

1 BY AUTHORITY

2 ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
3 SERIES OF 2020

COUNCIL BILL NO. 20-0071  
COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE:  
4 Safety, Housing, Education and Homelessness

5  
6 A BILL

7 **For an ordinance amending section 8-67 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code**  
8 **requiring a provisional breed-restricted license for owners of pit bulls.**  
9

10 **WHEREAS**, the city and county of Denver (“Denver”) passed a pit bill ban in 1989 in response  
11 to two serious attacks by pit bulls resulting in death and serious injury;

12 **WHEREAS**, since Denver adopted its ban, there has been a review of controlled studies by the  
13 American Veterinary Medical Association (“AVMA”) that document that pit bulls are not  
14 disproportionately dangerous compared with other dogs;

15 **WHEREAS**, based on data and studies, over 100 cities have repealed their bans entirely; and,

16 **WHEREAS**, city council finds that based on studies and evidence from other jurisdictions a new  
17 regulation should be adopted permitting owners of pit bulls to apply for and obtain a provisional breed  
18 restricted-license that will become permanent upon satisfaction of and no violations of certain  
19 conditions imposed upon owners and keepers of pit bulls.

20 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:**

21 **Section 1.** That section 8-67, D.R.M.C. shall be amended by deleting the language stricken  
22 and adding the language underlined, to read as follows:

23 **Sec. 8-67. – Pit bulls prohibited without breed-restricted license.**

24 (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to own or keep any pit bull within the city without first obtaining  
25 a breed-restricted license satisfying the conditions set forth in this section. “Breed-restricted license”  
26 under this section shall mean a license granted by animal protection to owners or keepers of a pit bull  
27 in accordance with certain conditions.

28 ~~(b) Exceptions. The prohibition in subsection (a) of this section shall not apply in the following~~  
29 ~~enumerated circumstances. Exceptions. The prohibition in subsection (a) of this section shall not apply~~  
30 ~~in the following enumerated circumstances. Failure by the owner to comply and remain in compliance~~  
31 ~~with all of the terms of any applicable exception shall subject the pit bull to immediate impoundment~~  
32 ~~and disposal pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, and shall operate to prevent the owner from~~  
33 ~~asserting such exception as a defense in any prosecution under subsection (a).~~

1 ~~(1) The owner of a pit bull, who has applied for and received a dog license for such pit bull at the~~  
2 ~~Denver Animal Shelter on or before the date of publication of the ordinance enacting this section~~  
3 ~~[August 7, 1989], who has applied for and received a pit bull license in accordance with subsection (c)~~  
4 ~~of this section, and who maintains the pit bull at all times in compliance with the pit bull license~~  
5 ~~requirements of subsection (c) of this section and all other applicable requirements of this chapter,~~  
6 ~~may keep a pit bull within the city.~~

7 (1) Denver Animal protection, the Denver Police Department, or a licensed Colorado veterinarian  
8 may temporarily harbor, and transport, adopt, and/or disposition any pit bull for purposes of enforcing  
9 the provisions of this chapter under the conditions set forth in this section.

10 (2) Any humane society operating an animal shelter which is registered and licensed by the city may  
11 temporarily hold any pit bull that it has received or otherwise recovered, but only for so long as it takes  
12 to contact Denver Animal Protection and either turn the pit bull over to Denver Animal Protection  
13 employees or receive permission to destroy or have destroyed the pit bull pursuant to the provisions of  
14 subsection (d). harbor and disposition any animal that it has determined to be a pit bull breed. Any pit  
15 bull breed assessment not done by Denver animal protection is non-binding and it is the responsibility  
16 of any new owner of an adopted animal to contact Denver animal protection and follow the breed-  
17 restricted licensing process. Adopters intending to own or keep any such animals within Denver must  
18 comply with all requirements set forth in this section.

19 ~~(4) A person may temporarily transport into and hold in the city a pit bull only for the purpose of~~  
20 ~~showing such pit bull in a place of public exhibition, contest or show sponsored by a dog club~~  
21 ~~association or similar organization. However, the sponsor of the exhibition, contest, or show must~~  
22 ~~receive written permission from the executive director, must obtain any other permits or licenses~~  
23 ~~required by city ordinance, and must provide protective measures adequate to prevent pit bulls from~~  
24 ~~escaping or injuring the public. The person who transports and holds a pit bull for showing shall, at all~~  
25 ~~times when the pit bull is being transported within the city to and from the place of exhibition, contest,~~  
26 ~~or show, keep the pit bull confined in a secure temporary enclosure as defined in section 8-2(x).~~

27 (5) ~~Except as provided in subdivision (b)(4), above, the owner of a pit bull may temporarily transport~~  
28 ~~through the city a pit bull only if such owner has obtained a valid transport permit from the executive~~  
29 ~~director. Upon request, the executive director shall issue such permits only upon a showing by the~~  
30 ~~owner that the pit bull is being transported either from a point outside the city to a destination outside~~  
31 ~~the city, or from a point outside the city to an airport, train station or bus station within the city. In the~~  
32 ~~latter case, such owner must provide evidence of an intent to send or take the pit bull outside of the~~  
33 ~~city by producing an airline, train or bus ticket, or other equivalent document, showing a departure time~~

1 within six (6) hours of the time of the transport. At all times when the pit bull is being transported within  
2 the city, it must be kept confined in a secure temporary enclosure as defined in section 8-2(x) of this  
3 section. In all cases before issuing a transport permit, the executive director must find that the  
4 transport would not constitute an unnecessary or undue danger to the public health, welfare or safety,  
5 and shall not issue the permit where the executive director cannot so find. All transport permits issued  
6 shall only be valid for the time, date and pit bull specified on the permit, and shall not be construed to  
7 permit any activity otherwise prohibited.

8 (c) ~~The owner of any pit bull which had been licensed pursuant to section 8-46 on or before the date~~  
9 ~~of publication of the ordinance enacting this section (Ordinance No. 404, Series of 1989) shall be~~  
10 ~~allowed to keep such pit bull within the city upon compliance with the terms of the exception contained~~  
11 ~~in subdivision (b)(1) of this section only if the owner applies for and receives an annual pit bull license~~  
12 ~~on or before January 1, 1990. As a condition of issuance of a pit bull license, the owner shall at the~~  
13 ~~time of application comply with or otherwise provide sufficient evidence that the owner is in compliance~~  
14 ~~with all of the following regulations:~~

15 (1) ~~The owner of the pit bull shall provide proof of rabies vaccination and shall pay the annual pit bull~~  
16 ~~license fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00).~~

17 (2) ~~The owner of the pit bull shall keep current the license for such pit bull through annual renewal.~~  
18 ~~Such license is not transferable and shall be renewable only by the holder of the license or by a~~  
19 ~~member of the immediate family of such licensee. A pit bull license tag will be issued to the owner at~~  
20 ~~the time of issuance of the license. Such license tag shall be attached to the pit bull by means of a~~  
21 ~~collar or harness and shall not be attached to any pit bull other than the pit bull for which the license~~  
22 ~~was issued. If the pit bull tag is lost or destroyed, a duplicate tag may be issued upon the payment of a~~  
23 ~~two-dollar (\$2.00) fee.~~

24 (3) ~~The owner must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age as of January 1, 1990.~~

25 (4) ~~The owner shall present to the executive director proof that the owner has procured liability~~  
26 ~~insurance in the amount of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00), covering any~~  
27 ~~damage or injury which may be caused by a pit bull during the twelve-month period covered by the pit~~  
28 ~~bull license. The policy shall contain a provision requiring the insurance company to provide written~~  
29 ~~notice to the executive director not less than fifteen (15) days prior to any cancellation, termination, or~~  
30 ~~expiration of the policy.~~

31 (5) ~~The owner shall, at the owner's own expense, have the pit bull spayed or neutered and shall~~  
32 ~~present to the executive director documentary proof from a licensed veterinarian that this sterilization~~  
33 ~~has been performed.~~

1 ~~(6) The owner shall bring the pit bull to the Denver Animal Shelter where a person authorized by the~~  
2 ~~executive director shall cause a registration number assigned by the department to be tattooed or~~  
3 ~~otherwise marked on the pit bull. The executive director shall maintain a file containing the registration~~  
4 ~~numbers and names of the pit bulls and the names and addresses of the owners. The owner shall~~  
5 ~~notify the executive director of any change of address.~~

6 ~~(7) At all times when a pit bull is at the property of the owner, the owner shall keep the pit bull~~  
7 ~~securely confined indoors or confined in a secure enclosure as defined in section 8-2(w). At all times~~  
8 ~~when a pit bull is away from the property of the owner, the owner shall keep the pit bull either securely~~  
9 ~~leashed and muzzled or in a secure temporary enclosure as that term is defined in section 8-2(x).~~

10 ~~(8) The owner shall not sell or otherwise transfer the pit bull to any person except a member of the~~  
11 ~~owner's immediate family who will then become the owner and will be subject to all of the provisions of~~  
12 ~~this section. The owner shall notify the executive director within five (5) days in the event that the pit~~  
13 ~~bull is lost, stolen, dies, or has a litter. In the event of a litter, the owner must deliver the puppies to the~~  
14 ~~Denver Animal Shelter for destruction or permanently remove the puppies from Denver and provide~~  
15 ~~sufficient evidence of such removal by the time the puppies are weaned, but in no event shall the~~  
16 ~~owner be allowed to keep in Denver a pit bull puppy born after the date of publication of Ordinance~~  
17 ~~No. 404, Series 1989, that is more than eight (8) weeks old. Any pit bull puppies kept contrary to the~~  
18 ~~provisions of this subdivision are subject to immediate impoundment and disposal pursuant to~~  
19 ~~subsection (d) of this section.~~

20 ~~(9) The owner shall have posted at each possible entrance to the owner's property where the pit bull~~  
21 ~~is kept a conspicuous and clearly legible pit bull sign. Such pit bull sign must be at least eight (8)~~  
22 ~~inches by ten (10) inches in rectangular dimensions and shall contain only the words "PIT BULL DOG"~~  
23 ~~in lettering not less than two (2) inches in height.~~

24 ~~(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of Article VII of this chapter, the executive director is authorized~~  
25 ~~to immediately impound any pit bull found in the City and County of Denver which does not fall within~~  
26 ~~the exceptions listed in subsection (b), above, and the Denver Animal Shelter may house or dispose of~~  
27 ~~such pit bull in such manner as the executive director may deem appropriate, except as the~~  
28 ~~procedures in subsection (e), below, otherwise require.~~

29 ~~(e) When the executive director has impounded any pit bull dog pursuant to this section, and the~~  
30 ~~owner of such dog disputes the classification of such dog as a pit bull, the owner of such dog may file~~  
31 ~~a written petition with the executive director for a hearing concerning such classification no later than~~  
32 ~~five (5) days after impoundment. Such petition shall include the name and address, including mailing~~  
33 ~~address, of the petitioner. The executive director will then issue a notice of hearing date by mailing a~~

1 copy to the petitioner's address no later than ten (10) days prior to the date of the hearing. Where no  
2 written request from the owner for a hearing is received by the executive director within five (5) days of  
3 impoundment, the pit bull shall be destroyed.

4 The hearing, if any, will be held before the executive director or a hearing officer designated by the  
5 executive director. Any facts which the petitioners wishes to be considered shall be submitted under  
6 oath or affirmation either in writing or orally at the hearing. The executive director or hearing officer  
7 shall make a final determination whether the dog is a pit bull as defined in section 8-2(u). Such final  
8 determination shall be considered a final order of the executive director subject to review under Rule  
9 406(a)(4) of the state rules of civil procedure.

10 If the dog is found to be a pit bull, it shall be destroyed, unless the owner produces evidence deemed  
11 sufficient by the executive director that the pit bull is to be permanently taken out of Denver and the  
12 owner pays the cost of impoundment. If the dog is found not to be a pit bull, the dog shall be released  
13 to the owner. The procedures in this subsection (f) shall not apply and the owner is not entitled to such  
14 a hearing with respect to any dog which was impounded as the immediate result of an attack or bite as  
15 defined in section 8-61. In those instances, the dog shall be handled and the procedures governed by  
16 the provisions of article VII of this chapter.

17 (b) Application for a breed-restricted license to own or keep a pit bull shall include:

18 (1) The name and address of the owner or keeper where the pit bull will be located;

19 (2) The names and addresses of two (2) persons who may be contacted to take responsibility in the  
20 case of emergency;

21 (3) An accurate description of the pit bull and recent photograph for which the breed-restricted license  
22 is requested;

23 (4) An annual fee for a breed-restricted license or for any renewal or modification of such license. The  
24 license tag shall be attached to each licensed dog at all times when it is off the property of the owner  
25 or keeper by means of a collar or harness, and it shall be unlawful to place this tag on any animal  
26 other than the dog for which the breed-restricted license was issued;

27 (5) Proof that the animal has had a registered microchip implanted;

28 (6) Proof that the animal has a current rabies vaccination pursuant to section 8-31; and,

29 (7) Such other information as animal protection may reasonably require.

30 (c) Conditions of a breed-restricted license to own or keep a pit bull:

31 (1) Any owner or keeper of a pit bull shall be jointly and severally responsible with all other owners or  
32 keepers of such pit bull for compliance with the requirements of a breed-restricted license;

33 (2) Any owner or keeper of any pit bull may not own or keep more than two (2) pit bulls per household

1 or harbor more than two (2) pit bulls at any time.

2 (3) The owner or keeper of a pit bull shall notify animal protection in person or by telephone of any of  
3 the following occurrences within the scheduled time frames as set forth in this subsection:

4 a. Within eight (8) hours after the pit bull has escaped or has otherwise ceased to be in the custody of  
5 the owner or keeper for any reason, unless the owner or keeper knows such animal to be physically  
6 secured, restrained, or confined and to be in the custody of a competent adult;

7 b. Within eight (8) hours after the pit bull has attacked or bitten a person or another domestic animal;

8 c. If the pit bull has died, or if the owner or keeper of the pit bull or the address of the pit bull has  
9 changed to a person or location outside of the city, the owner or keeper listed on the breed-restricted  
10 license shall notify animal protection within twenty-four (24) hours of such change, including the name,  
11 address, and telephone number of the new owner or keeper. If the owner or keeper or location of the  
12 pit bill changes to a person or location at a different address within the city, the owner or keeper listed  
13 on the breed-restricted license shall notify animal protection within twenty-four (24) hours of the  
14 change, including the name, address, and telephone number of the new owner, and the new owner or  
15 keeper may be permitted to modify the breed-restricted license to reflect the new owner's name in the  
16 discretion of animal protection, but such modification must be obtained within five (5) days of the  
17 change.

18 (4) Notwithstanding section 8-4(c), animal protection officers shall be permitted access at reasonable  
19 times and in a reasonable manner to inspect the pit bull and/or the premise where the pit bull is  
20 located for sanitary and health conditions, including, without limitation, conditions in Article VI of this  
21 Chapter.

22 (d) After a period of thirty-six (36) consecutive months with no violations of any provisions of Chapter  
23 8, animal protection may remove the requirements of this section by issuing a written notice to the  
24 owner or keeper that the conditions of the breed-restricted license period have been satisfied for the  
25 requisite period. Upon receipt of written notice, the owner or keeper is required to license their pit bull  
26 under section 8-46, D.R.M.C. and maintain compliance with all other license requirements of Division  
27 3 of this Chapter.

28 (e) Violation by an owner or keeper of the conditions of the breed-restricted license may impact the  
29 permit and may result in other criminal or administrative penalties allowed by the code.

30 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed in any manner as altering any owner or keeper's duties,  
31 responsibilities and/or liabilities under Chapter 8.

32 (g) Animal protection will collect, maintain, and review data and findings from inspections and  
33 violations and shall report findings and make recommendations to city council after the initial five (5)

1 year period of the program.

2 **Section 2.** Section 24-5 (a), D.R.M.C., is amended by adding the language underlined and deleting  
3 the language stricken as follows:

4 (a) Any person who violates any provision of chapter 8 (animals), excluding the provisions of  
5 sections 8-74 (damaging property), 8-61 (dog attack or bite), 8-62 (dangerous dogs), 8-67 (pit bulls  
6 prohibited without a breed-restricted license), 8-131(a) (cruelty to animals prohibited), 8-133  
7 (abandonment), and 8-134 (keeping place for fighting animals); chapter 11 (child care); chapter 17  
8 (emergency vehicles); article X (body art) of chapter 24 (health and sanitation); chapter 26 (boarding  
9 homes, personal care boarding homes, and nongovernmental residential facilities for the treatment or  
10 supervision of offenders); article II of chapter 27 (housing code); chapter 33 (lodging); chapter 35  
11 (mobile homes and trailers); chapter 36 (noise control); article I of chapter 37 (health nuisances);  
12 chapter 51 (pools); or any retail store who violates article IX of chapter 48 (disposable bags), is also  
13 subject to a civil penalty of not more than nine hundred ninety-nine dollars (\$999.00) per violation.

14 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This ordinance takes effect upon ninety (90) days after passage.

15 COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE: January 22, 2020.

16 MAYOR-COUNCIL DATE: January 28, 2020.

17 PASSED BY THE COUNCIL \_\_\_\_\_ February 10, 2020

18 \_\_\_\_\_ - PRESIDENT

19 APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ - MAYOR \_\_\_\_\_

20 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ - CLERK AND RECORDER,  
21 EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE  
22 CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER  
23

24 NOTICE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY JOURNAL \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_

25  
26 PREPARED BY: Kirsten J. Crawford, Legislative Counsel; DATE: January 30, 2020

27 Pursuant to section 13-12, D.R.M.C., this proposed ordinance has been reviewed by the office of the  
28 City Attorney. We find no irregularity as to form, and have no legal objection to the proposed  
29 ordinance. The proposed ordinance **is not** submitted to the City Council for approval pursuant to §  
30 3.2.6 of the Charter.  
31

32 Kristin M. Bronson, Denver City Attorney

33  
34 BY: Kirsten J. Crawford, Assistant City Attorney

DATE: Jan 29, 2020

35