



United Kennel Club Position Statement Tethering

United Kennel Club opposes blanket anti-tethering laws on principle. Tethering is acceptable animal husbandry in many facets of dog sports and hunting. In those genres, it is completely different form of containment than dogs chained in potentially abusive situations: in inner cities and back yards where they never leave the chain for exercise and are often in basically abandoned situations. UKC is sympathetic to the intent of these laws, but they are most often over-inclusive and serve only to punish responsible active dog owners.

Hunting and sporting dogs such as sled dogs are often housed on tethers as opposed to kennel runs. However, these dogs are working dogs and are regularly exercised and trained OFF the tether. Comparing their situations to neglected dogs is apples to oranges, and any proposed tethering laws should be reflective of that. These dogs are most often tethered in groups together, which keeps them better mentally stimulated than the dog tethered alone in the back yard. Tethering is often done to ensure the safety of escape artists that can dig, chew, and climb their way out of kennel runs. Many tethering laws include temperature minimums, which is unrealistic for most of these dogs. Sled dogs in particular are bred for cold temperatures and are in fact happier in cold climates. Hunting dogs are conditioned to cold and also have proper shelter from the elements. Quite often these laws also restrict tethering to only short periods of time, which contradicts housing dogs on tethers.

UKC could not begin to consider any tethering restrictions unless there were clear exclusions for all hunting and working dogs and it would not impact competitions, trials, or other events. Otherwise, these laws are far too overreaching and do more harm to good dog owners than to punish the bad. Unless they are narrowly tailored to target truly abusive situations, UKC cannot support tethering restrictions.

A Kalamazoo, Michigan-based company founded in 1898, United Kennel Club is the largest all-breed performance-dog registry in the world, registering dogs from all 50 states and 25 foreign countries. Celebrating the unique Total Dog philosophy, UKC events highlight the instincts and heritage of dogs that look and perform equally well, as more than 60 percent of its annually licensed events are tests of hunting ability, training, and instinct. United Kennel Club prides itself on its family-oriented, friendly, educational events, welcoming both purebred dogs and dogs of unknown ancestry.

