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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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After an internal review, MDARD policy and interpretation of holding times for dogs and cats at animal shelters and requirements for rabies vaccinations in kennel situations are as follows:

Holding Times

Stray dogs and cats without identification noting the owner's address or without some type of identification that leads to an owner's address must be held for four days. Animals with identification noting the owner's address or identification that leads to an owner's address (e.g., microchip, tattoo, dog license), must be held for seven days from the date the required written notice is sent to the owner alerting the owner the animal is at the shelter.

"Day" should be interpreted to mean a 24-hour period which is not a State holiday or weekend (Saturday or Sunday), regardless of the days the shelter is actually open. In addition, "day" would not include the first day of acquisition. If an animal only wearing a collar was received by a shelter on a Saturday, the animal would need to be held for four days-the following Friday, assuming no holidays fell during that week, since neither weekends nor the first day of acquisition count. Owner surrendered animals, or animals which are ill or injured to the extent that holding the animals would result in undue suffering, are not subject to a holding time.

Rabies Vaccinations in Kennel Situations

Section 10 of The Dog Law (1919, Public Act 339, as amended) clearly states that "proof of vaccination against rabies shall not be required" meaning that dogs kept under a kennel license are not required under state law to be vaccinated against rabies. A local municipality can enact an ordinance or other mechanism requiring all dogs kept under a kennel license to be currently vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Note, however, that dogs kept under a kennel license pursuant to state law must remain in the kennel unless temporarily being used for hunting, breeding, trail, or show, unless temporarily out and on a leash.

MDARD is asking that the above replace all past correspondences received from the department regarding holding times and rabies vaccinations for dogs kept under kennel licenses, and be strictly followed. For questions or concerns regarding holding times or rabies vaccines for dogs kept under kennel licenses, please contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at 517-373-1077.

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