

ORDINANCE NO 2025-2026 #15

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOG OWNERS, PROHIBITING DOGS RUNNING AT LARGE, DANGEROUS DOGS, AND PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES.

WHEREAS, by the City Council of the City of Sumiton, Alabama, to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, dogs running at large and uncontrolled animals may pose risks to persons, property, and other animals; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds it necessary to clearly establish the responsibility of dog owners for the control and conduct of their dogs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Sumiton, Alabama, as follows:

Section 1. Definitions

For the purposes of this ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Dog - Any canine, male or female.

Owner - Any person, firm, corporation, or entity owning, keeping, harboring, possessing, or having care, custody, or control of a dog.

At Large - A dog that is off the premises of its owner and not under the immediate control of a responsible person.

Premises - The real property owned or lawfully occupied by the dog's owner.

Dangerous Dog - A dog meeting the criteria set forth in Section 6 of this ordinance.

Section 2. Owner Responsibility

The owner of any dog within the corporate limits of the City of Sumiton shall be fully responsible for the care, control, and conduct, at all times.

Section 3. Dogs Running at Large Prohibited

No owner shall permit any dog to run at large within the corporate limits of the City of Sumiton.

Dogs shall be confined to the owner's premises by a fence, enclosure, or other suitable means, or shall be kept under the immediate control of a responsible person when off the premises.

Allowing a dog to roam freely off the owner's premises and not under control of the owner shall constitute a violation of this ordinance.

Section 4. Owners Control

Any dog off the owner's premises shall always be under the direct control of a responsible person.

Section 5. Damage and Public Nuisance

Owners shall be responsible for any injury or damage to persons, property, or animals caused by their dogs. No owner shall permit a dog to become a public nuisance, including but not limited to excessive barking, aggressive behavior, or trespassing upon private or public property.

Section 6. Dangerous Dogs

A. Declaration of a Dangerous Dog

A dog shall be deemed a dangerous dog if it:

Has attacked, bitten, or inflicted injury upon a person without provocation; or
Has killed or seriously injured another domestic animal while off the owner's premises; or

Exhibits aggressive behavior that would cause a reasonable person to believe the dog poses an immediate threat to public safety; or
The dog has been declared dangerous by a court of competent jurisdiction or by the City of Sumiton following an investigation.

B. Owner Responsibilities for Dangerous Dogs

The owner of a dangerous dog shall:

Securely confine the dog, at all times, within a locked enclosure or fence designed to prevent escape and prevent entry by the public.

When off the owner's premises, ensure the dog is muzzled and restrained by leash not exceeding six (6) feet in length and under the control of a responsible adult.

Post clearly visible warning signs on the premises indicating the presence of a dangerous dog.

Take all reasonable measures to prevent the dog from attacking, chasing, or threatening persons or animals.

C. Prohibited Conduct

No dangerous dog shall be permitted to run at large.

No dangerous dog shall be kept in a manner that endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the public.

D. Impoundment

Any dangerous dog found in violation of this ordinance may be immediately required to be impounded as directed by law enforcement or an authorized city official in accordance with applicable law.

E. No Breed-Specific Determination

No dog shall be deemed dangerous solely because of its breed, size or appearance. Determination shall be based solely on behavior and actions.

Section 7. Enforcement

This ordinance shall be enforced by the City of Sumiton law enforcement officers or other authorized officials.

Section 8. Penalties

Any person violating this ordinance shall be subject to penalties as provided by the general penalty provisions of the City of Sumiton's Ordinances or as otherwise provided by law.

Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

Violations involving dangerous dogs may be subject to enhanced penalties as allowed by law.

Section 9. Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or provision of this ordinance is held invalid or unconstitutional, such holding shall not affect the validity of the portions.

Section 10. Repealed

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 11. Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage and adoption as provided by law.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 3rd day of February 2026.

Mayor, City of Sumiton, Alabama

City Clerk