



# Denver Pit Bull Fact Sheet

January 1, 2021

Denver residents voted November 3, 2020, to repeal the pit bull ban. Under [Denver's Ordinance Sec. 8-67](#), restricted breeds (American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, or Staffordshire Bull Terrier) are prohibited ***unless they have been issued a provisional Breed-Restricted Permit.***

This means that Denver residents may not own or keep a pit bull within the city without first obtaining a **Breed-Restricted Permit** from Denver Animal Protection (DAP).

Pit bull-type dogs are defined as any dog displaying a majority of physical traits of any one or more of the specific breeds mentioned above, or any dog exhibiting those distinguishing (physical) characteristics that substantially conform to the standards established by American Kennel Club or United Kennel Club.

The ordinance was officially amended January 1, 2021, and DAP has established an initial **Breed-Restricted Permitting Process** based on the amended language of the ordinance voted into law to help pit bull owners plan for the changes. It is the responsibility of any new owner of an adopted restricted-breed animal to contact DAP to initiate the provisional permitting process.

Information on how to schedule an assessment through Denver Animal Protection is posted at [DenverAnimalShelter.org](http://DenverAnimalShelter.org)

*If your question is not answered below, please review the FAQ that follows.*

## **City of Denver Breed-Restricted Permitting Process:**

Effective immediately, all pit bull owners and adopters must contact Denver Animal Protection to schedule an appointment for a restricted-breed assessment. Assessments will take 30-45 minutes and will be conducted by Denver Animal Protection (DAP) at the [Denver Animal Shelter](#). The assessment fee is \$25 per dog and is non-refundable. No owner or keeper of any pit bull may own or keep more than two (2) pit bulls per household.

Through the assessment process, if your dog is determined **not to have** a majority of the physical characteristics of the restricted breeds, the dog will be allowed in Denver without a permit. The owner will be provided with an official breed evaluation letter stating that the dog was evaluated by Denver Animal Protection. Assessment fees are non-refundable. All dogs in Denver are required to have a rabies vaccination, [city license](#), and be spayed or neutered, or have an intact permit allowing the dog to remain unaltered (which requires a \$150 fee; more information at [DenverAnimalShelter.org](http://DenverAnimalShelter.org)).

If, through the assessment process, your dog is determined **to have** a majority of the physical characteristics of the banned breeds, you will need to follow the application process for obtaining a **Breed-Restricted Permit**.

## ***The application process for a Breed-Restricted Permit to own or keep a pit bull will require the following:***

- Name and address of the owner or keeper where the pit bull will be located
- The names and addresses of two (2) people who may be contacted in the event of an emergency involving the pit bull
- An accurate description of the pit bull and recent photograph

- The payment of the \$30 Breed-Restricted Permit fee (this is in addition to the \$25 assessment fee)
- Proof that the animal has been neutered or spayed, or proof of an [intact permit from DAP](#) that allows the animal to remain unaltered
- Proof that the animal has had a registered microchip implanted
- Proof that the animal has a current rabies vaccination
- Proof that the animal has a [city license](#)
- Any other information that DAP reasonably requires

The fee for the permit is \$30 per animal, and it must be renewed every year for three (3) years (at \$30 per animal per year). If there are no violations\* within that time period, **Breed-Restricted Permit** holders may request to be removed from Breed-Restricted requirements.

\*Examples of potential violations include, **but are not limited to**:

- Off-leash charge
- Lapsed permit charge
- Excrement charge
- Bite charge
- Excessive barking charge
- Potentially dangerous animal/dangerous animal charge

Each violation results in a resetting of the three-year time period, or other consequences. In order to reapply for a **Breed-Restricted Permit**, owners and keepers must show proof that the violation has been corrected.

In addition to the **Breed-Restricted Permit**, each and every dog and cat living within the City and County of Denver is required to have a [city license](#) (\$15 per animal annually, or \$40 for three years) purchased at the time of receiving the Breed-Restricted Permit.

## FAQ

### Are pit bull dogs legal now in Denver?

Restricted breeds are still illegal to own within the City and County of Denver **unless** you have a **Breed-Restricted Permit** for the dog issued by Denver Animal Protection.

### When is the new ordinance active?

The ordinance is in effect as of January 1, 2021. Owners of dogs impounded or evaluated after this date will have their animals returned to them with a breed letter and guidance to apply for and purchase a permit after the new law goes into effect.

### What if I have a dog that has already been determined to be illegal under the old ordinance?

Under the new ordinance, you may bring the dog that was previously illegal back to Denver, but first you must obtain a permit. In order to do this, please bring the breed letter you were previously given to the shelter during normal business hours and request a permit application from the staff at the shelter. An application can also be found through [DenverAnimalShelter.org](#).

### Can I bring my pit bull into Denver now?

You cannot bring a restricted-breed dog into Denver until you have a **Breed-Restricted Permit** issued by Denver Animal Protection.

### I live in another city and I want to bring my pit bull in for a visit. Do I need a permit?

Yes. All suspected pit bull dogs must have a breed evaluation completed at DAP, and if the dog is determined by DAP to be a restricted-breed dog, a permit is required for the dog to be within Denver City and County limits at any time.

**I don't live in Denver and I want to use a doggie day care in Denver. Do I need a permit?**

Yes. All pit bulls must be permitted to be within Denver City and County limits at any time. There is no exception for owned dogs that will be placed at any boarding or day care facility.

**I'm thinking of moving to Denver. Can I purchase the permit online or call and buy the permit before I move?**

Unfortunately, this is not an option. Denver Animal Protection needs to do an evaluation in person of the dog to determine its breed, and then you can purchase the permit if necessary. If you get your dog evaluated by Denver Animal Protection prior to moving, you are welcome to purchase the permit at the same time and then update it when you move to a Denver address.

**Can pit bull dogs be adopted out now by Denver Animal Shelter or other local shelters to Denver residents?**

Yes. Adopters of restricted-breed dogs must schedule a breed evaluation and then purchase a permit if Denver Animal Protection determines your dog to be a restricted-breed dog.

**If I am a Denver resident and adopt a dog from a shelter other than Denver Animal Shelter that is a restricted breed, what do I need to do next?**

Please schedule a breed evaluation and then purchase a permit if Denver Animal Protection determines your dog to be a restricted breed.

**I don't know if my dog is a pit bull. What should I do?**

If you are unsure of your dog's primary breed, you can make an appointment with Denver Animal Protection for a breed assessment. Breed assessments cost \$25. If your dog is determined to have a majority of the physical characteristics of the restricted breeds, you will need to follow the process for obtaining a **Breed-Restricted Permit**.

If it is determined that the dog does not have a majority of the physical characteristics of the restricted breeds, the dog will be allowed in Denver without a permit. The owner will be provided with an official breed evaluation letter stating that the dog was evaluated by Denver Animal Protection. All dogs in Denver are required to have a rabies vaccination, [city license](#) and be spayed or neutered, or have an intact permit.

**How many pit bulls can I have?**

The maximum number of pit bulls that any owner or keeper may have living in your home is two (2).

**Can I bring my pit bull to an off-leash dog park?**

Yes, once your dog has satisfied all of the requirements and been issued a **Breed-Restricted Permit** and [a city license](#), the dog is allowed in any off-leash dog park in the City and County of Denver.

**What are the criteria for my dog being labeled a pit bull?**

Denver Animal Protection team members have been highly trained to evaluate the characteristics of a dog to determine whether it is a restricted breed. Many of these characteristics are apparent only to a trained professional.

**How do I make an appointment for an assessment?**

Information on how to schedule an assessment through Denver Animal Protection is posted at [DenverAnimalShelter.org](#)

**What if I disagree with Denver Animal Protection's assessment of my dog?**

If you dispute the classification of your dog as a pit bull, you may file a written petition for a hearing concerning such classification no later than 7 days after the assessment.

**Why do I need to provide the names and addresses of two people in the application?**

To fulfill the requirements of Denver Ordinance Sec. 8-67, all owners or keepers of a restricted-breed animal must have on file the names and addresses of two contacts.

These two contacts must be people who can take care of the dog or be able to control the dog when you're not available. The people you designate as your contacts can be a family member, a neighbor or a friend, but that person is going to have to come get the dog if it escapes or is in an altercation. It needs to be someone who feels comfortable with and capable of getting the animal under control. This person is acting on your behalf and is responsible only for the care or control of the dog when you are not able to do so.

**What if I don't get a permit for my pit bull(s)?**

If you are stopped by Denver Animal Protection or are reported to DAP and found to be in possession of one or more pit bulls that have not been issued a permit, the following protocols apply:

You will receive a warning and a mandatory request to bring the animal(s) in for an assessment. DAP will perform a follow-up verification within ten (10) days of the warning. If you have not brought the dog in for an assessment and applied for a permit, you may be subject to a court appearance or a fine, or DAP may remove the animal(s) from the home.