



# Dog Management Policy

**Approved by Council** on June 17, 2026

**Effective Date:** June 17, 2026

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## Section 1. Introduction

The Gwich'in have historically used and worked with dogs for travel to hunting and fishing grounds and to move around seasonal camps. This relationship has changed as the community has adopted other modes of transportation, however, dogs continue to be an important part of life for the Van Tat Gwich'in.

Dogs running-at-large, creating packs or having been abandoned are a regular and repeated occurrence in Old Crow. This creates a public nuisance and can create public health and safety concerns if loose or abandoned dogs approach, bite or attack people, especially the elderly or young children. Dogs running at-large and abandoned dogs may also suffer from neglect, including hunger, starvation, and lack of care.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN) is seeking to reduce the suffering of abandoned dogs and ensure public safety in the community by addressing dogs running at-large and abandoned dogs.

## Section 2. Scope

### **Authority:**

This Policy was issued under the authority of the Chief and Council meeting held on June 17, 2026.

### **Application:**

This Policy applies to all dog owners; and to those who have dogs under their control (either temporarily or long-term) in Old Crow. This Policy also applies to people who are employed by the VGFN (or hired under contract) as a Community Safety Officer or as an Assistant Community Safety Officer.

## Section 3. Principles and Intent

1. The health and safety of community members is paramount – residents and visitors to Old Crow should be able to enjoy the community without fear of interaction with nuisance or dangerous dogs.
2. VGFN recognizes that dogs (and dog ownership) are important aspects of many community members' lives. Dogs can play an important and often integral role in a person's social and emotional well-being. They may also serve a cultural element by assisting with transportation or activities in VGFN Traditional Territory.
3. Dogs deserve to be treated and cared for respectfully, and provided with adequate food, water and shelter.
4. Capturing and sending dogs outside the community to be rehomed or euthanized is considered a last resort option after other avenues for dog care by the dog owner and/or the community have been exhausted.

## Section 4. Policy Core Objectives

1. The core objectives of this Policy are to ensure public health and safety, while supporting responsible dog ownership.
2. This Policy:
  - establishes public health and safety as being of paramount importance in matters of managing nuisance and dangerous dogs;
  - acknowledges the importance of dog ownership;
  - outlines acceptable behaviour for dogs;
  - clarifies expectations and responsibilities of dog owners to manage dogs with problematic behaviour; and,
  - identifies the consequences if there is unacceptable dog behaviour and ownership, including the levying of fines by VGFN and the seizing/relocating of nuisance dogs or dogs suffering abuse.

## Section 5. Definitions

“Abandoned dog” includes a dog that

- a) is left for more than twenty-four (24) hours without adequate food, water or shelter; or,
- b) is left on premises for which a tenancy agreement has been terminated.

“Attack” means to set upon with force or to seek to hurt or defeat.

“Dangerous Dog” means a dog that:

- a) has bitten, injured, attacked, or killed a domestic animal, without provocation;
- b) has bitten, injured, or attacked a human being, without provocation; or,
- c) has shown the disposition or tendency to be threatening or aggressive.

“Dog” means a male or female domesticated dog and an animal that is a crossbreed between a wolf and a dog.

“Nuisance Dog” means:

- a) a dog which causes damage to the property of anyone other than its owner, including but not limited to; getting into or turning over garbage containers, damaging gardens, flowers and vegetables, or defecating on the property of others or on any public property.
- b) a dog which is maintained in an unsanitary environment which results in offensive odours or danger to the dog or to the public health, safety or welfare; or a dog not maintained in a condition of good order and cleanliness, thereby increasing the probability of the transmission of disease.
- c) a dog kept on an owner’s or VGFN property that is maintained in a manner that is offensive, annoying or dangerous to the public health, safety or welfare of the community because of the number, type, variety, density or location of dogs on the property.
- d) a dog which is permitted or allowed to bark, whine, howl, or otherwise make noise in an excessive or untimely fashion so as to interfere with the quiet and reasonable use and enjoyment of neighbouring properties.
- e) a dog that is maintained without adequate medical treatment and that is diseased or dangerous to the public health.
- f) a dog that chases, snaps at, or attacks people, bicycles, or other vehicles, or animals being walked on a leash.

“Owner” means a person who possesses or harbours a dog and if the owner is a minor or someone in the care of a guardian, the person responsible for the custody of the minor or of the individual under the person’s care

“Pack’ means a group of three (3) or more dogs, travelling and behaving in a collective fashion.

“Running at large” means a situation where a dog is not on the property of the owner and not on a leash under the control of a responsible person.

“VGFN Community Safety Officer” means a person who is employed by, or may be contracted by, VGFN to seize or capture abandoned, dangerous or nuisance dogs, and those that are running at-large in the community, or that have formed packs.

## Section 6. Policy Provisions

- A. This Policy draws from and is intended to be consistent with generally accepted dog care standards and practices.
- B. Dog Owners are expected to provide the following for their Dog(s):
  - (a) food and water sufficient to maintain a healthy body condition and adequate hydration,
  - (b) shelter that provides adequate ventilation and protection from injurious heat and cold; and includes reasonable measures to exclude predators,
  - (c) sanitary living conditions,
  - (d) opportunity for exercise and socialization, and,
  - (e) adequate care to address medical or health needs.
- C. Dog Owners must not neglect or abandon their Dogs.
- D. Dog Owners must not allow their Dogs to become a Nuisance or Dangerous Dog or to form Packs.
- E. Dog Owners must not (and must not permit any minor under their supervision) to deliberately cause or permit a dog to be injured, harmed, or physically abused; or to suffer extreme anxiety.
- F. Dog Owners must keep their Dog confined to their immediate property or vehicle and must manage the Dog in such a way that it does not:
  - a. injure or kill any person;
  - b. injure or kill another Dog or other animal;
  - c. stray onto public property or the property of another person without that person's consent; or,
  - d. damage the property of another person or public property.
- G. Dog Owners who contravene this Policy may be subject to the following penalties:
  - (a) Abandoning their Dog:  
Written warning
  - (b) Allowing their Dog to become a Nuisance Dog:  
Written warning
  - (c) Allowing their Dog to be Running at large or form a Pack:  
Written warning
  - (d) Allowing their Dog to act aggressively or Attack people or other Dogs:  
Written warning
  - (e) Failing to provide their Dog with adequate food, water, or shelter:  
Written warning
- H. Abandoned, Nuisance, and Dangerous Dogs, and Dogs Running at large may be apprehended by the Community Safety Officer and held by VGFN until a determination can be made as to how best to respond to the incident, including:
  - (a) returning the Dog to its Owner;
  - (b) issuing a written warning;
  - (c) re-homing the Dog in the community; or,
  - (d) surrendering to the Yukon Government (YG) Animal Health Unit; under the Yukon Community Dog Care Initiative.
- I. Dangerous Dogs may be removed from the community for rehoming or euthanized as determined by the VGFN Executive Director or Associate Executive Director in their sole discretion.

## Section 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### **VGFN Community Safety Officer**

- (1) Seize or capture Nuisance or Dangerous Dogs and take them to an official place to be held, until a decision is made in accordance with provisions 6H. or 6I. of this Policy.
- (2) Complete a VGFN “Dog Incident Form” each time they are required to catch a Dog or respond to a Dog incident.

### **VGFN Executive Office**

Take temporary care of any captured Dogs and provide them with adequate food, water and shelter until a decision is made in accordance with sections 6H and 6I. of this Policy.

- (1) Liaise with the YG Animal Health Unit, and other agencies as required, regarding logistics of shipping Dogs outside of the community to be surrendered to an animal shelter or rehomed.
- (2) Liaise with the YG Animal Health Unit, and other agencies as required, to access program funding and to coordinate training workshops and wellness, deworming and vaccination clinics in Old Crow.

### **VGFN Executive Director or Associate Executive Director**

- (1) Oversee implementation of this Policy.
- (2) Determine the need for euthanizing of Dangerous Dogs taking into account the risk presented to the community after consultation with affected residents and relevant VGFN Department Directors.
- (3) Receive suggestions or complaints from Citizens and residents of Old Crow regarding the implementation of this Policy.

## Section 8. Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is being implemented as intended.