

# Dog License FAQs

## When are dog licenses available?

Licenses are available for purchase year-round but must be renewed annually Dec. 1 – Jan. 31.

## How much does a license cost?

Dog licenses cost \$20 for dogs that have been spayed or neutered, and \$24 for those dogs who are unaltered. If an owner fails to register their dog before the Jan. 31 deadline, they can be cited and charged a penalty fee of \$40 or \$48 – double the cost of renewal.

## Why should I license my dog?

In Ohio, licensing your dog is the law (Ohio Revised Code 955.01). Ohio Revised Code 955.10 then further requires all dogs three months and older to always wear a current-year license. Aside from it being the law, there are plenty of benefits to licensing your dog:

- **Licenses are the only “official” legal proof of ownership**  
Because Ohio requires all dogs three months and older to be licensed, it is the only “official” proof that a dog belongs to someone – not photos, not veterinarian records, not even microchips! A license lets finders know a dog has a home and a family that is looking for them. Plus, it makes reuniting dogs with their family super simple.
- **Licenses can be traced back to an owner 24 hours a day, seven days a week**  
If your dog gets lost, anyone that finds them can look up their license tag number at [www.mcoho.org/dogs](http://www.mcoho.org/dogs) and return them home safely, without needing to involve the shelter or anyone else.
- **Licenses are inexpensive compared to fines and fees if your dog is caught without one**  
Dog licenses are \$20 or \$24, depending on whether your pet is spayed or neutered. In comparison, if your unlicensed dog gets lost and ends up at the shelter, one single day of fines and fees cost at least \$85.
- **Licenses allow us to quickly ID owners, so they can make critical decisions for their dog**  
If your dog is brought to the shelter and has routine medical needs or requires emergency care, a license allows us to contact you quickly, giving you the opportunity to decide what is best for your pet.
- **Licenses provide extra time to find and reunite with your dog**  
If a dog is lost and ends up at the Animal Resource Center (ARC), a license ensures that the shelter will hold them for 14 days to allow the owner time to find and reunite with their pet. In comparison, unlicensed dogs are guaranteed a legal stray hold of only three days before becoming legal property of the ARC.

## What happens if I don't license my dog?

If you choose not to license your dog, you're actively choosing to break the law. Aside from costly fines and penalties if you are caught, not licensing your dog puts your pup at risk if they do get lost. If a neighbor finds your dog roaming without a license, they may have difficulty connecting with you to return your dog home safely.

Shelters, no matter how nice or clean, are extremely stressful for dogs; this is not somewhere you want your pet to end up if you can avoid it. All the unfamiliar sights, sounds, smells, and people cause stress, and your pup is much more likely to get sick. If your pet does end up at the Montgomery County Animal Resource Center (ARC), the legal stray hold for an unlicensed dog is three days, compared to 14 days for a licensed dog. This means after three days, a dog legally becomes property of the ARC and all decisions on health, adoption, humane euthanasia, or rescue fall to ARC staff.

## Where/how can I purchase a dog license?

Dog licenses may be purchased one of three ways:

- **Online** at [www.mochio.org/dogs](http://www.mochio.org/dogs)
- **In person** at any of the outposts listed on the [Auditor's dog license website](#), the Auditor's Office or the Animal Resource Center
- **By mail** using the license renewal reminder application, or by visiting the Auditor's dog license website and printing the [Dog License Application](#) Form. All dog license forms should be mailed with payment to:

Montgomery County Dog Licenses  
PO Box 972  
Dayton, OH 45422-1031

## What if my dog loses their license tag?

If a dog's tag is lost, the County Auditor will issue a duplicate tag for \$5.

## What if I rehome my dog?

If you rehome your dog, transfer of the license and registration must be done through the Auditor's Office and costs \$5. Ensure you take this step to officially transfer ownership when rehoming your dog.