

**BOROUGH OF WRIGHTSTOWN
COUNTY OF BURLINGTON**

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF
WRIGHTSTOWN AMENDING THE BOROUGH OF WRIGHTSTOWN CODE OF
ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 35 - “ANIMALS”**

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of New Jersey has, in N.J.S.A. 40:48 et seq and N.J.S.A. 40:55D et seq., conferred upon local governments the authority to adopt regulations designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Wrightstown finds that it is in the best interests of the Borough to adopt ordinances related to the keeping of cats in the Borough in order to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF WRIGHTSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 35 entitled “Animals” is hereby amended to add a new Article III “Cats” as attached hereto as Schedule “A” and made a part hereof.

Section 2. Sections 29 through 39 in Chapter 35 are hereby “Reserved.”

Section 3. All other provisions of the Code currently in effect, are hereby saved from revision, and shall remain in full force and effect;

Section 4. If any provision of any section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision, or clause of this ordinance shall be judged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such order of judgment shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of any section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision, or clause of this ordinance.

Section 5. This ordinance shall be effective as of the date hereof and shall remain in force until modified, amended or rescinded by Borough of Wrightstown, Burlington County, New Jersey.

NOTICE

The Ordinance published herewith was introduced and passed upon first reading at a regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Wrightstown, held on April 23, 2025. It will be further considered for final passage after a Public Hearing at the regular meeting to be held on May 28, 2025, at the Borough Hall, 21 Saylor's Pond Road, Wrightstown, New Jersey, at 6:30 P.M. at which time and place any persons desiring to be heard upon the same will be given an opportunity to be heard.

FREDA H. GORMAN, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Introduction/First Reading April 23, 2025

Motion: Mr. Severns

Second: Ms. Knapp

Roll Call:

Ayes: Mr. Bushnell, Mrs. Carroll, Mr. Craig, Ms. Knapp, Mr. Severns

Nays: None

Absent: Mr. Bird

Abstain: None

Second Reading/Public Hearing May 28, 2025

Motion: Mr. Severns

Second: Ms. Knapp

Roll Call:

Ayes: Mr. Bird, Mr. Bushnell, Mrs. Carroll, Mr. Craig, Ms. Knapp, Mr. Severns

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

DONALD COTTRELL
Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true copy of the ordinance that was introduced after first reading at a meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Wrightstown on April 23, 2025, and adopted after a public hearing at a meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Wrightstown held on May 28, 2025.

FREDA H. GORMAN, RMC
Municipal Clerk

SCHEDULE "A"
CHAPTER 35, NEW ARTICLE III
CATS

§35-40. Purpose.

It is an objective of this section to protect the public and animals from the spread of rabies to animals and humans since rabies is transmissible to humans and is fatal in all cases. It is an objective of this section to protect the public from animal related nuisances and threats to public health, safety, and welfare. It has been determined that these objectives can be fostered by assuring that animal owners meet responsibilities for the control and care of their cats.

§35-41. Definitions.

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meanings stated herein unless their use in the text of this Chapter clearly demonstrates a different meaning. When consistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words used in the plural number include the singular number, and words used in the singular number include the plural number. The word "shall" is always mandatory and not merely directory.

- a. ANIMAL Shall mean, for the purpose of this section, cat.
- b. ANIMAL CONTROL AUTHORITY Shall mean any person or agency designated or certified by the State of New Jersey to enforce the provisions of this section.
- c. CAT Shall mean any member of the domestic feline species, male, female, or altered.
- d. CAT OF LICENSING AGE Shall mean any cat which has attained the age of seven (7) months, or which possesses a set of permanent teeth.
- e. CATTERY Shall mean any room or group of rooms, cage, or exhibition pen, not part of a kennel, wherein cats for sale are kept or displayed.
- f. HARBORING Shall mean maintaining custody or control over a cat, or permitting a cat to remain on premises, or providing food and shelter.
- g. LICENSING AUTHORITY Shall mean the Department of Licensing, Vital Statistics, and Animal Control as charged with administering the issuance and/or revocation of permits and licenses under the provisions of this section.
- h. NEUTERED Shall mean rendered permanently incapable of reproduction as certified by a licensed veterinarian.
- i. OWNER Shall mean and include every person having a right of property (or custody) in a cat and every person who has a cat in his/her keeping, or who harbors or maintains a cat or knowingly permits a cat to remain on or about any premises occupied by that person.
- j. PERSON Shall mean any individual, corporation, partnership, organization, or institution commonly recognized by law as a unit.
- k. PREMISES Shall mean open, unenclosed portion of any property.
- l. PUBLIC NUISANCE Shall mean a cat that damages either public or private property or harms the lawful users or occupants thereof.

- m. STRAY CAT Shall mean a cat having no known owner or custodian or known place of care and shelter.
- n. UNLAWFUL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS. The following shall be unlawful:
 - i. It is unlawful to expose a cat to harsh weather conditions, such as freezing temperature (32 degrees Fahrenheit or below) excessive heat (90 degrees Fahrenheit or above), rain or snow, for more than thirty minutes when the Owner of the cat is not exposed to the same conditions.
 - ii. Confining a cat in any structure, room, area or container that is not a proper shelter that is soundly built, in good repair and provides the cat with adequate ventilation, water, light and space to move and sit.
 - iii. Directly or indirectly abuse, torment, overwork, torture, maim, poison, cause serious godly injury or the death of a living cat.
 - iv. Fail to provide the cat in one's custody with the necessary care.
 - v. Leave a cat unattended in a vehicle under inhumane conditions adverse to the health of the cat.
 - vi. Abandon a cat to die in a public space.
 - vii. Confine a cat without providing food and water or fail to provide the cat with necessary care.

§35-42. Rabies Vaccination of Cats.

- a. Vaccination and License Requirements. Beginning January 1, 2026, no person shall own, keep, harbor, or maintain any cat over seven (7) months of age within the Borough, unless the cat is vaccinated and licensed. The provisions of this section do not apply to cats held in a cattery, or a veterinary establishment where cats are received or kept for diagnostic, medical, surgical, or other treatments, or licensed animal shelters, pounds, kennels, or pet shops.
- b. Vaccination. All cats shall be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian in accordance with the latest "Compendium of Animal Rabies Vaccines and Recommendations for Immunization" published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, except as provided for in paragraph d below.
- c. Vaccination Certificate. A certificate of vaccination shall be issued to the owner of each animal vaccinated, on a form recommended by the State.
- d. Exemptions. Any cat may be exempted from the requirements of such vaccination for a specified period of time by the Department of Licensing, Vital Statistics and Animal Control, upon presentation of a veterinarian's certificate stating that because of an infirmity or other physical condition, or regimen of therapy, the inoculation of such cat shall be deemed inadvisable.

§35-43. Licensing Requirements.

- a. Display of License Number. Beginning January 1, 2026, any person who shall own, keep, or harbor a cat of licensing age shall annually apply for and procure from the Department of Licensing, Vital Statistics, and Animal Control, or other official designated by the Governing Body thereof to license cats in the municipality in which he/she resides, a

license and official registration tag with license number, or a registration sleeve for each cat so owned, kept, or harbored, and shall place upon the cat a collar, or other device with the license number securely fastened or displayed thereto. Acceptable methods of displaying license number shall include, but are not limited to, break-away or elastic collars. License tags or sleeves are not transferable.

- b. Time for Applying for License. The owner of any newly acquired cat of licensing age, or of any cat which attains licensing age, shall make application for license tag or sleeve for the cat within ten (10) days after such acquisition or age attainment. This requirement will not apply to a nonresident keeping a cat within the Borough for no longer than thirty (30) days.
- c. Cats Brought into Jurisdiction.
 - 1. Any person who shall bring, or cause to be brought into the Borough, any cat licensed in another State for the current year, and bearing registration tag or sleeve, and shall keep the same or permit the same to be kept with the Borough for a period of more than thirty (30) days, shall immediately apply for a license and registration tag or sleeve for each such cat.
 - 2. Beginning January 1, 2026, any person who shall bring or cause to be brought into the Borough any unlicensed cat, and shall keep same or permit same to be kept within the Borough for a period of more than ten (10) days, shall immediately apply for a license and registration tag or sleeve for each such cat.
- d. Application; Preservation of Information. The application shall state the breed, sex, age, color, and markings of the cat for which license and registration are sought, and whether it is of a long or shorthaired variety; also the name, street, and post office address of the owner, and the person who shall keep or harbor the cat. The information on the application and the registration number issued for the cat shall be preserved for a period of three (3) years by the Department of Licensing, Vital Statistics and Animal Control.
- e. License Forms and Tags. License forms and official tags or sleeves shall be furnished by the Borough and shall be numbered serially, and shall bear the year of issuance and the name of the municipality.
- f. Evidence of Inoculation; Requirement for License. No Municipal Clerk or other official designated by the Governing Body of any municipality to license cats therein shall grant any such license and official registration tag or sleeve for any cat, unless the owner thereof provides evidence that the cat to be licensed and registered has been inoculated with a rabies vaccine of a type approved by and administered in accordance with the recommendations of the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Human Services, or has been certified exempt as provided by subsection 8-7.3. The rabies inoculation shall be administered by a duly licensed veterinarian, or by such other veterinarian permitted by law to do the same.

- g. License Fee Schedule. A person applying for the license and registration tag shall pay a total annual fee for each cat as follows:
 - 1. Neutered Cat \$5.00
 - 2. Unneutered Cat \$10.00
- h. Fees; Renewals; Expiration Date of License.
 - 1. Licenses from another municipality shall be accepted. The person applying for the license and registration tag and/or sleeve shall pay the fee fixed or authorized. The fee for the renewal of license and registration tag or sleeve shall be the same as for the original, and the license, registration tag or sleeve and renewal thereof shall expire on December 31 annually.
 - 2. Only one (1) license and registration tag or sleeve shall be required in the licensing year for any cat in the Borough. Any valid New Jersey license tag or sleeve issued by a New Jersey municipality shall be accepted by the Borough as evidence of compliance.
- i. Loss of License. If a license tag or sleeve has been misplaced or lost, the Department of Licensing, Vital Statistics and Animal Control may issue a duplicate license and/or registration sleeve for that particular cat at a fee of one (\$1.00) dollar.
- j. Proof of Licensing. Beginning January 1, 2026, proof of licensing shall be produced by any person owning, keeping, maintaining, or harboring a cat, upon the request of any health official, Police Officer, Animal Control Officer, or other authorized person.
- k. No person or group of persons residing in one dwelling shall own, keep or harbor more than five (5) cats. If any person or group of persons residing in one dwelling shall own, keep or harbor more than five (5) cats the person in control shall arrange for their removal. If such person fails to do so, the Animal Control Authority shall arrange for their removal at the cost of the person in control of the cats.

§35-44. Provisions for Control of Cats.

- a. Any person who owns, keeps or harbors any cat located within the Borough or permits a cat to enter the Borough shall exercise sufficient and proper care and control over the animal at all times so as to prevent the animal from becoming a public nuisance as defined herein.
- b. No person owning, keeping or harboring any cat shall permit it to soil, defile or commit any nuisance on any place where people congregate or walk, or upon any public property whatsoever. This provision shall apply to all privately owned property in the Borough except the property of the owner or keeper of a cat and the property owned or controlled by persons who have invited or permitted the owner or keeper of a cat to bring the cat upon the premises.

- c. No person shall abandon any cat of any age or permit a cat to become a stray.
- d. No person shall who owns, keeps or harbors any cat located within the Borough shall treat a cat unlawfully as defined in this section.

§35-45. Stray Cats.

- a. The Borough Animal Control Officer shall take into custody and impound or cause to be taken into custody and impounded, and thereafter destroyed or disposed of as provided in this section:
 - a. Any cat off the premises of the owner or of the person keeping or harboring the cat which the official or agent has reason to believe is a stray cat;
 - b. Any cat off the premises of the owner or person keeping or harboring the cat that is not licensed;
 - c. Any female cat in season off the premises of the owner or person keeping or harboring the cat.
- b. If any cat so seized wears a collar or harness having inscribed thereon or attached thereto the name and address of any person, or registration tag, or the owner, the person keeping or harboring the cat is known, the Animal Control Officer shall forthwith serve on the person keeping or harboring the cat, if known, a notice in writing stating that the cat has been seized and will be liable to be disposed of or destroyed if not claimed within seven (7) days after the service of the notice. A notice under this subsection may be served either by delivering it to the person on whom it is to be served, or by leaving it at the person's usual or last known place of abode, or at the address given on the collar, or by forwarding it by mail in a prepaid letter addressed to that person at his usual or last known place of abode, or to the address given on the collar.
- c. When any cat so seized has been detained for seven (7) days after notice given as above set forth, or when notice has not been and cannot be given as above set forth, and if the owner or person keeping or harboring the cat has not claimed the cat and has not paid to the Borough's Division of Licensing and Vital Statistics all expenses incurred by reason of its detention, including any costs associated with redemption for each cat per incident plus maintenance charge of four (\$4.00) dollars per calendar day, and if the cat is unlicensed at the time of seizure and the cat owner or person keeping or harboring the cat has not produced a license and registration tag for the cat or paid a penalty of fifty (\$50.00) dollars, the Animal Control Officer may cause the cat to be destroyed in a manner causing as little pain as possible or the cat may be placed for adoption in a suitable home. No cat so caught and detained or procured, obtained, sent or brought to a pound or shelter shall be sold or otherwise made available for the purpose of experimentation. Any person who sells or otherwise makes available any cat or other animal for the purpose of experimentation shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense.

§35-46. Seizure of Cats for Impounding.

Any Officer of his agent authorized or empowered to perform any duty under this section is hereby authorized to go upon any premises to seize for impounding any cat or cats which he may lawfully seize and impound when such Officer is in immediate pursuit of such cat or cats, except upon the premises of the owner of the cat if the owner is present and forbids the same.

§35-47. Interfering with Persons Performing Duties.

No person shall hinder, molest, or interfere with anyone authorized or empowered to perform any duty under this section.

§35-48. Violations; Penalties.

- a. Except as otherwise provided in this section, any person who violates, or who fails or refuses to comply with this section, shall be liable to a penalty, upon conviction, of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars for the first offense and fifty (\$50.00) dollars for each and every subsequent offense thereafter. The violation of this section shall apply to each cat owned or harbored by such person shall, and there shall be a separate violation for each cat. A person who violates the provisions of this section with regard to the unlawful treatment of cats shall be liable to a penalty, upon conviction, ranging from \$250 to \$5,000 for each cat subject to unlawful treatment.
- b. In addition to the foregoing, any owner, or person keeping or harboring the cat(s), shall pay to the Borough restitution equal to the amount of money actually paid by the Borough to dispose of all cats of the owner, or person keeping or harboring the cat(s), pursuant to this Article.