

ORDINANCE NO. 26-4036

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KELSO, WASHINGTON AMENDING
CHAPTER 6.04 ANIMAL CONTROL TO BRING IT INTO ALIGNMENT WITH THE
HUMANE SOCIETY'S TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN PROGRAM.**

WHEREAS, the City has partnered for the last several years with the humane society to provide animal control and sheltering services: and have worked together to ensure an environment for healthy pets and to prevent unnecessary surrenders; and

WHEREAS, the Humane Society is beginning a new Trap-Neuter-Release program to reduce the number of stray cats within the City of Kelso; and

WHEREAS, the City's Animal Control code provisions must be updated to reflect the changed circumstances;

**NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KELSO,
WASHINGTON DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. **Public Interest**. The Kelso City Council finds it to be in the public interest to adopt this ordinance to amend its animal control provisions.

Section 2. **Amending KMC 6.04**. That Chapter 6.04 Animal Control, of the Kelso Municipal Code is hereby amended as set forth in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

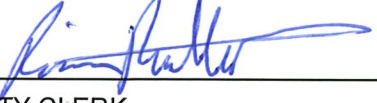
Section 3. **Corrections**. The City Clerk and the codifiers of this ordinance are authorized to make necessary clerical corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener's/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references thereto.

Section 4. **Severability**. Any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person, legal entity, or circumstance is held invalid; the remainder of the ordinance or its application to other persons, legal entities, or circumstances is not affected.

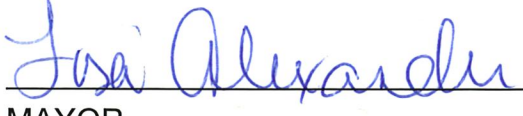
Section 5. **Effective Date**. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect five (5) calendar days after adoption and publication pursuant to law.

ADOPTED by the City Council and **SIGNED** by the Mayor this 7th day of APRIL, 2026.

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATION:




CITY CLERK

Deputy 

MAYOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



CITY ATTORNEY

PUBLISHED: 4-14-26

6.04.160 Impoundment—General regulations.

A. General

The animal control agent shall apprehend any animal committing or involved in or any animal said agent has probable cause to believe has committed or been involved in any of the acts set out in this chapter or in any other ordinance as unlawful and/or which is being subjected to cruel treatment as set out in this chapter.

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B. Identification and return

After such animal is apprehended, the animal control agent shall determine whether the animal is licensed, registered or otherwise identifiable, and may return the animal to the owner, together with a notice of violation of this chapter. If it is not reasonably possible to immediately return the animal to its owner, or if he finds it necessary for the protection of the animal or of the public, the animal control agent shall notify the owner of the animal within a reasonable time by telephone, mail, direct personal contact or by posting notice at the residence of the owner that the animal has been impounded and may be redeemed at the designated city animal shelter upon payment of redemption fees and any medical or other chargeable fees.

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C. Hold times

Any unlicensed or unregistered animal impounded pursuant to this chapter shall be held for its owner at least seventy-two hours commencing with apprehension. For licensed or registered animals, such seventy-two-hour period shall begin upon notification to the owner of such impoundment. If reasonable attempts have been made by the appropriate authority to notify such owner without success, the licensed animal shall be held for at least seventy-two hours from the time of apprehension. All impound periods shall continue to run during those hours when the designated city animal shelter is not open for business.

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Exemption from Mandatory Stray Hold for Eligible Cats

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the Animal Shelter or its authorized agents may forego the standard stray hold period for cats that meet the following criteria:

- a. The cat appears healthy, is of appropriate age and condition to undergo sterilization surgery, and shows no signs of ownership (e.g., collar, microchip, or other identifiable markings).
- b. The cat was impounded or received as a stray from within the jurisdiction's boundaries.
- c. The cat is assessed as suitable for return under the Shelter-Neuter-Return or Trap-Neuter-Return program.

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2. Eligible cats may be sterilized, vaccinated against rabies and other core diseases, ear-tipped for identification, and returned to the approximate location where they were found, unless relocation is deemed necessary for public health or safety reasons.

3. Exceptions

The stray hold exemption shall not apply to:

- a. Cats with verified ownership, microchips, or other traceable identification.
- b. Cats that are visibly ill, injured, or under the age of eight weeks.
- c. Cats determined by Animal Control to present a public safety risk or nuisance that cannot reasonably be mitigated.

4. Recordkeeping and Reporting

The Animal Shelter shall maintain accurate records of all cats processed under this section, including:

- a. Location of intake and return.
- b. Medical treatments administered (sterilization, vaccinations, etc.).
- c. Any exceptions applied under subsection (C).

An annual report summarizing outcomes under this section shall be made available to the jurisdiction on a monthly or quarterly basis.

5. Coordination with Animal Control and Public Communication

The Animal Shelter shall coordinate with Animal Control officers and community partners to educate the public about the Shelter-Neuter-Return program, promote responsible pet ownership, and reduce community cat population growth through humane, sustainable methods.

D. Medical care of impounded animals

The staff of the designated city animal shelter may cause to have provided necessary vaccinations against contagious disease to unlicensed and unregistered impounded animals. Any animal not redeemed by its owner during the prescribed period, or which is suffering from serious injury or disease as determined by the person in charge of the designated city animal shelter, may be humanely destroyed or, in the discretion of such shelter, may be held for a longer period for redemption or adoption.

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E. Redemption

The owner of any animal impounded pursuant to the provisions of this chapter may redeem the animal according to the procedures set out in this chapter; provided, that subject to the appeal procedures of this chapter, redemption may be denied to an owner who has cruelly treated an animal as defined in this chapter or for an animal believed to have engaged in vicious behavior toward any person as set out in this chapter.

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F. Impoundment due to arrest of owner

Animals delivered for impoundment by the police department who have been removed from the possession of a person in custody of the police officer shall be held for the period described in this section. An impoundment receipt shall be given to the police officer, who shall deliver such receipt to the person in custody from whom the animal was taken. Impoundment receipts shall recite redemption requirements and shall serve as the notice to the owner required in this chapter.

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G. Abandoned Animals

The above notification requirement shall not apply to any animal that was abandoned under the provisions of Chapter [16.54](#) RCW. For purposes of this section, such an animal shall be deemed to have no owner.

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