

# Exotic Animals Ordinance

---

*An ordinance to regulate the possession, care, treatment and disposal of exotic animals held in private possession and to establish penalties for violation of the ordinance.*

---

The Charter Township of Madison ordains as follows:

## **Section 1. Intent**

It is the intent of the Charter Township of Madison to protect the public against health and safety risks that exotic animals pose to the community and to protect the welfare of the individual animals held in private possession. By their very nature, exotic animals are wild and potentially dangerous and, as such, do not adjust well to a captive environment.

## **Section 2. Definitions**

- a. "Animal control authority" means the municipal or county animal control agency or a county sheriff in an area that does not have an animal control office.
- b. "Exotic animal" means those species of animals that are exotic to humans. Exotic animals include, but are not limited to, any or all of the following orders and families, whether bred in the wild or in captivity, and any or all hybrids. The animals listed in parentheses are intended to act as examples and are not to be construed as an exhaustive list or limit the generality of each group of animals, unless otherwise specified:
  1. Class Mammalia
    - i Order Artiodactyla (hippopotamuses, giraffes, camels, deer, not cattle or swine or sheep or goats)
    - ii Order Carnivora
      - (a) Family Felidae (lions, tigers, cougars, leopards, ocelots, servals, not domestic cats)
      - (b) Family Canidae (wolves, coyotes, foxes, jackals, not domestic dogs)
      - (c) Family Ursidae (all bears)

- (d) Family Mustelidae (weasels, skunks, martins, minks, not ferrets)
- (e) Family Procyonidae (raccoons, coatis)
- (f) Family Hyaenidae (hyenas)
- (g) Family Viverridae (civets, genets, mongooses)
- iii Order Edentalia (anteaters, armadillos, sloths)
- iv Order Marsupialia (opossums, kangaroos, wallabies, not sugar gliders)
- v Order Perissodactyla (rhinoceroses, tapirs, not horses or donkeys or mules)
- vi Order Primates (lemurs, monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas)
- vii Order Proboscidae (elephants)
- viii Order Rodentia (squirrels, beavers, porcupines, not guinea pigs, or rats, or mice, or gerbils, or hamsters)

2. Class Reptilia

- i Order Squamata
  - (a) Family Varanidae (only water monitors and crocodile monitors)
  - (b) Family Iguanidae (only green iguanas and rock iguanas)
  - (c) Family Boidae (all species whose adult length has the potential to exceed eight (8) feet in length)
  - (d) Family Colubridae (only boomslangs and African twig snakes)
  - (e) Family Elapidae (such as coral snakes, cobras, mambas, etc.) - all species
  - (f) Family Nactricidae (only keelback snakes)
  - (g) Family Viperidae (such as copperheads, cottonmouths, rattlesnakes, etc.) - all species
- ii Order Crocodilia (such as crocodiles, alligators, caimans, gavials, etc.) - all species

- c. "Person" means any individual, partnership, corporation, organization, trade or professional association, firm, limited liability company, joint venture, association, trust, estate or any other legal entity, and any officer, member, shareholder, director, employee, agent or representative thereof.
- d. "Possessor" means any person who owns, possesses, keeps, harbors, brings into the state, has in one's possession, acts as a custodian, or has custody or control of a exotic animal.
- e. "Wildlife sanctuary" means a non-profit organization described in Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi), Internal Revenue Code 1986, and its subsequent amendments, that operates a place of refuge where abused, neglected, unwanted, impounded, abandoned, orphaned, or displaced exotic animals are provided care for their lifetime or released back to their natural habitat and, with respect to any animal owned by the organization, does not:
  - 1. Conduct any activity that is not inherent to the animal's nature;
  - 2. Use the animal for any type of entertainment;
  - 3. Sell, trade or barter the animal or the animal's body parts; or
  - 4. Breed the animal for any purpose.

### **Section 3. Keeping of Exotic Animals Prohibited**

- a. It shall be unlawful for any person to own, possess, keep, harbor, bring into the city, have in one's possession, act as a custodian, or have custody or control of an exotic animal, except in compliance with this ordinance.
- b. It shall be unlawful for a person to breed an exotic animal.

### **Section 4. Exemptions**

The provisions of this ordinance shall not apply to:

- a. Institutions accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) or under mentorship through the AZA.
- b. Duly incorporated non-profit animal protection organizations housing an exotic animal at the written request of the animal control authority.
- c. Animal control or law enforcement agencies or officers acting under the authority of this ordinance.
- d. Licensed veterinary hospitals or clinics.

- e. Any wildlife sanctuary as defined under this ordinance.
- f. Any licensed or accredited research or medical institution.
- g. Any licensed or accredited educational institution.
- h. Any lawfully operated circus or rodeo.
- i. A person temporarily transporting an exotic animal through the city if the transit time is not more than 96 hours and the animal is at all times maintained within a confinement sufficient to prevent the exotic animal from escaping.

**Section 5. Personal Possession Permit Required for Possessor**

- a. A person may not own, possess, keep, harbor, bring into the state, have in one's possession, act as a custodian, or have custody or control of an exotic animal unless that person holds a personal possession permit for that animal issued by an animal control authority. A person may obtain a personal possession permit for an exotic animal only if the following are met:
  - 1. The person was in legal possession of the exotic animal prior to the effective date of this ordinance and is the legal possessor of the exotic animal.
  - 2. The person applies for and is granted a personal possession permit for each exotic animal in the person's possession within the time permitted in Section 17 of this ordinance.
- b. Persons who meet the requirements set forth in subsection A of this section shall annually obtain a personal possession permit. From and after the effective date of this ordinance, no new exotic animal shall be brought into possession under authority of a personal possession permit.
- c. An applicant shall file an application to receive a personal possession permit with the animal control authority on forms provided by the animal control authority. The application shall include the following:
  - 1. A written statement which sets forth the following information:
    - i. The name, address, telephone number, and date of birth of the applicant.
    - ii. A description of each exotic animal applicant possesses, including the scientific name, name, sex, age, color, weight, and any distinguishing marks or coloration that would aid in the identification of the animal.
    - iii. A photograph of the exotic animal.

- iv The exact location where the exotic animal is to be kept.
  - v The names, addresses, and telephone number of the person from whom the applicant obtained the exotic animal, if known.
  - vi The microchip number of the exotic animal, excluding exotic animals exempted under Section 6.
  - vii The name, address, and phone number of the veterinarian providing veterinary care to the exotic animal and a certificate of good health from the possessor's veterinarian.
2. A notarized written certification by the applicant that:
- i The applicant is eighteen (18) years of age or older.
  - ii The applicant has not been convicted of or found responsible for violating a local or state law prohibiting cruelty, neglect, or mistreatment of an animal or has not within the past ten (10) years been convicted of a felony or been convicted for possession, sale, or use of illegal narcotics.
  - iii All of the requirements set forth in this ordinance are and will continue to be met.
  - iv The facility and the conditions in which the exotic animal will be kept are in compliance with this ordinance.
  - v The applicant has regularly provided veterinary care to the exotic animal when needed and will provide such care in the future.
  - vi Proof that a licensed veterinarian, pursuant to Section 7, has spayed or neutered the exotic animal.
3. An applicant must submit his/her plan for the quick and safe recapture of the exotic animal if the exotic animal escapes at the time of filing of the application.
4. An applicant must submit a copy of the policy for liability insurance at the time of filing of the application.
5. Any additional information the animal control authority may deem necessary to carry out the provisions of this ordinance.
6. The animal control authority may establish and charge reasonable fees for application, issuance, and renewal of a personal possession permit in order to recover the costs associated with the administration and enforcement of

this ordinance. The fee charged to an applicant may not exceed \$50 for each animal and may not exceed \$200 for each person obtaining a permit, regardless of the number of animals owned by the person. The fees collected under this section may be used only to administer and enforce this ordinance.

- d. A permit shall not be granted unless the animal control authority finds that all of the requirements in Section 5C have been met.
- e. The personal possession permit shall set forth all of the following information:
  - 1. The name, address, phone number, and date of birth of the permit holder.
  - 2. The address if different than above, where the exotic animal(s) will be kept.
  - 3. The name, number, sex, species, age of the exotic animal(s), and any distinguishing marks or coloration that would aid in the identification of the animal.
  - 4. The identification number as required under Section 6, if applicable.
  - 5. The name, address, and phone number of the veterinarian who provides veterinary care to the exotic animal(s) named on the permit.
  - 6. Any other relevant information the animal control authority may deem necessary.
- f. If a person can no longer care for his/her exotic animal, that person may only transfer his/her exotic animal to another person currently holding a valid personal possession permit.
- g. The animal control authority shall keep records of who is carrying a valid permit. A permit holder shall notify the animal control authority of any changes of the stated information on the permit, which shall include the death of the exotic animal.

## **Section 6. Identification Number**

Every exotic animal must be implanted with a microchip, at the expense of the possessor, by or under the supervision of a veterinarian. This provision does not apply to an exotic animal if a veterinarian determines that the implant of a microchip would endanger the well-being of the exotic animal.

## **Section 7. Spaying or Neutering**

Every exotic animal must be spayed or neutered, at the expense of the possessor, by or under the supervision of a veterinarian. This provision does not apply to an exotic animal if a veterinarian determines that the spay or neuter procedure would endanger the

well-being of the exotic animal.

### **Section 8. Caging Requirements and Standards for Exotic animals**

For each exotic animal, the possessor shall comply with AZA's Minimum Husbandry Guidelines for animal care and maintenance of that animal.

### **Section 9. Care and Treatment of Exotic Animals Held Under A Personal Possession Permit**

- a. An exotic animal shall not be tethered, leashed, chained outdoors, or allowed to run at large.
- b. An exotic animal shall not be mistreated, neglected, abandoned, deprived of necessary food, water, and sustenance.
- c. A person transporting an exotic animal in a vehicle shall keep the animal securely caged in the vehicle at all times.
- d. Each person shall have a plan for the quick and safe recapture of the exotic animal if the exotic animal escapes, if recapture is impossible, then a plan for the destruction of the exotic animal held under a personal possession permit.
- e. The possessor shall contact the animal control authority, a wildlife sanctuary as defined under this ordinance, or an AZA accredited facility if the possessor can no longer care for the exotic animal prior to euthanasia of the exotic animal.

### **Section 10. Insurance; Signs; and Notification**

- a. A possessor of an exotic animal shall maintain liability insurance coverage in an amount of not less than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) for each occurrence for liability damages for destruction of or damage to property and death or bodily injury to a person caused by the exotic animal. The possessor of an exotic animal shall provide a copy of the policy for liability insurance to the animal control authority on an annual basis.
- b. The possessor of an exotic animal shall have continuously posted and displayed at each possible entrance onto the premises where an exotic animal is kept a conspicuous sign, clearly legible, and easily readable by the public warning that there is an exotic animal on the premises. In addition, the possessor shall conspicuously display a sign with a warning symbol that informs children of the presence of an exotic animal. The animal control authority shall prescribe the exact content and size of the sign.
- c. If any exotic animal unintentionally escapes the possessor of the exotic animal shall immediately contact a law enforcement officer of the city or county where the possessor resides to report the escape or release. The possessor is liable for all

expenses associated with efforts to recapture the animal.

- d. No person may intentionally release an exotic animal. If an exotic animal is intentionally released the possessor is liable for all expenses associated with efforts to recapture the animal.

### **Section 11. Public Contact**

The permittee shall not bring an exotic animal to any public property, or a commercial or retail establishment unless the permittee is bringing the animal to a licensed veterinarian or a veterinarian clinic.

### **Section 12. Enforcement of Article**

The animal control authority, its staff, its agents, local law enforcement agents, or county sheriffs are authorized and empowered to enforce the provisions of this ordinance.

### **Section 13. Inspection**

The possessor of an exotic animal, at all reasonable times, shall allow the animal control authority, its staff, and its agents to enter the premises where the animal is kept to ensure compliance with this ordinance.

### **Section 14. Denial of Personal Possession Permit; Appeal**

- a. If the animal control authority finds that an applicant for an original or renewal of a personal possession permit does not meet the requirements set forth in Section 5 the animal control authority shall deny the applicant a personal possession permit and give the applicant written notice of the denial and the reasons for the denial.
- b. If the animal control authority finds that a person has not complied with this ordinance the animal control authority may suspend or revoke the personal possession permit and give the possessor written notice of the suspension or revocation and the reasons for the suspension or revocation.
- c. A person who is denied a personal possession permit, denied a renewal of a personal possession permit, or who has had a permit suspended or revoked may appeal the decision to a Superior Court for the precinct in which the animal is located or the municipal court in the municipality in which the animal is located no later than the 15th day after the permit denied, suspended, or revoked. The decision of the court may not be appealed.

### **Section 15. Confiscation and Disposition of Exotic Animals**

- a. The animal control authority may immediately confiscate any exotic animal if the animal is kept in contravention of this ordinance. The possessor is liable for the costs of placement and care for the exotic animal from the time of confiscation until

the time of return to the possessor or until the time the animal has been relocated to an approved facility, such as a wildlife sanctuary as defined under this ordinance or an institution accredited by the AZA.

- b. If an exotic animal is confiscated due to the animal being kept in contravention of this ordinance, the possessor must post a security bond or cash with the animal control authority in an amount sufficient to guarantee payment of all reasonable expenses expected to be incurred in caring and providing for the animal, including but not limited to the estimated cost of feeding, medical care, and housing for at least thirty (30) days. The security bond or cash shall not prevent the animal control authority from disposing of the animal at the end of the thirty (30) days unless the person claiming the animal posts an additional security bond or cash with the animal control authority to secure payment of all reasonable expenses expected to be incurred in caring and providing for the animal for an additional thirty (30) days, and does so prior to the expiration of the first thirty (30) day period. The amount of the security bond or cash shall be determined by the animal control authority and based on the current rate to feed, provide medical care, and house the animal.
- c. If a confiscated animal possessor cannot be located or if a confiscated animal remains unclaimed, in the discretion of the animal control authority, the animal control authority may contact an approved facility, such as a wildlife sanctuary as defined under this ordinance or an institution accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), allow the animal to be adopted by a person who currently possesses a personal possession permit, or may euthanize the animal.
- d. If the exotic animal cannot be taken up or recaptured safely by the animal control authority or if proper and safe housing cannot be found the animal control authority may immediately euthanize the animal.
- e. An exotic animal may be returned to the possessor only if, to the satisfaction of the animal control authority, the possessor has a personal possession permit, has corrected the conditions resulting in the confiscation, and has paid the cost of placement and care of the animal while under the care and control of the animal control authority.

## **Section 16. Penalties**

- a. Any person violating any provision of this Ordinance shall be deemed:
  - 1. Guilty of a misdemeanor. Penalties may be imposed up to ninety (90) days incarceration in the County Jail and or fines up to five hundred (\$500.00) dollars plus the costs of prosecution.
  - 2. Responsible for a civil infraction. Penalties may be imposed in fines up to one hundred (\$100.00) dollars plus the costs of prosecution.
- b. The decision to charge the alleged violator with a misdemeanor and/or civil

infraction as a result of a violation of this Ordinance shall be at the sole discretion of the Township.

- c. In addition to the foregoing, any violation of this Ordinance shall be deemed a nuisance per se, permitting the Township Board, its officers, agents or any private citizen to take such action in any Court of competent jurisdiction to cause the abatement of such nuisance, including injunctive relief.

**Section 17. Effective Date**

- a. Except as provided by this section, this ordinance takes effect on the date the ordinance is signed into law.
- b. Not later than 6 months from the effective date of this ordinance, the animal control authority shall implement and administer the prohibitions of the keeping of exotic animals under this ordinance. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation of the personal possession permit program established by Section 5 of this ordinance, orders relating to the applications for personal possession permit and renewals, fees for the permit, and the form and content of the application.
- c. A person is not required to obtain a personal possession permit under Section 5 before 1 year following the effective date of this ordinance, but must obtain a personal possession permit by not later than 18 months after the effective date of this ordinance..

**Section 18. Severability**

If any part of this ordinance is found to be unconstitutional or unenforceable it shall not affect the constitutionality or enforceability of any other part.

YEAS:  
NAYS:  
ABSENT:

**Ordinance Declared Adopted on \_\_\_\_\_, 2005**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Theodore C. Dusseau, Supervisor  
Charter Township of Madison

**CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION**

I, Arnold O. Harper, the duly elected Clerk of the Charter Township of Madison certify that the foregoing ordinance is a true and correct copy of the ordinance enacted by the

Township Board of the Charter Township of Madison on \_\_\_\_\_ and published in the Daily Telegram a newspaper circulated in the Charter Township of Madison on \_\_\_\_\_.

---

Arnold O. Harper, Clerk  
Charter Township of Madison