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RELEASE**

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# City Amends Title 7 Animal Ordinance to Enhance Public and Animal Safety

## New “Aggressive” and “Vicious” Dog Definitions Strengthen Prevention, Accountability, and Enforcement

**EL PASO, Texas**—The City Council unanimously approved amendments to Title 7 (ANIMALS) of the El Paso Municipal Code that add new definitions for Aggressive Dogs and Vicious Dogs.

The updates strengthening public safety, support animal welfare, and provide Animal Protection Officers with earlier, clearer enforcement tools, while maintaining compliance with Texas state law.

Under Texas Health & Safety Code §822.041, a dog may be designated as a *Dangerous Dog* only if it is at large, acts unprovoked, and causes bodily injury to a person. This state designation is limited to human injury and applies for the life of the dog.

To address these limitations, the City’s local ordinance now includes two additional classifications:

- **Aggressive Dog:** A dog that, while at large, menaces or interferes with public movement or displays threatening behavior toward a person or another animal.
- **Vicious Dog:** A dog that, while at large, causes severe injury to or kills a domestic animal, livestock, or fowl, excluding dogs acting in a legitimate hunting capacity.

Both Aggressive and Vicious Dog designations require owners to take corrective actions within 30 days. Requirements include keeping the dog leashed at all times or securely enclosed, posting a visible warning sign identifying the dog’s designation, and completing a responsible pet owner course approved for Texas courts. Aggressive Dog designations require one year of compliance, while Vicious Dog designations require three years. After the applicable compliance period, owners may petition to remove the designation, but meeting the requirements does not guarantee the designation will be removed.

In addition, Schedule C of the City Fee Schedule has been amended to include a registration fee for dogs designated as Vicious, supporting compliance tracking and enforcement.

These updates allow for earlier intervention, clearer standards, and increased owner accountability to help prevent escalation and improve safety for residents, pets, and Animal Protection Officers.

Full City of El Paso Title 7 (ANIMALS) ordinance information is available through the City Code Ordinances at [www.ElPasoTexas.gov](http://www.ElPasoTexas.gov).

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