

Patrons and neighbors have shared concerns about the welfare of a patron's dog who has been tethered outside the library for approximately 1-1.5 hours during a weekly program over the past few weeks. The communications have included concerns about distress as the dog is barking regularly until its human returns, and also concerns due to the recent weather exceeding 90 degrees. The owner has confirmed the dog has been tethered in the grass with access to shade from a tree and it has water.

Staff members are sharing the information they received and/or experienced, and are communicating to ensure patron/neighbor/dog welfare and safety.

The D. A. Hurd Library Patron Pet Policy states:

The D.A. Hurd Library strives to create a welcoming, clean and comfortable environment for all members of the public. Consistent with this goal, patrons' pets are not allowed in the Library, with the exception of service animals and animals involved in approved Library events.

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9cd70539-39f1-4793-8b0e-43c2a18ea223/downloads/patron_pet_policy_1.pdf?ver=1658778013610

The Town of North Berwick Animal Control Ordinance states:

1.1 Animals creating a nuisance by noise: Anyone owning, possessing, or harboring any animal which barks, howls or makes other sounds common to its species, continuously for 20 minutes or intermittently for one hour or more shall be deemed to constitute a nuisance.

EXCEPTIONS:

a. Dogs barking at trespassers or threatening trespassers on private property on which dog is situated; or any legitimate cause for provocation.

b. Livestock (including poultry) as permitted in the Farm and Forest Zoning District as designated and defined in the North Berwick Zoning Ordinance.

https://www.townofnorthberwick.org/sites/g/files/vyh1if5971/f/uploads/animal_control_ordinance_2022.pdf#:~:text=1.1%20Animals%20creating%20a%20nuisance,deemed%20to%20constitute%20a%20nuisance.

When Staff receives information from a patron/community member that an animal on library property is in distress, we will bring it to the attention of the animal's owner - if the owner is present in our library. If the owner is not present or does not address or take action if needed to assist the animal, patrons/community members/Staff may contact authorities such as Animal Control to ensure the safety and welfare of the animal while on the library property.

Additional information about pets outdoors and in cars is available here:

Extreme weather: A person shall not leave a dog outside when a weather advisory, warning or watch is issued by a local, state or federal authority or when outside environmental conditions including, but not limited to, extreme heat, cold, wind, rain, snow or hail pose an adverse risk to the health or safety of the dog based on the dog's breed, age or physical condition, unless the tethering is for not more than 15 minutes. (This is Massachusetts, not Maine.)

<https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-dog-tether-laws#:~:text=No%20person%20owning%20or%20keeping%20a%20dog%20shall,leave%20unattended%20by%20the%20owner%2C%20guardian%20or%20keeper.>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/keep-pets-safe-heat#:~:text=Any%20time%20your%20pet%20is,fact%2C%20it%20makes%20it%20worse>

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/how-long-can-you-keep-your-dog-outside/>