

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2010 RECONVENED SESSION

## CHAPTER 875

*An Act to amend and reenact §§ 3.2-6503 and 3.2-6574 of the Code of Virginia, relating to animal cruelty; penalty.*

[H 281]

Approved May 21, 2010

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 3.2-6503 and 3.2-6574 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 3.2-6503. Care of companion animals by owner; penalty.

A. Each owner shall provide for each of his companion animals:

1. Adequate feed;
2. Adequate water;
3. Adequate shelter that is properly cleaned;
4. Adequate space in the primary enclosure for the particular type of animal depending upon its age, size, species, and weight;
5. Adequate exercise;
6. Adequate care, treatment, and transportation; and
7. Veterinary care when needed ~~or~~ to prevent suffering or disease transmission.

The provisions of this section shall also apply to every pound, animal shelter, or other releasing agency, and every foster care provider, dealer, pet shop, exhibitor, kennel, groomer, and boarding establishment. This section shall not require that animals used as food for other animals be euthanized.

B. Violation of this section is a Class 4 misdemeanor. *A second or subsequent violation of subdivision A 1, A 2, A 3, or A 7 is a Class 2 misdemeanor and a second or subsequent violation of subdivision A 4, A 5, or A 6 is a Class 3 misdemeanor.*

§ 3.2-6574. Sterilization of adopted dogs and cats; enforcement; civil penalty.

A. Every new owner of a dog or cat adopted from a releasing agency shall cause to be sterilized the dog or cat pursuant to the agreement required by subdivision 2 of subsection B of this article.

B. A dog or cat shall not be released for adoption from a releasing agency unless:

1. The animal has already been sterilized; or
2. The individual adopting the animal signs an agreement to have the animal sterilized by a licensed veterinarian: (i) within 30 days of the adoption, if the animal is sexually mature; or (ii) within 30 days after the animal reaches six months of age, if the animal is not sexually mature at the time of adoption.

C. A releasing agency may extend for 30 days the date by which a dog or cat must be sterilized on presentation of a written report from a veterinarian stating that the life or health of the adopted animal may be jeopardized by sterilization. In cases involving extenuating circumstances, the veterinarian and the releasing agency may negotiate the terms of an extension of the date by which the animal must be sterilized.

D. Nothing in this section shall preclude the sterilization of a sexually immature dog or cat upon the written agreement of the veterinarian, the releasing agency, and the new owner.

E. Upon the petition of an animal control officer, humane investigator, the State Veterinarian or a State Veterinarian's representative to the district court of the county or city where a violation of this article occurs, the court may order the new owner to take any steps necessary to comply with the requirements of this article. This remedy shall be exclusive of and in addition to any civil penalty that may be imposed under this article.

F. Any person who violates subsection A or B of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed ~~\$50~~ \$250.