



POLICY TITLE: DANGEROUS DOG LAWS

Reviewed by: AWMG

Date: October 13, 2016

Approved by: Management Team

Date: October 13, 2016

Approved by: Board of Directors

Date: October 18, 2016

The Animal Rescue League of Boston recognizes that dangerous/nuisance dog laws serve a needed public safety purpose and protect people as well as animals. But we also recognize that the laws-- and the determination whether or not a dog is a dangerous dog -- have the potential to be applied too broadly and unfairly, without sufficient due process, and are misunderstood by the public and, on occasion, by those charged with enforcing the laws.

The Animal Rescue League of Boston believes that the current Massachusetts state law (M.G.L. c. 140, §157) provides the necessary protection for both animals and people. Among its provisions, it prohibits a finding of a nuisance dog or dangerous dog based upon the breed of the dog; considers normal behavior or provoked behavior on the part of the dog; provides an owner with the opportunity to obtain remedial behavior training before a determination and provides for notice, a hearing, and an appeal process.

As with many issues surrounding companion animals, the Animal Rescue League believes that many unwanted behaviors including roaming and aggression can and should be adequately addressed by spaying, neutering, reducing the time an animal is kept tethered, confined, or left without adequate social interaction, and humane training.

Therefore, the Animal Rescue League will:

1. Encourage local government officials, including town and city clerks, to be familiar with the provisions of the statute and to apply those provisions fairly according to the law;
2. Encourage all Animal Control Officers to be familiar with the provisions of the statute; to advise the public of their rights under the law, and to apply those provisions accordingly;
3. Take necessary steps to encourage the public to be aware of their rights under the statute.