

823.15 Dogs and cats released from animal shelters or animal control agencies; sterilization requirement.--

(1) The Legislature has determined that uncontrolled breeding of dogs and cats in the state results in the production of many more puppies and kittens than are needed to replace pet animals which have died or become lost or to provide pet animals for new owners. This leads to many dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens being unwanted, becoming strays and suffering privation and death, being impounded and destroyed at great expense to the community, and constituting a public nuisance and public health hazard. It is therefore declared to be the public policy of the state that every feasible means of reducing the production of unneeded and unwanted puppies and kittens be encouraged.

(2) In furtherance of this policy, provision shall be made for the sterilization of all dogs and cats sold or released for adoption from any public or private animal shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society or by a county, city, or other incorporated political subdivision, by either:

(a) Providing sterilization by a licensed veterinarian before relinquishing custody of the animal; or

(b) Entering into a written agreement with the adoptor or purchaser guaranteeing that sterilization will be performed within 30 days or prior to sexual maturity. The shelter or animal control agency shall require a sufficient deposit from the adoptor or purchaser, which deposit shall be refundable upon presentation to the shelter or animal control agency of written evidence by the veterinarian performing the sterilization that the animal has been sterilized. The deposit or donation may be based upon recommended guidelines established by the Florida Federation of Humane Societies. Failure by either party to comply with the provisions of this paragraph shall be a noncriminal violation as defined in s. [775.08\(3\)](#), punishable by a fine, forfeiture, or other civil penalty, and, in addition thereto, the deposit or donation shall be forfeited to the shelter or animal control agency. Any legal fees or court costs used for the enforcement of this paragraph are the responsibility of the adoptor. Upon the request of a licensed veterinarian, and for a valid reason, the shelter or animal control agency shall extend the time limit within which the animal must be sterilized.

(3) All costs of sterilization pursuant to this section shall be paid by the prospective adoptor unless otherwise provided for by ordinance of the local governing body, with respect to animal control agencies or shelters operated or subsidized by a unit of local government, or provided for by the humane society governing body, with respect to an animal control agency or shelter operated solely by the humane society and not subsidized by public funds.

History.--ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 80-87.