

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA AMENDING CHAPTER 9 ANIMALS, ARTICLE 3 VACCINATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS; OFFICERS' AUTHORITY; ISSUANCE OF CITATIONS AND OTHER ENFORCEMENT MEASURES, SECTION 9.62. ISSUANCE OF ANIMAL LICENSE/IDENTIFICATION TAGS AND VACCINATION CERTIFICATES, GENERAL ORDINANCES, MARTIN COUNTY CODE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS, SEVERABILITY, APPLICABILITY, FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND CODIFICATION.

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Martin County, Florida, is authorized by provisions in Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of Martin County; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 9, Martin County Code of Ordinances sets forth the actions of impoundment, quarantining, disposition, vaccination and license of animals, as well as animal control, care, and treatment.

WHEREAS, microchipping of animals is a means to expedite reunifications between lost pets and owners.

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2025, the Animal Care and Control Oversight Board recommended that the aforementioned ordinance be amended to require that veterinarians who issue certificates of rabies vaccinations to owners and the Tax Collector for cats and dogs that have been vaccinated in Martin County, to also include the microchip number associated with the vaccinated animal.

WHEREAS, a current vaccination certificate, along with a report of a microchip number, would best reflect the current owner of the animal. Maintaining this information within the County would facilitate Animal Control Officers in quickly identifying the current owner of a lost cat or dog that is microchipped.

WHEREAS, to encourage microchipping, the costs of licensing a cat or dog is reduced when such animal is microchipped; therefore, providing the microchip number with the vaccination certificate, would ensure customers are afforded the reduced price.

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector was tasked with collecting a written disaster plan in the event of an emergency for an owner of 5 or more animals to reduce costs of licensing the animals. However, the Tax Collector is not tasked with emergency management of animals in a natural disaster and has never received such a plan from an owner.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, THAT:

PART ONE: AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 9 ANIMALS, ARTICLE 3 VACCINATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS; OFFICERS' AUTHORITY; ISSUANCE OF CITATIONS AND OTHER ENFORCEMENT MEASURES, SECTION 9.62. ISSUANCE OF ANIMAL LICENSE/IDENTIFICATION TAGS AND VACCINATION CERTIFICATES, GENERAL ORDINANCES, MARTIN COUNTY CODE.

Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 9.62 IS hereby amended as follows:

Sec. 9.62. Issuance of animal license/identification tags and vaccination certificates

9.62.A. All owners of dogs and cats, other than community cats meeting the definition in section 9.1 of this chapter, in Martin County shall obtain a Martin County license/identification tag for each dog and cat they own, keep, harbor, maintain, or have in custody, in accordance with the latest date referred to in the following timetable:

1. When the dog or cat reaches the age of six months; or
2. Within 30 calendar days of acquiring the dog or cat that is at least six months old; or
3. Within 30 calendar days of arrival in Martin County as a new resident with a dog or cat that is at least six months old.

License/identification tags must be securely fastened about the animal's neck by a collar or other device allowing the tags to be clearly visible at all times. Failure by an owner to ensure that a required tag remains fastened will result in the animal being labeled as a stray and the owner being in violation of Section 9.90 of this chapter, which may result in the issuance of a citation and impoundment of such animal. Dogs and cats, other than community cats meeting the definition in Section 9.1 of this chapter, housed in a secure enclosure may be exempt from wearing the required tag while kept in the enclosure, provided the tag is securely fastened to a collar/harness and that device is attached to the enclosure housing the dog or cat. The above licensing requirements do not apply to community cats meeting the definition of Section 9.1 of this chapter.

9.62.B. Licensed veterinarians shall issue a rabies vaccination certificate pursuant to subsection 9.61.B of this article and, if applicable, a sterilization certificate, and if determinable, a report of the animal's actual microchip number, to each owner for each animal vaccinated ~~and sterilized~~. Such a certificates and report must accompany each application for a Martin County license/identification tag. ~~If unless~~ the veterinarian issues the license/identification tag on the Tax Collector's Animal Services Unit's behalf, ~~which case only~~ the rabies vaccination certificate, sterilization certificate and microchip report must be submitted to the Tax Collector's Office ~~Animal Services Unit~~. The Tax Collector's Office ~~Animal Services Unit~~ may rely upon such

certificates and report in order to ensure that persons who have obtained such rabies vaccination certificate also obtain a license/identification tag.

9.62.C. Each license/identification tag registration is valid for one year from the date of issuance or date of the rabies vaccination, whichever is earlier, and must be renewed before or at the expiration of such period of time. Any owner who fails to renew a required tag within the designated period shall at a minimum pay a late fee, as established by resolution of the board.

9.62.D. Owners of dogs and cats shall purchase such license/identification tags directly from participating veterinarian's office; the County's designated impoundment facility; or at any branch office of the Martin County Tax Collector. The fees required for license/identification tags are established by resolution of the board. Required fees are based upon whether a dog or cat is micro-chipped, unsterilized or sterilized, and whether a dog is classified as "dangerous" under the provisions of this chapter and state law.

9.62.E. Every licensed veterinarian, acting on behalf of himself/herself or a veterinary hospital or other facility with which he/she is associated, may participate in the licensing/identification program, either by issuing a license/identification tag with each rabies certificate issued or by issuing a license/identification tag for an animal upon determining that the animal has been vaccinated elsewhere, but is not currently licensed in Martin County. The County shall pay veterinarians and the County's designated impoundment facility, respectively, the sum to be determined by resolution of the board for each license/identification tag sold by these parties.

9.62.F. Any person who owns, harbors or maintains five or more dogs, cats, or any combination thereof shall license all such animals at the same time; ~~provided however, upon submission to the Animal Services Unit's of a written plan specifying in detail the steps the owner will take with respect to the animals in the event of a man-made or natural disaster, payment shall be waived for all animals over and above the first five animals; and provided further that any unsterilized animals shall be among the five animals for which licenses are obtained and paid. The written plan will enable the Animal Services Unit's to be better prepared in the event of any man-made or natural disaster.~~

9.62.G. The licensing provisions of this chapter shall not apply to:

1. Any owner who is a nonresident or temporary resident, as defined in this chapter, provided that the owner's cat(s) and/or dog(s) has been vaccinated for rabies in some other jurisdiction, which vaccination remains valid under the laws of Martin County for the duration of the anticipated stay within this County (although all other requirements, including restraint obligations, shall apply); or
2. The ownership, care, custody, or maintenance, in the ordinary course of business, of any cat or dog by a research or veterinary medical facility, government-operated or authorized animal shelter, private nonprofit organization as defined in Section 9.1 of this chapter, or commercial pet shop, provided that

such shelter, facility or shop is operating in accordance with all applicable occupational licensing and zoning requirements, and all applicable state and federal regulations.

3. Community cats meeting the definition of Section 9.1 of this chapter.

9.62.H. No license/identification tag may be transferable from one cat or dog to another, or from one owner to another. Upon transfer of a previously licensed cat or dog to a new owner, such owner shall have a period of 30 calendar days within which to comply with the requirements of this chapter.

PART TWO – CONFLICTING PROVISIONS.

Special acts of the Florida Legislature applicable only to unincorporated areas of Martin County, County ordinances and County resolutions, or parts thereof, in conflict with this ordinance are hereby superseded by this ordinance to the extent of such conflict except for ordinances concerning the adoption or amendment of the Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

PART THREE – SEVERABILITY

If any portion of this ordinance is for any reason held or declared to be unconstitutional, inoperative or void, by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance. If this ordinance or any provision thereof shall be held to be inapplicable to any person, property or circumstances by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect its applicability to any other person, property or circumstances.

PART FOUR – APPLICABILITY OF ORDINANCE

This ordinance shall be applicable throughout the unincorporated area of Martin County and to the incorporated areas of Martin County to the extent permitted by Article VIII, Section 1(f) of the Constitution of the State of Florida.

PART FIVE – FILING WITH DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Clerk be and hereby is directed forthwith to scan this ordinance in accordance with Rule 1B-26.003, Florida Administrative Code, and file same with the Florida Department of State via electronic transmission.

PART SIX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Department of State.

PART SEVEN – CODIFICATION.

Provisions of this ordinance shall be incorporated in the County Code, except parts Two to Seven shall not be codified. The word "ordinance" may be changed to "section," "article" or other word, and the sections of this ordinance may be renumbered or re-lettered.

ADOPTED this _____ day of May, 2026

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

CAROLYN TIMMANN, CLERK OF THE
CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER

SARAH HEARD, CHAIR

APPROVED AS TO FORM & LEGAL
SUFFICIENCY:

ELYSSE A. ELDER, COUNTY ATTORNEY

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