

**Solicitor General**

Office of the Solicitor General

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**By email**

July 26, 2022

Dear Heads of Council:

I am pleased to connect with you as the new Solicitor General of Ontario. I am looking forward to working in partnership with you to ensure the continued safety and well-being of animals across the province.

On April 20, 2022, the Ministry of the Solicitor General informed you of updates to Ontario Regulation 444/19 (Standards of Care and Administrative Requirements) under the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019* (PAWS Act). The updated standards of care for dogs kept outdoors and dogs tethered outdoors are now in effect as of **July 1, 2022**. The updated standards can be read in full on the [Ontario e-Laws page for Ontario Regulation 444/19](#) and by viewing sections 4 to 4.5 of the regulation. A summary of the regulation in accessible language is publicly available at the [Ontario.ca page for dogs kept outdoors](#).

The ministry has prepared the attached guidance document, the ***Standards of Care for Dogs Kept Outdoors in Ontario – Legal Requirements and Best Practice Guidelines***, to help owners and custodians understand the updated standards and gain knowledge of best practices to help ensure the welfare of their dog(s).

To further support owners and custodians of dogs kept outdoors or dogs tethered outdoors, please find attached **Updated Frequently Asked Questions**, which will help address additional questions regarding the updated standards.

Please note, the updated standards will not impose any new requirements on municipal by-law enforcement departments. Animal Welfare Services, a branch within the ministry, is the primary body responsible for the enforcement of the PAWS Act and its regulations.

In the event of a conflict between a municipal by-law and the updated standards, section 67 of the PAWS Act continues to apply. Section 67 of the PAWS Act specifies that if there is a conflict between a provision of the PAWS Act or its regulations and a municipal by-law related to the welfare of animals or the prevention of cruelty to animals, the provision that provides the greater protection to animals prevails.

.../2

Page 2

Please share the guidance document and FAQs with your network, including municipal staff, members of the public, or any others who may be interested in learning more about the updates and associated best practices. Anyone who would like a copy of the guidance document can also contact the ministry at [animalwelfareservices@ontario.ca](mailto:animalwelfareservices@ontario.ca).

We will continue to ensure that appropriate and effective measures are in place to provide animals with the protections they deserve. These updated standards of care will help safeguard the welfare, health and safety of dogs kept and tethered outdoors in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Kerzner", with a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Kerzner  
Solicitor General

Enclosures