



Dog sellers, rescuers, shelters:

Get on mailing list now for license application; new law takes effect June 1

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MADISON – Wisconsin’s new law to protect dogs and the people who buy or adopt them has cleared its final hurdle and animal health authorities are gearing up to begin licensing some dog breeders and other businesses and groups involved in dog sales and adoptions.

The Legislature has approved ATCP 16, a rule specifying standards for animal care, the final step in enacting the law known as Wisconsin Act 90. It takes effect June 1.

“We have a long list of breeders and other organizations and individuals who have requested license applications to us since the law was first passed in 2009, and we’ll start with those,” said Dr. Yvonne Bellay, who oversees the new program for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

“If you know you’ll need a license and haven’t placed your name on that list, or you’re unsure, please call or email us. We can tell you if you’re exempt, or get an application to you if you need it. Anyone who knows of an operation that should be licensed can also contact us by phone or email, so we can follow up.”

To inquire about licensing or to be placed on the mailing list for applications, call 608-224-4872 or email DATCPanimals@wi.gov.

Wisconsin Act 90 requires licensing and inspection for some dog selling/adopting operations, which had been almost entirely unregulated until now. It takes effect June 1. Operations that will need licenses are:

- Dog breeders or breeding facilities selling at least 25 dogs a year from at least 3 litters
- Dog dealers selling at least 25 dogs a year in Wisconsin, even if the dealer lives in a different state
- Non-profit animal facilities that shelter at least 25 dogs a year, such as humane societies, rescue groups, and other animal shelter and welfare groups
- Animal control facilities that contract with a city, village, town or county

The law does not apply to anyone who sells, shelters or adopts out fewer than 25 dogs annually, sporting dog trainers, boarding facilities or pet owners.

The Department will begin mailing out license application materials about mid-April. Applicants will receive a temporary license until an inspector can visit their facilities to be sure they meet the licensing standards. Inspectors will work with them to correct any shortcomings, and they will then receive a permanent license if their facilities and animal care meet criteria.

Wisconsin Act 90 protects dogs and consumers who buy and adopt them. In addition to the licensing requirement, it also requires that dogs be examined by a veterinarian before they are sold or adopted, and prohibits sale of puppies younger than 7 weeks. The act directed the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to write an “administrative rule” that would spell out the requirements for kennels and other facilities and for care of dogs. This rule, called ATCP 16, received legislative approval March 21.

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