

Taken in part from a Fact Sheet from The Humane Society of the United States.
“Chaining or Tethering Dogs”

- **What is meant by “chaining” or “tethering” dogs?** These terms refer to the practice of fastening a dog to a stationary object or stake, usually in the owner’s backyard, as a means of keeping the animal under control. These terms do not refer to the periods when an animal is walked on a leash.
- **Is there a problem with continuous chaining or tethering?** Yes, the practice is both inhumane and a threat to the safety of the confined dog, other animals, and humans.
- **Why is tethering dogs inhumane?** Dogs are naturally social beings who thrive on interaction with human beings and other animals. A dog who is kept chained in one spot for hours, days, or even years suffers immense psychological damage. An otherwise friendly and docile dog, when kept continuously chained, becomes neurotic, unhappy, anxious, and often aggressive..... In many cases, the necks of chained dogs become rubbed raw and covered with sores, the result of improperly fitted collars and the dogs’ constant yanking and straining in desperate attempts to escape confinement. Dogs have even been found with collars embedded in their necks, the result of years of neglect at the end of a chain. In one case, a veterinarian had to euthanize a dog whose collar, an electrical cord, was so embedded in the animal’s neck that it was difficult to see the plug that was ultimately removed.
- **How does tethering or chaining dogs pose a danger to humans?** Dogs tethered for long periods of time can become highly aggressive. Dogs feel naturally protective over their territory; when confronted with a perceived threat, they respond according to their natural fight-or-flight instinct. A chained dog, unable to take flight, often feels forced to fight, attacking any unfamiliar animal or person who unwittingly wanders into his or her territory.....Numerous attacks on people by tethered dogs have been documented. Tragically, the victims of such attacks are often children who are unaware of the chained dog’s presence until it is too late. Furthermore, a tethered dog who finally does get loose from his chains may remain aggressive and likely to chase and attack unsuspecting passersby and pets.
- **Why is tethering dangerous to dogs?** In addition to psychological damage wrought by continuous chaining, dogs forced to live on the end of a chain make easy targets for other animals, humans, and biting insects, from which there is virtually no escape. A chained animal may fall prey to harassment and teasing from insensitive humans, stinging bites from outdoor insects, and, in worst cases, attacks by other animals. Chained dogs are also easy targets for thieves looking to steal dogs for sale to research institutions or to be used as training fodder for organized animal fights. Finally dogs’ tethered can become entangled with other objects, which can choke or strangle dogs to death.
- **Are tethered dogs dangerous to other animals?** In some instances, yes. Any other animal that enters a tethered dog’s area of confinement is in jeopardy. Cats, rabbits, smaller dogs, and others may enter the area when the tethered dog is asleep and then be fiercely attacked after the dog awakens.

- **Are chained dogs otherwise treated well?** Rarely does a chained or tethered dog receive sufficient care. Tethered dogs suffer from sporadic feedings, overturned water bowls, inadequate veterinary care, and extreme temperatures. During snowstorms, chained dogs often have no access to shelter. During periods of extreme heat, they may not receive adequate water or protection from the sun.....Because chained dogs' often neurotic behavior makes them difficult to approach, they are rarely given even minimal affection, food, and water. Many do not receive sufficient veterinary care, including standard vaccinations. Tethered dogs may become "part of the scenery" and can be easily ignored by their owners.
- **Are the areas in which tethered dogs confined usually pleasant?** No, because the dogs have to eat, sleep, urinate, and defecate in a single confined area. The owner who chains her dog is also the owner less likely to clean the area in any way. And even though there may have once been grass in the area of confinement, it is usually so beaten down by the dog's pacing that the ground consists of nothing but dirt or mud.
- **But how else can people confine dogs?** The Humane Society of the United States recommends that all dogs be kept indoors at night, taken on regular walks, and otherwise provided with adequate attention, food, water, and veterinary care. If an animal must be housed outside at certain times, he should be placed in a suitable pen with adequate square footage and shelter from the elements.
- **Should chaining or tethering ever be allowed?** To become well-adjusted companion animals, dogs should interact regularly with people and other animals and should receive regular exercise. It is the owner's responsibility to properly restrain her dog, just as it is the owner's responsibility to provide adequate attention and socialization. Placing an animal on a restraint to get fresh air can be acceptable if it is done for a short period of time. However, keeping an animal tethered for long periods of time is never acceptable.
- **If a dog is chained or tethered for a short period of time, can it be done humanely?** Animals who must be kept on a tether should be secured in such a way that the tether cannot become entangled with other objects. Collars used to attach an animal should be comfortable and properly fitted; choke chains should never be used. Restraints should allow the animal to move about and lie down comfortably. Animals should never be tethered during natural disasters such as floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, or blizzards.
- **Why should a community outlaw the continuous chaining or tethering of dogs?** Animal control and humane agencies receive countless calls every day from citizens concerned about animals in these cruel situations. Animal control officers, paid at taxpayers expense, spend many hours trying to educate pet owners about the dangers and cruelty involved in this practice.....A chained animal is caught in a vicious cycle; frustrated by long periods of boredom and social isolation, he becomes a neurotic shell of his former self - further deterring human interaction and kindness. In the end, the helpless dog can only suffer the frustration of watching the world go by in isolation - a cruel fate for what is by nature a highly social animal. Any city, county, or state that bans this practice is a safer, more humane community.

