

Ask The League *What is a Pet Dealer License?*

During the 2013 legislative session, state lawmakers implemented changes to the pet merchant licensing program that had historically been managed by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM). The dealer permit takes the place of the kennel permit, which is now obsolete and applies only to those who meet the statutory definition of a “pet dealer.”

A pet dealer is “any person who sells or exchanges or who offers to sell or exchange cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids, or any combination thereof, from three or more litters of cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids in any 12-month period. This definition shall not apply to pet shops, animal shelters, or rescue organizations as those terms are defined in section 3901 of this title (Title 20).” 20 V.S.A. § 3541(10). A person meeting this definition must annually obtain a pet dealer license from a municipal clerk. This permit costs \$25.00 and expires on March 31st. This fee is in addition to, and not a substitute for, all other licensing fees (e.g., basic license, working farm dog license, or breeding [aka “special” license]) as it is a separate, stand-alone license for operating as a pet dealer. For example, if an owner has dogs over six months old from three or more litters for sale, he or she must pay to license each individual dog and also pay for a pet dealer license. “The provisions of subchapters 1, 2, and 4 of this chapter not inconsistent with this subchapter shall apply to the pet dealer permit which shall be in addition to other permits required.” 20 V.S.A. § 3681. If not obtained by April 1st, a pet dealer license may still be obtained, but the fee will increase by 50 percent (i.e., to \$37.50). Unlike with basic licenses, there is no discount for a pet dealer permit, based on when during the year it’s obtained.

You may use the agency’s pet dealer permit form to issue permits to qualified individuals, but you must print out and complete two copies. Town clerks are required to keep in their office a copy of the completed form, which must include the type of animals kept. The permittee is required to post a copy of the same form.

Last July, VAAFMM’s Animal Health Section sent a letter to all municipal clerks that included some helpful information:

- Upon issuance of the Pet Dealer permit, the municipal clerk must provide the pet dealer with a copy of Part 3 of the Animal Welfare Regulations promulgated by VAAFMM. You can download the document at http://agriculture.vermont.gov/animal_health/registrations_licensing/pet_dealer.
- Upon issuance of the permit, the clerk must also give the pet dealer VAAFMM’s Animal Health Office telephone number (802-828-2421). Permittees should direct questions to either the clerk or the Health Office.
- Upon issuance of the permit, the clerk must also give the pet dealer the telephone number of the Department of Taxes (802-828-2421). Callers should choose option 3 and ask to speak with a business tax examiner for any information regarding sale tax obligation for the sale of pets.

For additional information, visit www.agriculture.vermont.gov. Click on the animal health tab and then registrations/licensing to get to the pet dealer permit page.

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