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TETHERING:

- **Need:** Studies have proven continued tethering of a dog is unnatural and inhumane. Tethered dogs have a higher propensity toward aggressive behavior to both animals and humans. They tend to be the forgotten part of the landscape in the backyard. Behavior issues are common in dogs which are continuously tethered. While the instances of tethered animals in Talbot County has decreased over the past decade, it is still a situation officers encounter on a regular basis.
- **Proposal:** Prohibited Conduct. A person must not tether a dog under circumstances that endanger its health, safety, or well-being, including:
 - A. Tethering a dog longer than two hours cumulatively during any twenty-four hour period;
 - B. tethering a dog by any means other than a harness;
 - C. tethering a dog between the hours of Midnight – 6AM
 - D. unattended tethering of a dog during a weather emergency, or a dog-control emergency declared by the Executive, the Director, or the County Health Officer,
 - E. using a tether that weighs more than 1/8 of the dog's body weight;
 - F. using a tether that does not have a swivel attached on each end;
 - G. using a tether that is less than five times the length of the dog, as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail;
 - H. tethering that unreasonably limits a dog's movement;
 - I. tethering under conditions where the dog or tether can become entangled on the tether or some other object;
 - J. tethering that restricts a dog's access to suitable and sufficient food, clean water, and appropriate shelter;
 - K. tethering in unsafe or unsanitary conditions;
 - L. tethering that does not allow a dog to defecate or urinate in an area separate from the area where it must eat, drink, or lie down; or,
 - M. tethering that causes injury, stress, or demonstrable socialization problems.
- III. It shall be unlawful for any person to tether, chain, fasten, tie, or otherwise restrain a cat to a house, tree, fence, or other stationary or immobile object.
- IV. Failure to provide relief to a dog in distress when exposed to any of the conditions listed in subsection II is proof that the dog was improperly, i.e., cruelly, tethered.
- V. Exception. Nothing in this regulation prohibits:

A. a regiment of restraint that the Director has approved for a particular training or working dog purpose; or

B. the temporary tethering of a dog incidental to its veterinary care and/or grooming, in accordance with professionally accepted standards.

VI. This regulation establishes requirements for tethering a dog humanely. Notwithstanding any other provision of this regulation, the particular circumstances or conditions of a dog otherwise tethered according to the requirements of this regulation are sufficient evidence of cruelty to constitute a violation of State or County law.

• **Penalties:**

- \$100 citation and subject to additional and increased citations every incident thereafter.
- Impoundment of Animal.
- Abatement Hearing.

Unaffected: MD Comar § 10-623. Dogs outside, unattended and restrained

Counties with similar ordinances: Montgomery County, Carroll County, QA County