 351</u>	A person commits the crime of cruelty to animals if he or she ties, tethers, or restrains an animal, either a pet or livestock, in a manner that is inhumane or is detrimental to its welfare
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Virginia	<u>Va. Code Ann. §§ 3.2-6500</u>	Each owner shall provide for companion animals adequate space. "Adequate space" means a tether that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is appropriate to the age and size of the animal • is attached to the animal by a properly applied collar, halter, or harness • configured so as to protect the animal from injury and prevent the animal or tether from becoming entangled with other objects or animals • is at least three times the length of the animal 	Class 4 misdemeanor
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Washington

West Virginia	<u>W. Va. Code. § 61-18-19</u>	It is unlawful for any person to intentionally, knowingly or recklessly cruelly chain or tether an animal	Misdemeanor: fine of \$300 to \$2,000 or jail up to six months
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Wisconsin

Wyoming

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