

California Spay/Neuter Bill Adds Microchip Rules

Changes to the bill mandate some problem dogs must be microchipped.

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California Assembly Bill 1634, now cited as the California Responsible Pet Ownership Act, was amended in the state's Senate on Tuesday to mandate microchipping of certain problem pets and to give pet owners license fee discounts for microchipping and spaying or neutering their pets.

The bill, which already proposed increasing fines for impounded intact animals, now mandates microchipping on the first or second impoundment by an animal control agency.

Current law states that a pet owner of an animal that has not been spayed or neutered and is impounded by animal control will be fined \$35 on the first occurrence, \$50 on the second occurrence and \$100 on the third occurrence.

AB 1634 would increase the above fines for dog owners to \$50 for the first occurrence, \$100 and microchipping of the dog at the owner's expense for the second occurrence and would require spaying or neutering of a dog at the third occurrence.

Cat owners would need to pay \$50 and microchip the pet at the owner's expense for the first occurrence and would require spaying or neutering of the cat on the second occurrence.

The amendment also eliminated violations of other animal control ordinances from the new, more stringent penalty structure, so the bill now only affects those intact animals that are caught running loose.

Under the bill, cited pet owners would be able to have fines waived by providing proof of the pet's sterilization within 14 days of the violation and reduced by at least \$30, and possibly waived altogether, with proof of having the pet microchipped.

The bill also provides exemptions for animals in poor health or in the state temporarily.

Existing state law requires dog and cat license tags to be issued for half or less of the fee if the owner can prove their pet has been spayed or neutered. The amended bill would instead allow owners to pay 1) three-quarters or less of the license fee if the pet has been implanted with a microchip that can be used to positively identify the dog, its owner and the owner's contact information; 2) half or less of the fee if the owner can prove their pet has been spayed or neutered; and 3) one quarter or less of the fee if the owner can prove their pet has been spayed or neutered and microchipped.

[Click here to read the bill .](#)