

Questions and Answers about Dog Tethering

1. What is meant by dog chaining or dog tethering?

Chaining or tethering refers to the practice of tying a dog to a stationary object as a means of keeping the animal confined. This does not refer to periods when animals are being walked on a leash.



2. What problems are associated with dog tethering?

Chaining is inhumane and unsafe for dogs.

Dogs are, by nature, social beings who thrive on interaction with people and other animals. A dog kept chained in one spot for months or even years suffers immense psychological damage. A continuously chained dog usually becomes neurotic, anxious, and aggressive.

In many cases, the necks of chained dogs become raw and infected from too-tight collars. Dog tethers can also easily become entangled with other objects, choking or strangling the dogs to death.

Chaining is an extreme safety hazard for people.

Dogs naturally feel protective of their territory. When confronted with a perceived threat, they respond according to their *fight-or-flight* instinct. A chained dog, unable to take flight, often feels forced to fight. A study by the Centers for Disease Control found that chained dogs are 2.8 times more likely to bite. The dogs most likely to bite are male, unneutered and chained.

Tragically, the victims of chained dog attacks are usually children.

3. Are tethered dogs otherwise treated well?

Unfortunately, tethered dogs rarely receive sufficient care. They suffer from sporadic feedings, overturned water bowls, inadequate veterinary care, lack of exercise, and extreme temperatures. They have to eat, sleep, urinate, and defecate in a single confined area. Grass is usually beaten into hard-packed dirt by the dog's continual pacing. Chained dogs are rarely given even minimal affection and are easily ignored by their owners.

4. Should dog chaining or tethering ever be allowed?

To become well-adjusted companion animals, dogs should interact regularly with people and receive regular exercise. Placing an animal on a restraint for short periods for exercise or fresh air is acceptable. Animals kept temporarily tethered should be safely secured so the tether can't become entangled with other objects. Collars should be properly fitted.

Attaching a dog's leash to a clothesline or a pulley run is preferable to fixed-point chaining. However, the best way to confine dogs is to bring them inside or provide them with a fenced area.

5. Who says dog tethering is inhumane?

In 1996, the **United States Department of Agriculture** stated, "Our experience in enforcing the Animal Welfare Act has led us to conclude that continuous confinement of dogs by a tether is inhumane. A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury."

In 1997, the USDA ruled that people and organizations regulated by the Animal Welfare Act cannot keep dogs continuously chained.





The **American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)** has also come out publicly against dog tethering. In a press release for Dog Bite Prevention Week, the AVMA states, "Never tether or chain your dog because this can contribute to aggressive behavior."

6. Don't chained dogs make good guard dogs?

No, the opposite is true. Chained dogs are unable to stop an intruder. Since most chained dogs are unsocialized, they are unable to distinguish a real threat from a family friend or neighborhood child. The best guard dogs are those who live inside the house and are treated as part of the family.

7. Why should we pass a law to ban the continuous chaining or tethering of dogs?

Local animal control advocates receive hundreds calls every year from citizens who are concerned about chained and neglected animals. However, because dog tethering is legal, there is little animal control can do to help the dog. By the time it becomes a clear-cut case of animal cruelty under current legal standards, it is often too late to save the dog.

A dog tethering ban can also make for a safer community. Prohibiting dog chaining can cut down on dog attacks and dog bites against people and animals. Moreover, regulations against chaining gives officers a tool to crack down on illegal dog fighting, since most fighting dogs are kept on chains.

8. Are there laws against dog chaining in other states or communities?

Yes. Connecticut became the first state to pass a statewide ban in 2003 with a law making it illegal to tether a dog for an "unreasonable period" of time. Many other U.S. cities and counties have passed laws banning or carefully regulating chaining.

9. Would passage of this law cost lots of money?

No. Animal control officers are already spending time and resources responding to hundreds of reports of chained, neglected, and abused dogs. A ban would allow animal control officers to fine individuals who are constantly tethering their dogs. This would be a source of additional revenue.

10. Who would be affected by a law to ban dog tethering?

This bill would not apply to situations where a dog is temporarily tied on public property, such as outside a store or restaurant. It would also not apply to situations where dogs are temporarily tethered per government regulation, such as at state parks or camping areas. People who keep their dogs continually chained would be affected by this law.

11. What about people who say they have to chain their dog while they are at work?

There are many alternatives to chaining a dog to a stationary object. Dogs can be kept inside the house, inside a fenced yard, or on a pulley or trolley system. There are many resources available to help people train their dogs to be well-behaved members of the family.

12. Where can I learn more?

Visit www.unchainyourdog.org or www.dogsdeservebetter.org for articles, statistics, photos, ordinance language, and other information about chaining.

