

Frequently Asked Questions



If you are unable to find the answer to your question(s) here in FAQ or elsewhere on our web site, please feel free to contact us.

What are the fees?

Please see the [Shelter Fee List](#). *(Shelter fees may change per Commission approval. The most recent fees were adopted in January 2014)*

How long does the shelter keep an animal before euthanizing?

GFAS does not euthanize an animal due to the length of time an animal is in the shelter. Many factors are involved before the difficult decision is made. In most cases we only euthanize if the animal is dangerous or aggressive, the animal has been involved in a bite case, the animal is feral, the animal is sick with an illness that is not treatable using reasonable resources, or if the animal is deemed unadoptable in some other way. In some cases the decision to euthanize due to space may be made, but only after other resources have been exhausted. Please see the GFAS Policy Manual for more information.

How long does the shelter keep a stray animal before adopting it?

GFAS will hold a stray animal that arrives to the shelter with no identification and no known owner 72 hours before it is assessed and deemed adoptable. If the stray animal arrives to the shelter with some form of identification, we make many attempts to contact a possible owner. If after 96 hours, no one has claimed the animal we will assess the said animal for adoptability.

Where can an owner register (license) a dog or cat?

An owner of a dog or cat may purchase a license at the City of Great Falls Shelter or participating local veterinarians.

When do I need to register my puppy or kitten?

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The puppy or kitten can be licensed as early as the owner wishes to purchase a license, but must be licensed no later than six (6) months of age. Failure to register may result in a fine of up to \$250.00.

Do I have to register my service animal?

Yes. Service animals must be licensed, but there is no fee to license such animal.

Do I have to register my therapy/companion/medical dog or cat?

Yes. These animals must be licensed, and all licensing fees apply.

I'm not eighteen; can I register a dog or a cat?

No. If you are not yet eighteen, a parent or guardian who is over eighteen must co-sign your registration.

I have family visiting for two (2) weeks. They will be bringing their pets. Do they have to register?

No. Non-residents having animals under restraint within the City less than sixty (60) days do not need to register.

My dog/cat has a micro-chip implant. Am I still required to have him wear a collar or tags?

No. Micro-chipped animals are not required to wear a collar or tags, but licensing is still required.

If I give my dog to my relatives across town, do they have to re-register?

Yes. Registrations for animals, like cars, are non transferable.

How many animals am I allowed to have?

City Ordinances allow citizens to own up to two (2) dogs and two (2) cats without applying for a multiple animal permit. Owners of rental properties can establish policies that may place further restrictions on the number of animals allowed on their properties.

How do I apply for a Multiple Animal Permit?

You must pay a fee based on the number of animals you wish to have and fill out a permit application with Animal Control. If you fail to get the permit and have more than the allowed number of animals, you could be subject to a fine of up to \$500 and could also be ordered to surrender your animals to Animal Control. Contact the Great Falls Police Department at 406-455-8492 (Dial 0 for Dispatch - Do not leave a message unless it is just a general question) to speak with an Animal Control Officer.

My dog/cat is pregnant. Do I need to take any special action for the litter being born?

A Hobby Breeder's Permit must be purchased from GFAS within ten (10) days after the birth of the litter. This is required regardless if the puppies/kittens are being sold or given away. The applicant's facility is subject to inspection by Animal Control. The puppies/kittens must be relocated to new homes within four (4) months of age. See the [City Ordinances](#) for more details.

I want to board animals as a full time business; do I need to obtain a Multiple Animal Hobby Breeder permit?

No. You would be required to obtain a kennel license. Before applying for the kennel license a zoning permit and safety inspection certificate must be obtained.

How thorough of a home inspection will be done when I apply for a Multiple Animal Permit?

The thoroughness of the inspection is dependent upon the MAP permit request and the review of the information contained in the request. If you are asking to have 4 dogs and live in an apartment complex with 16 units, you may

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be subjected to a more thorough home inspection than someone who makes the same request who lives in an area with a 1/2 acre lawn. There may also be a more thorough inspection if you are requesting to have 20 dogs or cats versus someone asking to have 4 dogs or cats. Under most circumstances, if you provide sufficient information with your application, the home inspection will be less intrusive and quicker.

I regularly walk my pet around my neighborhood. What are my responsibilities?

First, your dog must be on a leash. Second, if your dog “does its business” on public or private property not owned by you, you are required to remove any feces left by the animal. Failure to do so could result in fines of up to \$500 for failure to have your dog on a leash and up to an additional \$500 for failing to clean up their feces.

My neighbor is not very good at picking up the feces left by their dogs in their yard. I have spoken to them about the odor, but they aren't being very neighborly! What can I do?

The owner or occupant is responsible to ensure their property is kept free of feces. If the accumulation of feces interferes with the use or enjoyment of your property due to odors, visual blight, or attraction of insects or pests, Animal Control will provide the owner or occupant with written notice to clean up the property within 48 hours. Failure to do so can result in fines up to \$500 and impoundment of the animals and potentially a jail sentence if they refuse to clean up the property.

Do I have to keep my cat on a leash?

No. However, as a cat owner you are required to take steps to confine the animal to your property or keep them under your physical control.

My neighbors have a dog that barks and howls all night long, I've spoken to them about it but they have failed to do anything to let me sleep. What can I do?

Animal Control can investigate and will advise you to prepare a written statement signed by you and another neighbor outlining the behavior, keep a bark log, and obtain video or audio tape of the noise or they may seek to come to your residence and document the behavior themselves. If the investigation and complaint reveals that animal is allowed to bark, howl, or make other sounds common to its species in excess, continuously for a period of fifteen or more minutes or intermittent noise for a period of thirty or more minutes, the owner can be cited and may face fines up to \$500 and impoundment and removal of the animals.

I was walking my dog and a dog running free charged us causing me to fear for the safety of my dog and myself, what can I do?

Call Animal Control immediately. City ordinances require pet owners to keep their pet in their yard or on a leash, and any animal running free and charging you could result in charges being filed against the pet owner for animal at large. Also, depending upon the circumstances, the owner could be charged with nuisance or dangerous animal violations as well. If you are in reasonable fear for your safety and took defensive action to protect yourself or your dog, the owner of the pet could be charged with dangerous animal violations. If the dog chased you and your pet, that could be a nuisance animal violation.

My unregistered dog was picked up and taken to the Shelter. How much will I have to pay to recover it?

The redemption fees are covered in the [Shelter Fee List](#).

I accidentally hit a dog while driving to work this morning, what are my responsibilities when I hit an animal while driving?

First you need to stop and render aid if possible. Then you must notify Animal Control at the Police Department by calling 406-455-8492 (Dial 0 for Dispatch - DO NOT leave a message) as quickly as possible and let them know about the collision and the injuries to the animal.

I want to have an exotic animal/wild animal as a pet – are there any special requirements?

Yes. First contact Animal Control at the Police Department by calling 406-455-8492 and inquire if the animal you

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want to possess is allowed within the city limits. Depending on the type of animal, a wild life animal license certificate may be required.

Where do I go to learn more about animals in the City of Great Falls?

The City Code, Title 6 includes information on Animals. [Chapter 8 \(Animals\)](#) includes the city's rules and regulations/codes regarding animals and [Chapter 10](#) has information on bees.

Are donations I make to the Great Falls Animal Shelter tax deductible?

Yes! Cash and in-kind donations to our organization are tax deductible. Our Tax ID is 81-6001269. Your donation can be designated to be used for the Guardian Angel Fund, the Adoption Fund or the Help Us Grow Project. All donations stay here at the Shelter. We are considered a municipal shelter, or a governmental agency/unit; donations are deductible under the IRS code 170(c). All donations stay within our organization and help us fund for the care of sheltered animals, assist in adoption costs or shelter improvements.

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