

SB 476 FACT SHEET
Microchipping of Dogs and Cats Required for Pet Dealers

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20192020/SB/476>

Sponsored By: Senators Kirkpatrick (32nd), Black (8th), Unterman (45th), Stone (23rd), Parent (42nd), Cowsert (46th)

Bill Summary

Any person that is licensed as a pet dealer that sells, offers to sell, exchanges, offers for adoption, provides for the care of, or otherwise engages in licensable activity relating to dogs or cats shall microchip each dog or cat prior to being sold, exchanged, transferred, or adopted. A dog or cat shall not be sold, exchanged, transferred, or adopted or microchipped prior to seven to eight weeks of age. If such dog or cat is over the age of eight weeks, such animal shall be microchipped within 30 days of acquiring such animal or prior to the animal being sold, exchanged, transferred, or adopted, whichever occurs first.

Do not confuse this bill with another microchip bill HB 886 which requires veterinarians or veterinary technicians to scan animals and to report ownership information

Purpose

In addition to readily identifying lost pets, microchipping has the advantage of preventing consumer fraud. It is not uncommon to receive vaccine records on a new pet originating from a commercial breeder that do not match the age of the animal being examined. Essentially the vaccine records are being re-used over and over on different animals. The new owner is given false security that the pet has been adequately vaccinated and treated for intestinal parasites. Dogs and cats that have not been adequately de-wormed pose a potential zoonotic risk. Furthermore, inadequately vaccinated animals are at risk of developing potentially deadly diseases such as panleukopenia and parvovirus. These viral diseases require intensive veterinary medical treatment, costing the consumer hundreds to thousands of dollars.

Veterinary health certificate forms provide a space for microchip numbers. If the pet does not have a microchip, then only physical descriptions are used (e.g., "6-week old Dachshund female, red"). It would be easy for the breeder to substitute a similar puppy for the one listed on the health certificate that HAS NOT been examined by a veterinarian and deemed "healthy and free of infectious diseases." SB 476 will help prevent these types of fraudulent activities.

Ideally, microchips would allow the consumer to track the animal back to the facility where it was bred and potentially review inspection reports to ensure the facility meets the Georgia Department of Agriculture and USDA guidelines.

Benefits of Microchipping Pets

1. Provides an immediate and permanent (lifetime) method of pet and owner identification.
2. Significantly increases the likelihood of a lost pet being returned to the owner.
3. In the case of a stolen animal, provides definitive proof of ownership if registration information is current.
4. Provides a database to search for stray dogs by breed, city and/or state.
5. Can be pivotal in civil and criminal cases involving the animal such as: dog bite, fraud, contracts, ownership conflicts, animal fighting, animal cruelty cases, and more.
6. Expedites access to health records and ownership on stray dogs that have bitten a person.
7. Expedites enforcement of local and state dog laws.
8. Helps maintain a local registry for dangerous dogs.
9. Prevents fraudulent activity and falsifying records.
10. Pivotal in tracking and/or preventing the spread of diseases.
11. Assists with insuring bloodlines in AKC registered animals by verifying AKC breeding information.
12. Microchips are easily implanted. The procedure does not require sedation or anesthesia.
13. The majority of veterinarians offer microchipping services to their clients and almost all Georgia rescue organizations and humane society shelters microchip pets prior to their adoption.

Endorsement

SB 476 has the support of the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association, the Georgia State Board of Veterinary Medicine and Georgia Animal Control Association, and various rescue/animal welfare organizations.

Mandatory Scanning for Microchips Helps Reunite Lost Pets with Owners

History on Microchipping in GA - Georgia state lawmakers passed the Microchip scanning law in 2010 due to the lack of identification being the #1 reason that animals are euthanized in shelters. Georgia veterinarians and rescue groups have become increasingly concerned about the failure of many county and city animal shelters to scan pets for microchips prior to being euthanized or relinquished for other purposes (e.g., research facility). Based on the feedback we have received from rescue groups and animal control officers, the failure to consistently scan strays by many shelters has resulted in countless pets being euthanized instead of reunited with their owners. In addition, shelters are spending their limited funds on unnecessary boarding and euthanasia for such pets, despite a mandatory microchip scanning law passed in 2010 (O.C.G.A. § 4-11-5.2).*



Microchip Scanning Law (2010)

*** O.C.G.A. § 4-11-5.2 .**

(a) As used in this Code section, the term 'microchip reader' means a device designed to read microchips at 125 kHz, both encrypted and nonencrypted, 128 kHz, and 134.2 kHz, and which is ISO 11784 and 11785 compliant. (b) When any dog, cat, or other large animal traditionally kept as a household pet is brought to an animal shelter or other facility operated for the collection and care of stray, neglected, or abandoned animals, the operator of the facility shall, if the owner of the animal is not known, within 24 hours or as soon as possible, scan for the presence of an identifying microchip through the use of a microchip reader. If a microchip is found, the operator shall make a reasonable effort to contact the owner of the animal. Prior to euthanizing a dog, cat, or other large animal traditionally kept as a household pet, any facility referred to in this subsection shall again scan for the presence of an identifying microchip through the use of a microchip reader. (c) Shelters and facilities and their employees and the Department of Agriculture shall not be liable for failing to detect a microchip or failing to contact the owner of the animal. Shelter personnel shall not be required to scan any animal they deem to be too vicious or dangerous to permit safe handling.

USDA-APHIS (U.S. Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) published a Report on Microchips in July 2007, stating, "The existing infrastructure in the United States favors the 125kHz chips." Microchip readers are widely in place in the U.S. that will read and display this frequency.