

**CITY OF MARGARET, ALABAMA  
ORDINANCE NO. 2026-003**

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING COMPREHENSIVE ANIMAL CONTROL REGULATIONS; REPEALING PRIOR ANIMAL ORDINANCES; AND PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT, DUE PROCESS, AND PENALTIES**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARGARET, ALABAMA, AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1. TITLE; AUTHORITY; PURPOSE**

**1.1 Title**

This ordinance shall be known as the **“City of Margaret Animal Control Ordinance.”**

**1.2 Authority**

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the City’s police powers under § 11-45-1, Code of Alabama 1975, and related state animal health and public safety statutes.

**1.3 Purpose**

The purposes of this ordinance are to:

1. Protect public health and safety;
2. Promote humane treatment of animals;
3. Prevent animals from running at large;
4. Address animal-related nuisances;
5. Establish clear, enforceable, and constitutionally sound procedures; and
6. Replace outdated and conflicting animal ordinances with a single, comprehensive standard.

**SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this ordinance:

**2.1 Animal**

Any domesticated animal, including dogs and cats.

## **2.2 At Large**

An animal is “at large” when it is off the premises of its owner and not under restraint.

## **2.3 Owner / Harboring**

Any person who owns, keeps, harbors, shelters, feeds, or has custody or control of an animal.

## **2.4 Under Restraint**

An animal is under restraint when:

- Controlled by a leash, lead, or tether held by a responsible person; or
- Confined within a fence, enclosure, or structure sufficient to prevent escape.

## **2.5 Nuisance Animal**

An animal that creates a nuisance condition as defined in Section 7 of this ordinance or the City’s Nuisance Ordinance.

## **2.6 Dangerous Animal**

An animal that, based on specific behavior:

- Has attacked or bitten a person without provocation; or
- Has exhibited aggressive behavior creating a reasonable threat to persons or domestic animals.

## **SECTION 3. ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY**

This ordinance shall be enforced by:

- The City Police Department; and/or
- Any City official or employee designated by the Mayor.

## **SECTION 4. ANIMALS AT LARGE PROHIBITED**

### **4.1 Prohibition**

No owner shall permit an animal to run at large within the City.

### **4.2 Enforcement Options**

Animals found at large may be:

- Impounded; or
- Returned to the owner with a citation or warning, at the discretion of the enforcing officer.

## **SECTION 5. VACCINATION AND IDENTIFICATION**

### **5.1 Rabies Vaccination Required**

All dogs and cats over three (3) months of age shall be vaccinated against rabies in accordance with Title 22, Code of Alabama, as amended.

### **5.2 Identification**

Animals shall have visible identification or microchip information sufficient to identify the owner.

### **5.3 Unidentified Animals**

Animals without identification may be transported to an approved animal shelter or animal control facility.

## **SECTION 6. HUMANE CARE REQUIREMENTS**

No owner shall fail to provide an animal with:

1. Sufficient food and potable water;
2. Adequate shelter from weather;
3. Necessary veterinary care to prevent suffering; and
4. Humane treatment at all times.

## **SECTION 7. ANIMAL-RELATED NUISANCES**

The following constitute animal-related nuisances:

### **7.1 Excessive Noise**

Frequent, continuous, or habitual barking, howling, or other noise that unreasonably disturbs nearby residents.

### **7.2 Unsanitary Conditions**

Failure to maintain animal enclosures or premises free from waste creating odor, health hazards, or vector attraction.

### **7.3 Aggressive Behavior**

Animals that menace, chase, or threaten persons or domestic animals.

Animal nuisances shall be enforced in coordination with the City’s Nuisance Ordinance.

## **SECTION 8. DANGEROUS ANIMALS (BEHAVIOR-BASED)**

### **8.1 Designation**

An animal may be designated “dangerous” only after:

- Documented behavior; and
- Notice and an opportunity for the owner to be heard.

### **8.2 Restrictions**

Owners of dangerous animals may be required to:

- Secure the animal in an enclosure;
- Use restraints when off property;
- Post warning signage; and
- Comply with specific safety conditions imposed after hearing.

## **SECTION 9. PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

It shall be unlawful to:

1. Remove or release an animal from lawful confinement without permission;
2. Interfere with animal control enforcement; or
3. Fail to comply with lawful orders issued under this ordinance.

## **SECTION 10. PENALTIES**

### **10.1 Graduated Enforcement**

Violations may be addressed by:

- Warning;
- Citation; or
- Municipal court prosecution.

## **10.2 Penalties**

Upon conviction, penalties may include fines as authorized by the City's general penalty ordinance, not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per offense.

Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

## **SECTION 11. SEIZURE; IMPOUNDMENT; DUE PROCESS**

### **11.1 Authority**

Animals may be seized or impounded only:

- When at large;
- When posing an immediate threat; or
- After notice and due process where required.

### **11.2 Reclaiming Animals**

Owners shall be afforded an opportunity to reclaim animals subject to applicable fees and compliance requirements.

## **SECTION 12. APPEALS**

Any owner aggrieved by enforcement action may request a hearing in accordance with procedures established by the City.

## **SECTION 13. REPEALER**

The following ordinances are hereby repealed in their entirety:

- Ordinance No. 4401
- Ordinance No. 06-1113
- Any prior animal control ordinance or resolution inconsistent with this ordinance

## **SECTION 14. SEVERABILITY**

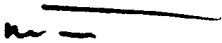
If any provision of this ordinance is held invalid, the remainder shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 15. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption, approval, and publication as required by law.

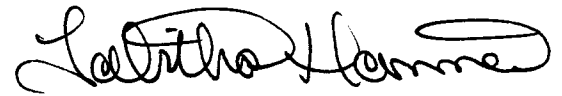
PASSED AND ADOPTED this 26 day of January, 2026.

APPROVED:



Matt Tortorice, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tabitha Hanner, City Clerk

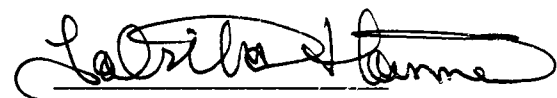
**CERTIFICATION OF CITY CLERK**

STATE OF ALABAMA

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

I, Tabitha Hanner, City Clerk of the City of Margaret, Alabama, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of an ordinance duly and legally adopted by the City Council of the City of Margaret, Alabama, on the 26 day of January, 2026, while in regular session.

Witness my hand and seal of office this the 26 day of January, 2026.



CITY CLERK