



# City of Fremont Animal Services:

## Effective Pet Licensing Enforcement

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Compiled by ASPCA<sup>®</sup> and PetSmart Charities<sup>®</sup> and distributed to the field, September 2007. Visit the ASPCA<sup>®</sup> National Outreach website for animal welfare professionals: [www.ASPCApro.org](http://www.ASPCApro.org).

## Fremont Animal Services: Effective Pet Licensing Enforcement



The City of Fremont Animal Services has developed an innovative approach to license enforcement through automated citations which has increased compliance, involved local veterinarians and increased revenue!

### Stats

- From January 2002 to March 2004, the number of citations increased from 84 to 2,564. The amount of collected fines in that time rose from \$3,030 to \$38,582.
- In that same time period revenue from pet licensing almost doubled, from \$101,000 to \$195,000.

### How Cool is That?

Once this program is set-up, the monthly cost of operations can be as low as \$250, while resulting in significantly increased compliance with licensing laws, and resultant income from license fees and fines.

### Adopt or Adapt

If your local ordinance allows the delivery of citations by mail, you could implement this program in your community. If not, borrow one key element to start: supply your local veterinary clinics with license applications.

# Fremont Animal Services: The Whole Story

## *License Enforcement Program*

It is no surprise that many communities experience a high rate of non-compliance with pet licensing programs. In Fremont, California, their problem reached epidemic proportions when one third of their 20,000 existing license records were delinquent.

In order to address this issue and educate the public, the City of Fremont instituted an automatic citation system which has proven effective in raising the number of licenses purchased and funds raised with little maintenance once the program was launched.

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## Who They Are and What They Do

City of Fremont Animal Services  
Ernest Molieri, Supervisor

The City of Fremont Animal Services is responsible for protecting lost and injured animals, as well as protecting the public from animal-carried diseases. They promote responsible pet ownership and provide licensing services for pets.

Animal Services serves the city of Fremont, with a population of 203,000, median household income of \$76,579 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000 census).

## Ingredients and Prep Work

### Prerequisites

- An Administrative Remedies Ordinance in your state law enabling the delivery of citations by mail, with no signature from the recipient, is required to make it legal
- Requirement that veterinarians submit animal and owner information for each rabies vaccination
- While the program can be done by hand by volunteers, it is most efficient and feasible with software that automatically sorts license renewal dates and produces reminder postcards, and citation notices, ready to mail

### People

- Volunteer or staff member to enter information on rabies vaccinations submitted by veterinarians into a database
- Volunteer or staff member to set up a monthly report that generates renewal and citation notices
- Volunteer or staff member to enter information on receipts of license renewal fees and non-compliance fines to update database

### Up-front Costs and Startup Funding

- Software capable of generating renewal and citation notices based on database of licensees or rabies vaccinated animals. Cost: variable. There are software programs made for shelters,

such as Chameleon, that can produce the notices. There may already be software in your city or county that can do this. In Fremont, the software used to send notices on expired building permits could have been used for issuing the dog license renewal notices and citations.

- Design of notices. Cost: negligible

## Key Milestones

- Pass enabling legislation
- Purchase or obtain use of software
- Design notices
- Input rabies vaccination dog and owner information into database
- Send first batch of renewal notices

## Step by Step

### 1. Educate the public about the program

The City of Fremont worked through the twelve veterinary offices in the city.

### 2. Obtain data on rabies vaccinated dogs from veterinarians in your enforcement area

They supplied a triplicate form to the veterinarians to be completed when the rabies vaccination was administered. The client's copy provided detailed information about the licensing requirement.

### 3. Enter data into a sortable computer database

Unlicensed animals were entered into a license database; this way, even if the owners failed to license their pets, there would be a record of where the pet lived and a record of current rabies vaccination.

### 4. Allow pet owners 60 days to purchase a license after rabies vaccination

After 60 days, send notices to list of owners of unlicensed vaccinated dogs reminding them to purchase a license. Also send renewal notices to owners with dogs with expired licenses.

### 5. Each month, send an incremental reminder/renewal notice on the following schedule:

- 1 month reminder (postcard)
- 2 month reminder
- 3 month reminder

### 6. After 90 days of reminders, send first citation notice.

### 7. Each month, send an incremental citation notice, with the fine doubling with each notice.

- 4 month: 1st citation: \$30 fine
- 5 month: 2nd citation: \$60 fine
- 6 month: 3rd citation: \$120 fine

### 8. Track data on license renewals and income.

## Results

### The Numbers

- From January 2002 to March 2004 (27 months) the number of citations increased from 84 to 2,564. The amount of collected fines in that time rose from \$3,030 to \$38,582.
- In that same time period revenue from pet licensing almost doubled, from \$101,000 to \$195,000

### Critical Factors

- Sections in state and local law that enable administrative citations
- The goal of the program is compliance, not more income from citation fees. However the program results in both.

### Thinking Outside the Box

- An important benefit of citations delivered by mail is that animal control officers do not have to confront owners who may react in a hostile manner.
- Animal Control becomes a more important source of revenue for the government entity, therefore raising its esteem in the governing body's eyes.

### How They Feel About What They Did

They are happy to see higher compliance rates with license laws. Also, the department looks good to their city supervisors because their income exceeded the budget.

### Their Next Steps

- Hire a collection agency to go after unpaid citation funds. The collection agency keeps a percentage, but the net result is collection of a lot of money that otherwise would not be realized.
- Engage in discussions with city government aimed at allowing the collected fines to go directly to the animal control unit budget rather than into the general fund.

## Some Words of Wisdom

### What Worked

The system has been easy to maintain. Once set up, the automated system needs very little employee time to operate.

### What Didn't

Providing people with tags doesn't guarantee the tag will be put on the animal. Return to owner rates didn't rise over the three year period, but remained steady.

### Be Prepared For

Many people will come in to pay high fines to get their license. The ones who don't respond should not be let off the hook, which means that effort and even payment of a percentage of the fine as a fee to a collection agency is important so that these people are not allowed to disregard the law.

## Tell Us What You Think

With the information we've provided, can you start a program like this one in your organization? [Click here](#) to send an e-mail to ASPCA® National Outreach with your feedback.

## Fremont Animal Services: Thumbnail Sketch

City of Fremont Police Department  
Animal Services Unit  
1950 Stevenson B1  
Fremont, CA 94537

[www.ci.fremont.ca.us/PublicSafety/AnimalServices](http://www.ci.fremont.ca.us/PublicSafety/AnimalServices)

Fremont Animal Services is dedicated to providing humane and compassionate care for all animals and excellent customer services for the citizens of our community. We are staffed by a team of professional and courteous employees who are committed to providing a clean, comfortable environment for the animals in our care.



### Staff

15 full time staff:

- Police Sergeant as administrator
- Supervisor
- 3 officers
- 2 clerical support
- 8 public service assistants who clean and maintain the kennels

2 part time staff: public service assistants who work the front counter

Per-diem veterinarian and vet tech

15 adult volunteers

### Operating Budget

Annual projected: \$846,000

### Business Type

Government agency