

Illinois Amends Dogfighting, Dangerous Dog Laws

The state establishes a new dangerous dog category and toughens animal fighting penalties.

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Illinois recently amended two of its animal welfare acts, which toughen dangerous dog and animal fighting violations. Both amendments were signed by Governor Rod R. Blagojevich Aug. 30, 2007.

Introduced by Rep. Jerry L. Mitchell, House Bill 822 amends the Animal Control Act by establishing a “potentially dangerous dog” category. The amendment defines a potentially dangerous dog as one that is unsupervised and found running at large with three or more other dogs. If a dog fits this definition, an animal control officer or warden may deem the dog potentially dangerous.

If deemed potentially dangerous, the amendment requires the dog to be altered and microchipped within 14 days after the dog has been claimed. Dog owners failing to comply will have their dogs impounded or they’ll be fined \$500. This measure takes effect June 1, 2008.

House Bill 3614 amends the Humane Care for Animals Act by changing all forms of animal fighting from misdemeanors to felonies. Prior to the amendment, only dogfighting was considered a felony. The amendment was introduced by Rep. Ed Sullivan, Jr. and it takes effect immediately.