

## An Act to Increase Kennel Safety (Ollie's Law) (Prepared for 2025 MMA Connect 351 Conference)

On September 20, 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed into law “An Act to Increase Kennel Safety,” also known as Ollie’s Law, codified as Chapter 213 of the Acts of 2024 found [here](#). Ollie’s Law was inspired by the story of a seven-month-old Labradoodle who was injured in a dog fight while staying at a doggy daycare, and tragically succumbed to his injuries two months later. In an effort to prevent such incidents in the future, Ollie’s Law aims to improve animal safety in kennels by establishing – for the first time – state oversight of commercial kennels, including daycare and boarding facilities for dogs, by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (“MDAR”). As part of a revised licensing process, the statute establishes important obligations for municipal officials, including new reporting requirements that take effect on **June 1, 2025**.

Ollie’s Law requires that cities and towns license and inspect all kennels. There are five types of kennels: (1) Personal Kennel, more than four dogs on a single premises for personal use; (2) Commercial Boarding or Training Kennel, an establishment used for boarding, holding, day care, overnight stays or training of animals that are not the property of the owner of the establishment; (3) Commercial Breeder Kennels, an establishment, other than a personal kennel, engaged in the business of breeding animals for sale or exchange to wholesalers, brokers or pet shops in return for consideration; (4) Domestic Charitable Corporation Kennel, a facility operated, owned or maintained by a domestic charitable corporation registered with the department or an animal welfare society or other nonprofit organization incorporated for the purpose of providing for and promoting the welfare, protection and humane treatment of animals; and (5) Veterinary Kennel, a veterinary hospital or clinic that boards dogs for reasons in addition to medical treatment or care.

Each of the kennel types are required to have a kennel license issued by the municipal clerk. Importantly, Ollie’s law eliminates the option of obtaining a kennel license in lieu of licensing each dog individually and the option for owners with less than three (3) dogs to obtain a kennel license in lieu of individual licenses for each dog. The law now makes clear that every dog over the age of six months must have an individual license and rabies certificate.

For each kennel license issued, the municipal clerk must specify: the type of kennel, the name and address of the kennel and the owner, the license expiration date, the date of the last inspection and the maximum number of dogs allowed. **The municipal clerk is required to provide this information to the MDAR annually by June 1, beginning on June 1, 2025 through a portal on its website: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/kennel-reporting-for-municipalities>**

All kennels must be inspected prior to a license being issued or renewed and are subject to inspection at other times to ensure that they are being maintained in a sanitary and humane manner and that required records are being properly kept. The owner of the kennel is required to be present for any inspections and kennel licenses are subject to revocation or suspension if these standards are not being met.

Commercial boarding or training kennels are required to report to MDAR all injuries to animals or people occurring on their premises and those reports may be investigated by the municipal animal control officer and/or

**THE LEADER IN PUBLIC SECTOR LAW**

MDAR. MDAR must make investigative reports of injuries publicly available on its website if the investigation results in enforcement action against the kennel.

To assist in the enforcement of kennel standards, MDAR is required to promulgate rules and regulations for commercial boarding or training kennels, including those located at a private residence. Such regulations may address a broad range of topics including, but not be limited to, licensing, inspection, compliance and enforcement, use of best practices and operation, provider and staff to animal ratios, fire and emergency planning, injury reporting, group sizes and supervision, minimum housing and care requirements, indoor and outdoor physical facility requirements, utilities, body language interpretation, breed familiarity, dog handling, and insurance. The regulations may also address proper education and training of commercial boarding or training kennel staff, including, but not limited to, dog daycare staff, operational safety standards, risk management and consumer education and protection.

Ollie's Law took effect on December 19, 2024 and regulations must be promulgated by MDAR not later than June 19, 2026. The new reporting requirements are effective beginning on June 1, 2025.

If you have questions about implementation of Ollie's Law, or laws affecting the regulation of dogs generally, please contact Attorneys [Gregg Corbo](#), [Michael D'Ortenzio](#) or your KP Law attorney at 617-556-0007.

Disclaimer: This information is provided as a service by KP Law, P.C. This information is general in nature and does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Neither the provision nor receipt of this information creates an attorney-client relationship with KP Law, P.C. Whether to take any action based upon the information contained herein should be determined only after consultation with legal counsel.