

November 2009

Pet Waste and Storm Water Pollution

Dog poop left on streets, pavements, yards, driveways, or along the sides of roads does not magically disappear or fertilize the ground. Improperly disposed animal feces can be picked up by storm water runoff and carried into storm drains or nearby washes. Storm drains do not always connect to sanitary sewer systems and treatment facilities, so pet waste can be the cause of significant storm water pollution and present health risks to adults, children and other pets.

Dangers of Pet Waste if Not Handled Properly

Pet waste carries bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can make people, especially children, sick. Pets can catch diseases from contact with infected feces of other pets. Not only are animal feces a nuisance in our neighborhoods and desert environment, feces also presents serious health risks. Pets and children who play in yards or parks where pets defecate are most at risk for infections from disease-causing bacteria and parasites found in pet waste. Diseases and parasites that can be passed from pet waste to humans:

- **Campylobacteriosis** – a bacterial infection carried by dogs and cats that frequently causes diarrhea in humans.
- **Salmonellosis** – the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Toxocariasis** – roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever, or cough.

Did You Know?

A day's worth of poop from one large dog can contain 7,800,000,000 fecal coliform bacteria.

Contrary to some beliefs (and/or excuses), carnivorous animals, such as dogs, do not produce useable manure-fertilizer for plants. Beneficial manure-fertilizer comes from herbivores (like cows and horses). These animals consume vegetation and return unused waste back to the soil to be taken up by plants.

You Can Make a Difference

Take a plastic bag or paper cup along when walking your pet. Dispose of the waste properly in the household trash after securely wrapping it. Pima County Code states "*it shall be unlawful for the owner or person having custody of any dog to fail immediately to remove and dispose of in a sanitary manner any solid waste deposited by such dog on public property or deposited on private property without the consent of the person in control of the property*". Blind persons, persons with mobility disabilities, and law enforcement officers accompanied by police dogs are excepted.

Benefits of Properly Disposing of Pet Waste

Pet waste management results in cleaner neighborhoods, with improved aesthetics and lowered potential for diseases to spread. Reducing pet waste also helps reduce one main cause of storm water-pollution.

For more information about storm water pollution prevention, call Pima County Department of Environmental Quality at 740-3340.

Pima County Code

Title 6 - Animals

Chapter 6.04 – Animal Control Regulations

Section 6.04.030. Dogs at large prohibited-Penalty-Exceptions. Dog waste removal required-Exceptions-Penalty.

- A. The owner of a dog that is found at large upon the streets, sidewalks, alleys, or public property is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.
- B. The owner of a dog that is found at large upon the premises of the owner or upon the private premises of any other person is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.
- C. Dogs may be at large as an exception to subsections A and B of this section as follows:
 - 1. While participating in field trials, obedience classes, or kennel club events where such trials, classes or events have been approved by the county animal care center;
 - 2. While being used or trained for legal hunting or for control of livestock;
 - 3. While assisting a peace officer engaged in law enforcement duties; or
 - 4. Guide dogs while assisting blind, deaf or physically handicapped persons, so long as such dogs are under direct and effective voice control of such individuals to assure that they do not violate any other provisions of law.
- D. Penalty. A violation of any provision of this section is punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than seven hundred fifty dollars, four months in jail, two years' probation, or any combination thereof. No judge may grant probation in lieu of, or otherwise suspend, the imposition of the minimum fine prescribed herein.
- E. It shall be unlawful for the owner or person having custody of any dog to fail immediately to remove and dispose of in a sanitary manner any solid waste deposited by such dog on public property or deposited on private property without the consent of the person in control of the property.***
- F. Penalties. A person convicted of the offense prohibited by subsection (E) of this section is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, thirty days in jail, one year probation, or any combination thereof. No judge may grant probation in lieu of, or otherwise suspend, the imposition of the minimum fine prescribed herein.
- G. Exceptions. Subsection (E) of this section shall not apply to blind persons, persons with mobility disabilities, or law enforcement officers accompanied by police dogs while on duty. (Ord. 2004-17 § 1 (part), 2004; Ord. 2002-80 § 1 (part), 2002; Ord. 1991-66 § 1, 1991; Ord. 1989-159 § 1 (part), 1989; prior code § 15.04.030)