

Laws Relating to Animal Control

Minor laws/regulations before 1940 and important ones after that date are only cited in the text.

Entries in *italics* either were not passed or were soon repealed.*

Date approved	Resume	Source/Notes**
Corps of Wash and G'town (1791-1871)		
Nuisances/Bd of Health		
<i>Washington</i>		
20 Sept 1803	Supt of Police established, given responsibility for nuisances	Acts of Washington
14 Aug 1819	Health Officer established, given vague responsibility for nuisances	Acts of Wash
30 Mar 1822	Bd of Health established, assumes responsibility for nuisances	Acts of Wash; slightly revised 22 May 1822; 26 July 1837
26 May 1823	Bd of Health removes untended nuisances	Acts of Wash
17 Aug 1832	Strengthens powers of Bd of Health re nuisances, institutes fines	Acts of Wash
20 May 1848	Omnibus BoH act; Bd of Health responsibilities, powers re nuisances specified	Acts of Wash Sheahan, pp. 266-273; modest revision of 1848 act
20 May 1853	Omnibus BoH act, as above	Acts of Wash; substantive revision of 1853 act; slightly revised 24 Mar 1862
17 Jan 1856	Omnibus BoH act, as above; Commissioner of Health appointed	Daily Nat Republican, 28 Feb 1870, p. 3; repealed 21 Jan 1871
10 Jan 1870	Strengthens powers of Bd of Health	
Farm Animals		
<i>Georgetown</i>		
20 Nov 1791	Stray geese/swine prohibited, kept by finder	G'town Code 1811
4 Aug 1795	Stray swine prohibited, taken by police to market	G'town Code 1811
27 July 1796	Stray goats prohibited, taken by police to market	G'town Code 1811
10 Oct 1796	Fines for strays, taken by police	G'town Code 1811
18 May 1799	Stray stallions prohibited, owner fined	G'town Code 1811
14 June 1814	Stray horses prohibited	G'town Code 1821
28 Apr 1827	Swine-raising restrictions	Ordinances of G'town

11 Nov 1837	Swine/geese/goats regs tightened, fines to Poor House	Ordinances of G'town; refers to 1827 statute as "swine/geese/goats"
19 July 1845	Poor House pays fee to police for swine delivered	Ordinances of G'town
13 Mar 1858	Swine-raising restrictions, police remittance raised	Ordinances of G'town
23 Nov 1859	Poor House must return swine	Ordinances of G'town; repealed 24 May 1867
7 June 1862	Swine-raising limited to one, police remittance raised again	Ordinances of G'town
22 Apr 1865	Cow-raising restrictions	Ordinances of G'town
9 Aug 1867	Stray swine prohibited	Ordinances of G'town

Washington

28 Mar 1809	Stray swine prohibited, finder shares proceeds with Almshouse	Acts of Wash
27 Oct 1809	Swine-raising restrictions, stray swine prohibited, finder shares with city	Acts of Wash
26 July 1815	Stray geese prohibited, taken to Almshouse	Acts of Wash
21 Mar 1817	Stray swine prohibited, finder shares with Almshouse; constables fined if shirking duty	Acts of Wash
by 1819	Regs re fences; all strays prohibited; fines prescribed; Justice of Peace responsible for strays	Corp act; Cranch, <u>Code</u> , pp. 223-229
11 May 1819	Stray goats prohibited, killed	Acts of Wash
1 Apr 1820	Stray swine prohibited, finder shares with city	Acts of Wash
2 Aug 1828	Stray debilitated horses prohibited, killed	Acts of Wash
by 1833	Expenses for keeping strays set	Corp act; <u>System of Civil . . .</u> , ch. XXIII, sect. 17
28 May 1835	Stray stallions over 16 months prohibited	Acts of Wash
8 Apr 1836	Swine-raising restrictions; stray swine prohibited, sold at market; police fined for shirking duties	Acts of Wash
17 Jan 1838	Swine-raising restrictions; stray swine prohibited, taken to Asylum; police fined for shirking duties	Acts of Wash; stray-swine provision repealed 26 Sept 1838
20 Jan 1841	Stray swine prohibited, taken to Asylum	Acts of Wash
28 Apr 1841	Police reminded of duty; interfering prohibited	Acts of Wash
20 May 1848	Diseased animals at large prohibited	Acts of Wash; repeated 20 May 1853; BoH act, 17 Jan 1856
10 Sept 1849	<i>Would have imposed swine-raising restrictions; stray swine, goats prohibited, taken to Asylum; police fined for shirking duties</i>	<i>Corp act; Daily Nat Intelligencer, 12 Sept 1849, p. 1; not passed BoH ordinance; Daily Nat Intelligencer, 29 Sept 1851; repeated 27 Mar 1856, p. 14; possibly annual</i>
Sept 1851	Diseased horses at large declared nuisance	
26 Aug 1852	Restrictions on animals held for slaughter; police fined for shirking duties	Acts of Wash
3 June 1853	Swine-raising restrictions; stray swine prohibited, taken to Asylum	Acts of Wash
3 June 1853	Omnibus nuisance act; restrictions on diseased and stray horses, geese, goats	Corp act; Sheahan, pp. 164-166

17 Jan 1856	Restrictions on diseased and stray horses, geese, goats repeated	Acts of Wash Corp act; Ould and Cross, pp. 162-164
by 1857	Justice of Peace responsible for strays, mad dogs	Acts of Wash; slightly revised 24 May 1866, Webb, pp. 119-120
1 Aug 1863	Cow-raising restrictions	Corp act; Daily Nat Intelligencer, 6 May 1868, p. 1
5 May 1868	Revived 1853 prohibition on stray hogs, goats, geese	Acts of Wash
9 Nov 1868	Almshouse must return hogs, geese if requested	

Dogs

Georgetown

2 June 1792	Tax on dogs	Text not available; G'town Code 1811
17 Feb 1798	"Diminish number of dogs"	Text not available; G'town Code 1811
4 May 1798	Further to "Diminish"	Text not available; G'town Code 1811
29 Aug 1803	Further to "Diminish"	Text not available; G'town Code 1811
4 Sept 1804	Dogs prohibited in market	Ordinances of G'town
5 July 1805	Tax on dogs	Text not available; G'town Code 1811
21 July 1807	Tax on dogs; strays prohibited	Ordinances of G'town; slightly revised 9 June 1808
29 June 1808	Restrictions for rabies	Corp act; Wash Federalist, 29 June 1808, p. 3; temporary
18 May 1811	Police to kill all strays	Corp act; Spirit of Seventy-Six, 21 May 1811, p. 4
6 Oct 1815	Tax on dogs increased	Ordinances of G'town; slightly revised 10 Oct 1818
24 July 1819	Stray dogs prohibited	Ordinances of G'town
29 Mar 1822	Tax on dogs increased	Ordinances of G'town
3 Aug 1824	Tax on dogs decreased; constables to check each household	Ordinances of G'town
3 May 1828	Defines "owners" of dogs	Ordinances of G'town
18 Feb 1829	Revives prohibition on dogs in market	Ordinances of G'town
12 Sept 1829	Unlicensed dogs killed	Ordinances of G'town
25 June 1836	Revives prohibition on stray dogs	Ordinances of G'town
28 July 1855	Muzzled dogs not to be killed	Corp act; Evening Star, 27 June 1857, p. 2
14 Feb 1857	All dog ordinances to be harmonized	Ordinances of G'town
25 June 1859	Comprehensive ordinance: tax, rabies emergency, dogs in market	Ordinances of G'town
1 Aug 1860	Dog tags instituted; dangerous dogs killed	Ordinances of G'town
10 May 1867	Comprehensive ordinance as above, some charges raised; spayed females taxed as males	Ordinances of G'town

Washington

12 Sept 1803	Tax on dogs	Acts of Wash
30 May 1804	Repeals fine for non-payment	Acts of Wash
5 Sept 1804	Registration of dogs, fine reimposed	Acts of Wash
4 Nov 1807	Tax on dogs; strays prohibited	Acts of Wash
4 Aug 1809	Tax on dogs increased, bounty on strays increased	Acts of Wash; tax on females increased by 1818, Hewitt, pp. 75-76.
9 Oct 1817	Restrictions for rabies	Acts of Wash
29 July 1819	<i>Would have prohibited stray dogs, and in market; dogs on street leashed</i>	<i>Corp act; City of Wash Gazette, 3 Aug 1819, p. 2; replaced 14 Aug 1819</i>
14 Aug 1819	Stray dogs prohibited, and in market; dogs on street leashed	Acts of Wash; sight variation on 29 July 1819
1 Apr 1820	Comprehensive act: tax, tags, strays, market, rabies; constables fined for shirking duty	Acts of Wash
11 Nov 1824	Dogs prohibited in market	Acts of Wash
8 June 1826	Vicious dogs prohibited	Acts of Wash
23 Aug 1827	Police must enforce law	Mayor's directive; United States Telegraph, 28 Aug 1827, p. 4
25 July 1829	Comprehensive act as above; constables fined if shirking duty	Acts of Wash; slightly revised 27 Apr 1838
12 Mar 1838	Free blacks allowed to keep dogs	Acts of Wash
22 May 1844	Dogs prohibited in market	Acts of Wash
24 May 1853	Omnibus market act; dogs prohibited in market	Corp act; Sheahan, p. 195; almost identical to 22 May 1844
3 June 1853	Dog fights prohibited; dogs must be controlled on street	Corp act; Sheahan, p. 150; slightly revised 7 Nov 1867, Webb, p. 465
25 July 1853	<i>Would have required muzzling of dogs</i>	<i>Corp act; Daily Nat Intelligencer, 27 July 1853, p. 1; not passed</i>
by 1857	Justice of Peace to kill mad dogs, owners fined	Corp act; Ould and Cross, pp. 162-163
27 May 1857	Omnibus market act; dogs prohibited in market	Acts of Wash
14 Jan 1858	Comprehensive act as above; constables fined if shirking duty	Acts of Wash

County

25 July 1864	Unlicensed dogs killed by police	US Statutes; inc in statute of 1 Dec 1873, sect. 189
spring? 1867	Specifics of dog licensing procedure	Levy Court; Callan, pp. 15-16

Pound

Washington

16 July 1862	Charge of animals given to Police Property Clerk	US Statutes Not published in Acts; Daily Nat Intelligencer, 27 Mar 1863, p. 1; initial text Daily Nat Intelligencer, 28 Aug 1862, p. 1; repealed 14 Apr 1866
23 Mar 1863	Contractor pound for farm animals, dogs	

23 July 1866	Police holding procedures refined	US Statutes
22 Aug 1867	<i>Would have established dog pound</i>	<i>Acts of Wash; appropriation 4 Oct 1867; not acted upon</i>

Cruelty

Georgetown

7 Mar 1868	Animals at markets protected	Ordinances of G'town
5 Nov 1869	Horses and others protected	Ordinances of G'town

Washington

by 1819	Animal fights, dog attacks, cruelty in general prohibited; draught animals protected	Corp act; Cranch, <u>Code</u> , pp. 278-289
12 July 1821	Horses protected	Acts of Wash
3 June 1853	Horses protected	Corp act; Sheahan, p. 152; slightly revised 7 Nov 1867, Webb, p. 465
28 Sept 1860	Calves ungagged	Acts of Wash
12 July 1862	Animals at markets protected	Acts of Wash

District-wide

21 June 1870	SPCA established, works with police	US Statutes
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Dead animals

Georgetown

4 Aug 1795	Prohibited on private property	G'town Code 1811
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Washington

27 Oct 1809	Owners to bury if on streets	Acts of Wash
8 July 1820	Scavengers remove carcasses	Acts of Wash
11 July 1820	Negligent owners fined, city removes	Corp act; Rothwell, p. 117
3 July 1843	Carcasses declared nuisances	BoH minutes; repeated annually
20 May 1848	Bd of Health responsibilities, powers re carcasses specified; diseased animals must be destroyed, buried by owners; Bd has responsibility	Acts of Wash; repeated 20 May 1853; BoH act, 17 Jan 1856

County

4 May 1863	Leaving carcasses on public road prohibited	Levy Court; Callan, p. 1
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Territorial Govt (1871-74)

Bd of Health

21 Feb 1871 Terr Govt established; Bd of Health retains animal control; nuisances US Statutes

Farm Animals

May 1871 Strays prohibited BoH ordinance; summarized Daily Nat Republican, 3 May 1871, p. 4

Nov 1872 Stray goats prohibited BoH ordinance; text not available; Evening Star, 16 Nov 1872, p. 2

26 June 1873 Animals prohibited from public parks Acts of Territory; restated, extended nationwide by Cong act, 3 Mar 1875

Dogs

May 1871 Muzzling in summer; not allowed loose at night; rabid dogs to be killed BoH ordinance; summarized Daily Nat Republican, 3 May 1871, p. 4; extract (dogs) Evening Star, 14 June 1872, p. 2

19 Jan 1872 Dogs treated as property, may be redeemed Acts of Territory
Mayor of Wash vs. Meigs;

Apr 1873 Voided licensing act for dogs MacArthur, pp. 53-60

spring? 1874 Muzzling in summer increased BoH ordinance; text not available; Nat Republican, 18 June 1874, p. 4

Pound

19 May 1871 Contractor pound re-established; restrictions on animals re-stated; proceeds used for Sanitary Fund BoH ordinance; text not available; Evening Star, 12 May 1871, p. 4; 7 June 1871, p. 1; Snty Fund finally approved by Treasury 25 June 1895

Mar 1872 District-operated pound established, with elaboration of earlier provisions BoH ordinance; revision of 1871 ordinance; Comm Ann Rpt, 1900 (HO Ann Rpt, pp. 80-81)

spring? 1874 *Would have prohibited stray farm animals in County; established county pound* (County) Acts of Wash; not signed into law

Cruelty

23 Aug 1871 Omnibus cruelty act; violations, penalties specified; SPCA role outlined, with police cooperation US Statutes

Dead Animals

May 1871	Bd of Health assumes responsibility for nuisances; procedures, penalties established	BoH ordinance; summarized Daily Nat Republican, 3 May 1871, p. 4; further text Evening Star, 24 May 1871, p. 4
9 Sept 1873	Dead animals must be reported	BoH ordinance; Evening Star, 22 Sept 1873, p. 2

Commissioner Govt (1874-ca 1940)***

General/Bd of Health

? 1874-78	Stray animals in county to be impounded	Text not available; listed in index of Comm Minutes/Orders as pp. 351, 502, but that volume of minutes missing Comm order; BoH Ann Rpt, 1874; Garbagemaster abolished, 23 Mar 1875
22 July 1874	Responsibility for garbage assigned to Bd of Health	BoH ordinance, incorporating earlier ordinances; Comm Ann Rpt, 1900 (HO Ann Rpt, pp. 77-80)
19 Nov 1875	Omnibus nuisance ordinance; Bd of Health has supervision of nuisances; violations, penalties specified	US Statutes
27 June 1879	Commissioners given control of animals thruout District	Comm Minutes/Orders
4 Aug 1879	Animal regs extended to some parts of county	US Statutes
26 Jan 1887	Commissioners given control of police regs about animals and dogs	Text not available; Comm order; Evening Star, 9 Jan 1891, p. 3
Jan 1891	Animal regs extended further to all "improved subdivisions"	Comm Minutes/Orders
16 Aug 1893	Stray animals thruout District to be impounded	US Statutes (Jt Res)
27-Jan-1905	Commissioners given control over all garbage collection	Comm Minutes/Orders; rescinded 1 Feb 1908
23-Dec-1907	<i>Would have prohibited animals (inc dogs) in public parks</i>	

Farm Animals

19 Nov 1875	Swine, diseased animals prohibited from municipalities and dense suburbs; restrictions on keeping animals	BoH ordinance, incorporating earlier ordinances; Comm Ann Rpt, 1900 (HO Ann Rpt, pp. 77-80)
16 Aug 1893	Strays prohibited throughout District	Comm Minutes/Orders
28 Aug 1897	Restrictions on cow pens/stables	Comm order; Comm Ann Rpt, 1898, pp. 4-5
24-May-1902	Further restrictions on cow pens/stables	Comm order; HO Ann Rpt, 1903
22-Jul-1908	Further restrictions on animal pens/stables	Comm order; HO Ann Rpt, 1909

Cattle in Streets

13 May 1875	Driving cattle thru city streets prohibited	Comm Minutes/Orders, text taken from 30 Nov 1881 restatement
10 June 1887	Further, specific restrictions	Police reg; Comm Ann Rpt, 1887, pp. 169-70
2 Dec 1891	Driving cattle thru suburbs prohibited, other specifics	Comm Minutes/Orders
5-Jul-1910	Lame, diseased animals prohibited from roads	Comm Minutes/Orders

Chickens/ Pigeons

10 June 1887	Stray, noisy fowl prohibited in Wash/G'town; owners fined	Police regs, 1887 <i>Police regs, 1887; part of above; not enforced</i>
10 June 1887	<i>Would have impounded stray, noisy fowl</i>	
by 1896	Stray, noisy fowls prohibited thruout District; owners fined	Police regs, 1896
by 1906	Restrictions on stray fowl tightened	Police regs, 1906
3-Dec-1906	Raising fowl prohibited in most parts of the city	Comm order; HO Ann Rpt, 1908
10-Sep-1908	Restrictions on fowl tightened	Comm Minutes/Orders
7-Jul-1909	Restrictions on fowl tightened, conditions of raising them specified	Comm Minutes/Orders
24-Feb-1939	Restictions on fowl tightened	Comm Minutes/Orders

Dogs

19 Nov 1875	Muzzling in summer increased, and during rabies emergency	BoH ordinance, possibly incorporating earlier ordinances; Comm Ann Rpt, 1900 (HO Ann Rpt, pp. 77-80) <i>HR 4539; LOC Law Library; not passed</i>
22 Apr 1878	<i>Would have prohibited spitz dogs</i>	
19 June 1878	Omnibus dog act; licensing required, unlicensed dogs impounded, rabies emergencies outlined, dogs are property	US Statutes
10 June 1887	Dangerous or noisy dogs prohibited; dangerous dogs leashed on street	Police regs, 1887
29 July 1892	Restrictions on dangerous dogs	US Statutes
19 Dec 1899	Rabies emergency, temporary muzzling	Comm Minutes/Orders
31-Mar-1902	<i>Would have given Commissioners control of dogs in public streets</i>	<i>S 4792; LOC Law Library; not passed</i>
30-Jun-1902	Females in heat controlled, fines revised	US Statutes
3-Dec-1906	Barking dogs prohibited; dangerous dogs to be leashed; owners of unlicensed dogs fined	Comm order; HO Ann Rpt, 1908 <i>Comm Minutes/Orders; rescinded 1 Feb 1908</i>
23-Dec-1907	<i>Would have prohibited dogs in public parks</i>	Comm Minutes/Orders; reissued 25 June 1908; also 4 Aug 1910, revised text Wash Herald, 8 Aug 1910, p. 7; and following years
16-Jun-1908	Rabies emergency, temporary muzzling	Comm Minutes/Orders
27-Sep-1911	Police court hears licensing complaints	Comm Minutes/Orders
27-Jun-1912	Dogs at large prohibited in Rock Creek Park	Comm Minutes/Orders

12-Jun-1923	Leashing an alternative to muzzling during rabies emergency	Comm Minutes/Orders
24-Feb-1939	Drivers not liable for injury to chasing dogs	Comm Minutes/Orders
24-Feb-1939	Leashing required on streets; dogs prohibited on private property without permission	Comm Minutes/Orders
5-Jul-1945	Raises dog tax; leashing, vaccination, quarantining for rabies allowed	US Statutes

Cats

11-Jun-1912 <i>by 1915</i>	Cats at large prohibited <i>Would have impounded stray cats from streets</i>	Comm Minutes/Orders <i>Police regs, 1915; not enforced</i>
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Miscellaneous Animals

24-Feb-1939	Wild-animal pets need permit; beekeeping restrictions	Comm Minutes/Orders
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Pound

16 Dec 1899	Fee required to claim untagged dogs	Comm Minutes/Orders <i>S 4232; LOC Law Library; not passed</i>
<i>16-Apr-1900</i>	<i>Would have given pound operations to WHS</i>	
28-Feb-1901	Proceeds to Police/Fire retirement funds	US Statutes
2-Mar-1911	DC budget funds new pound/stable	US Statutes
6-Jun-1930	Poundmaster salary raised; reinstated as MPDC special officer	US Statutes
23-Jun-1936	Transferred to jurisdiction of Commissioners	Comm Minutes/Orders

Cruelty/SCPC/WHS

<i>24 Mar 1876</i>	<i>Would have strengthened powers of SPCA (to seize and sell abused animals)</i>	<i>S 647; LOC Law Library; not passed</i>
Oct 1880	Fines paid to SPCA directly rather than govt	Comm order; Nat Republican, 28 Oct 1880 p. 4
13 Feb 1885	SPCA becomes WHS; cruelty to children prohibited	US Statutes <i>HR 10139; LOC Law Library; not passed</i>
<i>13 Dec 1886</i>	<i>Would have raised fines for abuse</i>	
<i>12 Mar 1888</i>	<i>Would have revised procedures; defined further abuse</i>	<i>HR 8344; see 1892 bill; LOC Law Library; not passed</i>
25 June 1892	Revisions to earlier procedures; docking, animal fights prohibited	US Statutes
29 July 1892	Further to dog fights, dangerous dogs	US Statutes

Shelters

20-Apr-1908	Commissioners given authority to regulate hospitals/asylums	US Statutes
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19-May-1909	Requires licensing of animal hospitals/shelters	Comm Minutes/Orders; slight modifications 7 Oct 1909, 16 Feb 1910
15-Jan-1937	Animal shelters allowed in residential districts	Comm Minutes/Orders

Dead Animals

19 Nov 1875	Dead animals must be removed; penalties specified	BoH ordinance, possibly incorporating earlier ordinances; Comm Ann Rpt, 1900 (HO Ann Rpt, pp. 77-80)
10 June 1887	Dead animals cannot be left on public land	Police regs, 1887
16 Aug 1893	Dead animals must be transported in sealed wagons	Comm Minutes/Orders
2 Mar 1895	Commissioners can contract out removal of dead animals for 5 years	US Statutes; preliminary act, 7 Aug 1894; repeated periodically
19 May 1896	Dead animals cannot be left on docks or in river	US Statutes
by 1902	Dead animals cannot be left in any open area	Police regs, 1902
28-Feb-1923	District govt to take dead animals rather than contractor	US Statutes

* Federal bills not passed are cited by date of first introduction; listed HR bills also include text of any related S bills.

** Laws/regulations are cited from official compilations unless noted otherwise.
 Only significant Board of Health and Commissioners orders are listed; minor administrative orders mentioned in the text are cited there by full date.