

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

# New Pit Bull Terrier Bill FACT SHEET



## GENERAL QUESTIONS

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### **What is the name of this bill?**

The bill, CB-097-2025, lifts the County's Pit Bull Terrier ban and provides for a pilot program to foster and adopt Pit Bull Terriers in the County. It also revises certain definitions, increases certain civil penalties, expands the leash law, and expands the type of dangerous animals with requirements found in the County Code.

### **When did the ban lift?**

The Prince George's County Council voted to end the 27-year ban on November 18, 2025. The new rules are effective immediately, along with the associated licensing and permit regulations.

### **Which dog breeds were affected by the ban?**

The ban targeted Staffordshire Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, American Pit Bull Terriers, and any dog that appeared to be predominantly of these breeds. The new legislation lifts the ban on all dogs classified as pit bulls or terriers, focusing instead on individual animal behavior.

### **Why was the ban lifted?**

The ban was lifted because it was deemed ineffective and costly to enforce, costing an estimated \$3 million annually while thousands of pit bull-type dogs continued to live in the county. The new law emphasizes "animal parenting" and recognizes that bad behavior is an owner issue, not a breed-specific issue.

### **What do the new rules mean for HOA communities or complexes that don't allow this breed of dog?**

HOA communities and complexes are currently allowed under county law to have their own restrictions for size or breed. Any person or entity should familiarize themselves with the ADA rules regarding dogs, as those may supersede any restrictions.

### **Can renters now adopt pit bull-type terriers?**

Under these new rules, any person may adopt any available dog in our facility, irrespective of breed. The renters' ability to own a dog in their rented home depends on the specific terms of their lease.

### **Who determines the breed of the dog? How is that done?**

There are various factors that determine a dog's breed, which is typically identified visually. If an animal's breed is identified as something other than its original classification while in the facility, it can be reviewed for a potential breed change through internal management approval.



## LEASH LAWS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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### **What are the new leash law requirements?**

The law now requires all dogs to be on a leash, with the maximum leash length expanded to 10 feet. Electronic collars and retractable leashes are no longer considered adequate restraints under the new rules.

### **What defines an “animal at large”?**

The law clarifies the definition of “animal at large” and increases the owner’s responsibility for securing their pets. Common areas in shared living spaces (like apartment hallways or HOA common areas) are not considered part of the owner’s premises, meaning a dog must be leashed in those areas.

### **What happens if a dog is deemed dangerous?**

The legislation increases penalties for any dog found to be dangerous, regardless of its breed. Owners are held directly responsible for damage or injury caused by their animals.

### **What are the fines?**

The civil penalties for dangerous dogs are substantial, with a first violation resulting in a \$500 fine, a second offense resulting in \$1,500 fine, and a third offense resulting in \$3,000 fine.

### **What is the definition of a dangerous dog, and who determines that definition?**

The definition of a dangerous dog is outlined in the County code. This is determined through a review by the County Council and approval by the County Executive.



## OWNER REQUIREMENTS, TRAINING, AND RESOURCES

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### **Do I need a special permit to own a dog that was formerly banned?**

Yes, owners interested in fostering or adopting a previously banned dog through the new pilot program must apply for a special permit and pay an associated fee.

### **How long is the pilot program?**

The pilot program will be reviewed annually for its efficacy.

### **What is the associated fee for the special permit?**

The fee for bully breeds will be the same as other breeds, but they will be identified by breed.

### **How does the shelter decide which dogs are ready for adoption?**

All animals in our facility are assessed as soon as they arrive. We have multiple daily interactions with each animal through their hold period. We look for any possible issues during that process and shift animals into behavior rooms to monitor for any observed changes.

### **Will PGC offer pet parenting or animal handling classes? If so, what is the process, frequency, and cost?**

We will offer a variety of courses, both online and in-person.

### **Is dog owner training mandatory?**

The training will be mandatory for individuals who own bully breeds. For those who are found to need additional help or training, we will approach each on a case-by-case basis, including potentially dangerous and high-risk dogs.

### **Will these pets be included in the foster-to-adopt program?**

Yes, they will be. We won't have any dogs that are restricted from any process due to breed.

**Do I need any type of insurance to adopt one of these dogs?**

There is no insurance required by the County code.

**Is a home visit required before adoption is complete?**

No home visit is required for any of our dog adoptions, including those of bully breeds.

**Will the County require me to have any specific confinement or pet supplies at home before adopting one of these dogs?**

There are no specific requirements for any animal in the county for your home based on breed. We ask that all animals be housed appropriately, given the resources they need to thrive, and be loved.

**Are there other requirements for owning a dog in the County?**

Yes, all dogs in Prince George's County are required to be licensed, microchipped, and spayed or neutered. A valid rabies vaccination certificate is required for licensing.

**What about dogs that were already in the County?**

Registered dogs currently residing in the county are grandfathered in, provided they continue to meet registration and updated requirements

**What if a dog adopted under the new law later shows aggressive behavior?**

The first thing to do if an animal exhibits aggressive behavior is to work on training it and seek professional help as needed. There are many animals that may exhibit aggression, and it is essential to prioritize the safety of both the community and your animal. Most aggression can be fixed through patience and training.

**How can adopters receive support after adoption?**

Please start by contacting your adoption counselor. They are the best starting point for what's happening with your adopted animals and how to help them transition and thrive in a new space.

