



Pet Ownership Guide for Residents of Hightstown



West Windsor Health Department
Serving West Windsor, Robbinsville, and Hightstown
(609) 936-8400



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

This booklet serves as a guide for pet owners living in Hightstown. Within the booklet, you'll find information on pet licensing, pet-related laws, and other resources you may find useful as a dog or cat owner.

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PET LICENSING

Pet licensing: Dogs and cats are required to be licensed annually. License applications are available at the links below or through the Office of the Borough Clerk at (609) 490-5100. For more information, visit the Animal Control Page of the Hightstown Borough website.

2025 Dog License Application: hightstownborough.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Dog-license-application_2025.pdf

2025 Cat License Application: hightstownborough.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Cat-license-application_2025.pdf

Dog Licensing:

- Licensing of your dog requires a rabies certification valid through October 31st of the current licensing year. Rabies vaccinations must be current at the time of licensing.
- If your dog has been neutered or spayed, you must present documentation, such as a certificate or veterinary bill, the first time the dog is licensed.
- Licenses are valid January 1st through December 31st of each year.
- Hightstown Borough limits the ownership of dogs to two (2) per household.



Cat Licensing:

- Licensing of cats is required by ordinance.
- Rabies vaccination must be current at the time of licensing.
- Licenses are valid July 1st through June 30th of each year.
- The maximum fee per household is \$30.00 regardless of the number of cats licensed per home.



ANIMAL CONTROL AND HUMANE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER (HLEO)

While both handle animal-related issues, Animal Control Officers and Humane Law Enforcement Officers (HLEOs) have different roles and responsibilities in Hightstown. See below for the duties of each type of officer. **Please note, both the Animal Control Officers and the Humane Law Enforcement Officers can be reached through the Hightstown Police at (609) 448-1234 (choose option 1).**

Animal Control Officers:

Animal control services in Hightstown Borough are provided through a professional services agreement with a New Jersey certified Animal Control Officer (ACO). The ACO reports directly to the Borough Administrator and works closely with the Police Department and the Health Departments to enforce all state and municipal regulations related to the animal population in the township. Animal control officers respond to the following situations:

- Animal bites
- Lost/found pets
- Stray animals

Humane Law Enforcement Officers:

The Hightstown Police Department has assigned officers to serve as Humane Law Enforcement Officers who are responsible to conduct animal cruelty investigations within the Borough.

Hightstown's HLEOs are responsible for enforcing animal welfare and animal cruelty laws of the State of N.J. under Title 4: Agriculture and Domestic Animals and N.J.S.A. 2C:33-31 and 32, along with any other related laws as a result of the investigation. They are trained to investigate and will sign complaints concerning confirmed violations of animal cruelty, including:

- Neglect of animal, including failure to provide: Food and water, clean and sanitary protection from weather and necessary veterinary care.
- Cruelty to animal: A person commits an offense if the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly ill-treats, overloads, beats, tortures, abandons or abuses an animal.

To report suspected animal cruelty or neglect, please contact the Hightstown Police Department at (609) 448-1234, option 1.

PET OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Please see below for “Guidelines for Responsible Pet Ownership” from the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Owning a pet is a privilege and should result in a mutually beneficial relationship. The benefits of pet ownership come with responsibilities. These include:

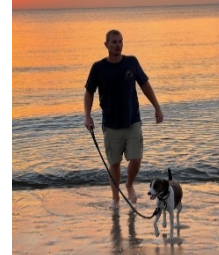
- Lifelong care of the pet. This means committing to the relationship for your pet's entire life.
- Selecting a pet that is suited to your home and lifestyle and avoiding impulsive decisions.
- Recognizing that owning a pet(s) requires an investment of time and money.
- Keeping only the type and number of pets for which you can provide an appropriate and safe environment. This includes appropriate food, water, shelter, health care and companionship.
- Animals that spend extended periods of time outside require habitats that protect their health, safety, and welfare. Outdoor confinement of an animal should include provisions to minimize distress or discomfort to the animal, and assure access to appropriate food, water, and shelter from extreme weather conditions.
- Ensuring pets are properly identified (i.e., tags, microchips, or tattoos) and that their registration information in associated databases is kept up to date.
- Adhering to local ordinances, including licensing and leash requirements.
- Helping to manage overpopulation by controlling your pet(s)' reproduction through managed breeding, containment, or spay/neuter. Establishing and maintaining a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.
- Providing preventive (e.g., vaccinations, parasite control) and therapeutic health care for the life of your pet(s) in consultation with, and as recommended by, your veterinarian.
- Socialization and appropriate training for your pet(s) to facilitate their wellbeing and the wellbeing of other animals and people.
- Preventing your pet(s) from negatively impacting other people, animals and the environment. This includes proper waste disposal, noise control, and not allowing pet(s) to stray or become feral.
- Providing exercise and mental stimulation appropriate to your pet(s)' age, breed, and health status.
- Include your pets in your planning for an emergency or disaster, including assembling an evacuation kit.
- Making arrangements for the care of your pet when or if you are unable to do so.
- Recognizing declines in your pet(s)' quality of life and making decisions in consultation with your veterinarian regarding appropriate end-of-life care (e.g., palliative care, hospice, euthanasia).

LEASH LAW & REMOVAL OF PET WASTE

Hightstown enforces several pet-related ordinances, two of which are highlighted below.

Leashing of Dogs

Dogs must be kept on a leash (six feet in length at the most) in all public places and public streets within Hightstown. Dogs must also be accompanied by someone over the age of 12 years.



Removal of Pet Waste

All pet owners and keepers are required to immediately and properly dispose of their pet's solid waste deposited on any property, public or private, not owned or possessed by that person.

For animal-related ordinances in Hightstown, visit: ecode360.com/38299681

ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS

To ensure all dog, pet and service animal owners and caretakers have a basic understanding of these newly enacted legal requirements, a brief, general description of the requirements and prohibitions and a guide to compliance is provided on the West Windsor Health Department website, on the Animal Licensing page (westwindsornj.org/animal-licensing). If you suspect animal cruelty or abuse, call the Hightstown Police Department at (609) 448-1234.

LOST & FOUND PETS

There may be an occasion when a pet is lost or found by a resident. Report lost or found pets to the Hightstown Police Department at (609) 448-1234. Read on for tips to prevent lost pets, as well as what you can do if your pet is lost.

Tips to Prevent Lost Pets:

- Get a collar with dog ID tags and/or a QR code to scan for your contact information.
- Secure your yard and home with a fence in the front- and backyard.
- Spay or neuter your pets to keep them from wandering off in search of other pets.
- Teach your pet basic commands, such as “come” and “stay.”

- Microchip your pet.

Steps to Take if You Lose Your Pet:

- Inform Hightstown Police Department.
- Call and visit local animal shelters to check for your pet.
- Use social media and community groups to share missing pet information.
- Create pet photo poster and post in local stores, restaurants, post offices, etc.
- Use private services dedicated to finding lost pets.
- Beware of scams.
 - If a stranger claims to have found your pet, ask them to describe your pet and send you a photo.
 - Be wary of anyone who asks for money before they'll return your pet.
 - Omit one identifying characteristic when advertising a lost pet and be skeptical of anyone who claims to have found your pet but can't describe this characteristic.

For more information on lost and found pets, visit the Animal Control page on the Hightstown Police Department website.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Call the Hightstown Police non-emergency dispatch number at (609) 448-1234 to report:

- Dog bites or vicious dogs
- Animal cruelty or neglect
- Sick or injured wildlife
- Human exposure/encounters with potentially rabid wildlife
- Lost or found dog/cat



Call the West Windsor Health Department at (609) 936-8400 for questions/concerns about:

- Rabies or potential exposure to rabies
- Rabies vaccination clinics

Call the Hightstown Borough Clerk at (609) 490-5100 for questions about:

- Dog and cat licensing

EMERGENCY PLAN FOR YOUR PET

In the event of an emergency, pet owners should have a plan of evacuation for themselves and their pets. Questions to ask yourself in preparation for an emergency include the following:

1. If I need to evacuate, where can I take my pet? List potential locations below:

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

2. Will I be able to bring my pet to a local emergency shelter? If so, where is the shelter located?

Local Emergency Shelter Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

3. Are there pet-friendly hotels in the area I am evacuating? If so, record name, location and contact for pet-friendly hotels.

Hotel Name: _____

Hotel Address: _____

Hotel Phone Number: _____

Hotel Name: _____

Hotel Address: _____

Hotel Phone Number: _____

4. If I become separated from my pet during an emergency, does my pet have adequate identification to re-connect with me/my family?

Collar with Phone Number Tag: Yes No

Microchip: Yes No

5. In the event of a medical emergency for my pet, do I have the contact number for veterinarian services?

Veterinarian Office: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Alternative Veterinarian Office: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Below please find an emergency plan checklist to complete for each pet you own.



- 🍏 Food, drinking water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and a manual can opener if your pet eats canned food.
- 🍏 Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport pets safely.
- 🍏 Medications and copies of medical records stored in a waterproof container.
- 🍏 A first aid kit.
- 🍏 Current photos of you with your pet(s) in case they get lost.
- 🍏 Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- 🍏 Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.
- 🍏 Veterinarian name and contact number.

