

**§3907. Definitions**

As used in this Part, and in every law relating to or affecting animals, unless the context indicates otherwise, the following terms have the following meanings. [PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**1. Act.** "Act" means the Animal Welfare Act.  
[RR 2005, c. 2, §10 (COR).]

**1-A. Abandoned dog.**  
[PL 2013, c. 115, §1 (RP).]

**1-B. Abandoned animal.** "Abandoned animal" means an animal that has been deserted by its owner or keeper, excluding animals that are part of a population control effort.  
[PL 2013, c. 115, §2 (NEW).]

**2. Animal.** "Animal" means every living, sentient creature not a human being.  
[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**3. Animal control.** "Animal control" means control of dogs, cats, and domesticated or undomesticated animals in accordance with section 3948.  
[PL 1993, c. 468, §4 (AMD).]

**4. Animal control officer.** "Animal control officer" means the person appointed periodically by a municipality pursuant to chapter 725.  
[PL 1995, c. 490, §1 (AMD).]

**5. Animal control shelter.**  
[PL 1993, c. 657, §2 (RP).]

**5-A. Animal shelter.** "Animal shelter" means a:

A. Facility that houses domesticated animals and operates for the purpose of providing stray, abandoned, abused or owner-surrendered animals with sanctuary or finding the animals temporary or permanent adoptive homes; or [PL 2015, c. 223, §1 (NEW).]

B. Rescue group. [PL 2015, c. 223, §1 (NEW).]  
[PL 2015, c. 223, §1 (RPR).]

**6. At large.** "At large" means off the premises of the owner and not under the control of any person whose personal presence and attention would reasonably control the conduct of the animal.  
[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**7. Board.**  
[PL 2005, c. 510, §2 (RP).]

**8. Boarding kennel.** "Boarding kennel" means any place, building, tract of land or abode in or on which 3 or more privately owned companion animals are kept at any one time for their owners in return for a fee or compensation and includes a facility where 3 or more companion animals are kept for training purposes for compensation.  
[PL 2009, c. 343, §3 (AMD).]

**8-A. Breeding kennel.** "Breeding kennel" means a location where 5 or more adult female dogs or cats capable of breeding are kept and some or all of the offspring are offered for sale, sold or exchanged for value or a location where more than 16 dogs or cats raised on the premises are sold to the public in a 12-month period. "Breeding kennel" does not include a kennel licensed by a municipality under section 3923-C when the dogs are kept primarily for hunting, show, training, sledding, competition, field trials or exhibition purposes and not more than 16 dogs are offered for sale, sold or exchanged for value within a 12-month period.  
[PL 2011, c. 100, §1 (AMD).]

**8-B. Bodily injury.** "Bodily injury" has the same meaning as in Title 17-A, section 2, subsection 5.  
[PL 2017, c. 404, §1 (NEW).]

**9. Business day.** "Business day" means any day of the calendar year other than a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.  
[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**9-A. Cat identification.** "Cat identification" means:

A. A registered microchip used in conjunction with a visible collar and tag, with a faceted, reflective ear stud or a tipped or notched ear; [PL 2001, c. 363, §1 (NEW).]

B. A collar or collar and tag worn by the cat that provides the current name, address and telephone number of the owner; or [PL 2001, c. 363, §1 (NEW).]

C. A collar and tag providing the name and address of the animal shelter that issued the tag. [PL 2001, c. 363, §1 (NEW).]  
[PL 2001, c. 363, §1 (NEW).]

**9-B. Cat.** "Cat" means a member of the genus and species known as *Felis catus*.  
[PL 2023, c. 484, §1 (NEW).]

**10. Clerk; municipal clerk.** "Clerk" or "municipal clerk" means the clerk of a municipality, the deputy clerk or assistant clerk, where directed by the clerk, carrying out the duties of this Part.  
[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**11. Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry or the commissioner's duly authorized agent.  
[RR 2021, c. 1, Pt. B, §146 (COR).]

**11-A. Companion animal.** "Companion animal" means a cat or dog.  
[PL 2003, c. 682, §3 (NEW).]

**11-B. Council.** "Council" means the Animal Welfare Advisory Council as established by Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 2-C or its duly authorized agent.  
[PL 2005, c. 510, §4 (NEW).]

**12. Constable.** "Constable" means a law enforcement officer appointed by municipal officers pursuant to law.  
[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**12-A. Equine facility.**  
[PL 1999, c. 498, §1 (RP).]

**12-B. Foster home.**  
[PL 2005, c. 510, §5 (RP).]

**12-C. Dog.** "Dog" means a member of the genus and species known as *canis familiaris*, except that in chapters 720, 721, 725, 727, 729 and 739 "dog" means a member of the genus and species known as *canis familiaris* or any canine, regardless of generation, resulting from the interbreeding of a member of *canis familiaris* with a wolf hybrid.  
[PL 2011, c. 100, §2 (AMD).]

**12-D. Dangerous dog.** "Dangerous dog" means a dog or wolf hybrid that causes the death of or inflicts serious bodily injury on an individual or a domesticated animal who is not trespassing on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises at the time of the injury or death; a dog or wolf hybrid that causes a reasonable and prudent person who is not on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises and is acting in a reasonable and nonaggressive manner to fear imminent serious bodily injury by assaulting or threatening to assault that individual or individual's domesticated animal; or a dog or

wolf hybrid that inflicts bodily injury on an individual or a domesticated animal who is not trespassing on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises at the time of the injury and has previously been determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be a nuisance dog.

"Dangerous dog" does not include:

- A. A dog certified by the State and used for law enforcement use; [PL 2017, c. 404, §2 (NEW).]
- B. A dog or wolf hybrid that injures or threatens to assault an individual who is on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises if the dog or wolf hybrid has no prior history of assault and was provoked by the individual immediately prior to the injury or threatened assault; or [PL 2017, c. 404, §2 (NEW).]
- C. A dog or wolf hybrid that inflicts serious bodily injury on or causes the death of an individual who is committing a crime against an individual or property owned by the dog or wolf hybrid owner or keeper. [PL 2017, c. 404, §2 (NEW).]

For the purposes of this definition, "dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises" means the residence or residences, including buildings and land and motor vehicles, belonging to the owner or keeper of the dog or wolf hybrid.

[PL 2017, c. 404, §2 (RPR).]

**12-E. Feral cat.** "Feral cat" means a cat without owner identification of any kind that consistently exhibits extreme fear in the presence of people.

[PL 2007, c. 439, §3 (NEW).]

**12-F. Dog licensing agent.** "Dog licensing agent" means a veterinarian office or animal shelter that licenses dogs for a municipality.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §3 (NEW).]

**13. Service dog kept for breeding purposes.** "Service dog kept for breeding purposes" means a male or female dog owned by a nonprofit organization for the purpose of producing puppies to be trained as service dogs and living with a resident of the State.

[PL 2007, c. 664, §8 (AMD).]

**14. Service dog kept prior to training.** "Service dog kept prior to training" means a dog under 18 months of age, owned by a nonprofit organization for the purpose of training as a service dog and living temporarily with a resident of the State prior to training.

[PL 2007, c. 664, §9 (AMD).]

**15. Humane agent.** "Humane agent" means an employee of the department who assists in enforcing this Part.

[PL 2001, c. 422, §4 (AMD).]

**15-A. Humane society.**

[PL 1993, c. 657, §4 (RP).]

**15-B. Humanely clean conditions.** "Humanely clean conditions" means that both indoor areas and outdoor enclosures are cleaned on a periodic basis to remove excretions and other waste materials, dirt and trash with sufficient frequency to minimize health hazards and to provide adequately clean living conditions for the species of animal.

[PL 2007, c. 702, §5 (NEW).]

**15-C. Humanely trap.** "Humanely trap" means to trap an animal using traps and trapping methods that are designed to avoid injury to animals to the greatest extent practicable for animal control or animal rescue purposes.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §4 (NEW).]

**16. Keeper.** "Keeper" means a person in possession or control of a dog or other animal. A person becomes the keeper of a stray domesticated animal, other than a dog or livestock, if the person feeds that animal for at least 10 consecutive days.  
[PL 1995, c. 490, §4 (AMD).]

**17. Kennel.** "Kennel" means 5 or more dogs kept in a single location under one ownership for breeding, hunting, show, training, field trials, sledding, competition or exhibition purposes. The sale or exchange of one litter of puppies within a 12-month period alone does not constitute the operation of a kennel.  
[PL 2011, c. 100, §4 (AMD).]

**18. Law enforcement officer.** "Law enforcement officer" means any person who, by virtue of the person's public employment, is vested by law with a duty to maintain public order, enforce any law of this State establishing a civil violation, prosecute offenders or make arrests for crimes, whether that duty extends to all crimes or is limited to specific crimes.  
[RR 2021, c. 1, Pt. B, §147 (COR).]

**18-A. Livestock.** "Livestock" means cattle; equines; sheep; goats; swine; domesticated cervids, fowl and rabbits; members of the family Camelidae, genus lama and genus vicugna; bison; and ratites.  
[PL 2007, c. 439, §4 (AMD).]

**19. Municipality.** "Municipality" means an organized city, town or plantation.  
[PL 1993, c. 657, §5 (AMD).]

**20. Mutilate.** "Mutilate" means to injure or disfigure by irreparably damaging body parts. "Mutilate" does not include conduct performed by a licensed veterinarian or conduct that conforms to accepted veterinary practices.  
[PL 1997, c. 456, §2 (AMD).]

**20-A. Nuisance dog.** "Nuisance dog" means a dog or wolf hybrid that causes bodily injury, other than serious bodily injury, to an individual or a domesticated animal who is not trespassing on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises at the time of the injury; a dog or wolf hybrid that causes a reasonable and prudent person who is not on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises and is acting in a reasonable and nonaggressive manner to fear bodily injury, other than serious bodily injury, by assaulting or threatening to assault that individual or individual's domesticated animal; or a dog or wolf hybrid that causes damage to property or crops not owned by the dog or wolf hybrid owner or keeper while the dog or wolf hybrid is not on the owner's or keeper's premises.

"Nuisance dog" does not include:

- A. A dog certified by the State and used for law enforcement use; [PL 2017, c. 404, §3 (NEW).]
- B. A dog or wolf hybrid that injures or threatens to assault an individual who is on the dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises if the dog or wolf hybrid has no prior history of assault and was provoked by the individual immediately prior to the injury or threatened assault; or [PL 2017, c. 404, §3 (NEW).]
- C. A dog or wolf hybrid that inflicts bodily injury on an individual who is committing a crime against an individual or property owned by the dog or wolf hybrid owner or keeper. [PL 2017, c. 404, §3 (NEW).]

For the purposes of this definition, "dog or wolf hybrid owner's or keeper's premises" means the residence or residences, including buildings and land and motor vehicles, belonging to the owner or keeper of the dog or wolf hybrid.  
[PL 2017, c. 404, §3 (NEW).]

**21. Owner.** "Owner" means a person owning, keeping or harboring a dog or other animal.  
[PL 1993, c. 657, §6 (AMD).]

**22. Person.** "Person" means an individual, corporation, partnership, association or any other legal entity.

[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**22-A. Pet animal.**

[PL 1997, c. 690, §6 (RP).]

**22-B. Pet.** "Pet" means a dog, cat or other domesticated animal commonly kept as a companion, but does not include tamed animals that are ordinarily considered wild animals or livestock.

[PL 1997, c. 690, §7 (AMD).]

**22-C. Pet food supplier.** "Pet food supplier" means any retail location located in the State that sells feeding supplies for pets or livestock.

[PL 2021, c. 99, §5 (NEW).]

**23. Pet shop.** "Pet shop" means a place or vehicle in or on which any dogs, cats, rodents, reptiles, fish, pet birds, exotic birds or exotic animals not born and raised on those premises are kept for the purpose of sale to the public.

[PL 1993, c. 657, §8 (AMD).]

**23-A. Rescue group.** "Rescue group" means an organization or individual that receives domesticated animals that have been abandoned, surrendered or removed from an animal facility or that takes in homeless dogs or cats and sells, gives or otherwise places the animals in private homes.

[PL 2015, c. 223, §2 (AMD).]

**23-B. Population control effort.** "Population control effort" means the activities, programs and projects aimed at reducing the number of cats and dogs without homes, including, but not limited to, the trapping, neutering and vaccinating of feral cats, the trapping of cats for impoundment at an animal shelter and spaying or neutering services for abandoned animals and stray dogs and cats.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §5 (NEW).]

**24. Respective municipality.** "Respective municipality" means, in the case of towns, plantations and cities, the municipality where the dog or ferret is found; in the case of unorganized territories, the municipality near or adjacent to the unorganized territory where the dog or ferret is found; or the designee of that municipality.

[PL 1993, c. 657, §9 (AMD).]

**24-A. Service dog.** "Service dog" means a dog that meets the definition of "service animal" set forth in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 9-E or "assistance animal" set forth in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 1-H.

[PL 2015, c. 457, §5 (AMD).]

**24-B. Serious bodily injury.** "Serious bodily injury" has the same meaning as in Title 17-A, section 2, subsection 23.

[PL 2017, c. 404, §4 (NEW).]

**25. Shelter.**

[PL 1993, c. 657, §10 (RP).]

**25-A. Stray.** "Stray" means off the owner's premises and not under the control of a person.

[PL 1993, c. 657, §11 (NEW).]

**25-B. Small animal.** "Small animal" means a bird, reptile or amphibian or a small mammal, other than a cat or dog, commonly kept as a household pet and that is an unrestricted species designated by the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in rules adopted pursuant to Title 12, chapter 915.

[PL 2013, c. 115, §6 (NEW).]

**26. Torment, torture and cruelty.** "Torment, torture and cruelty" means every act, omission or neglect, whether by the owner or any other person, where unjustifiable physical pain, suffering or death is caused or permitted.

[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**26-A. Unorganized territory.** "Unorganized territory" means all areas located within the jurisdiction of the State, except areas located within organized cities and towns, and Indian reservations. "Unorganized territory" does not include plantations.

[PL 1995, c. 490, §5 (NEW).]

**27. Vertebrate.** "Vertebrate" means a subphylum of chordate animals comprising those having a brain enclosed in a skull or cranium and a segmented spinal column, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish.

[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**28. Warrant.**

[PL 2015, c. 223, §3 (RP).]

**29. Well cared for.** "Well cared for" means that the animal is receiving necessary sustenance, necessary medical attention, proper shelter, protection from the weather and humanely clean conditions and that the animal has not been nor is being injured, overworked, tormented, tortured, abandoned, poisoned, beaten, mutilated or exposed to a poison with the intent that it be taken by the animal.

[PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW).]

**30. Wolf hybrid.** "Wolf hybrid" means a mammal that is the offspring of the reproduction between a species of wild canid or wild canid hybrid and a domestic dog or wild canid hybrid. "Wolf hybrid" includes a mammal that is represented by its owner to be a wolf hybrid, coyote hybrid, coydog or any other kind of wild canid hybrid.

[PL 1999, c. 127, Pt. A, §16 (RPR).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 383, §3 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 622, §FF11 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 779, §§11-15 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 779, §52 (AFF). PL 1993, c. 468, §§4,5 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 657, §§1-11 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 351, §1 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 409, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 490, §§1-5 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 33, §1 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 456, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 690, §§4-8 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 704, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 127, §A16 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 350, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 498, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 363, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 399, §4 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 422, §4 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 334, §2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 536, §2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 682, §3 (AMD). RR 2005, c. 2, §10 (COR). PL 2005, c. 510, §§1-5 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 439, §§3-5 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 664, §§8-10 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 702, §§3-6 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 343, §§3, 4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 403, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 100, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 369, §3 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §6 (REV). PL 2013, c. 115, §§1-6 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 223, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 457, §5 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 404, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 99, §5 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 1, Pt. B, §§146, 147 (COR). PL 2023, c. 484, §1 (AMD).

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