

**PRINCE ALBERT SPCA,**  
**CITY OF PRINCE ALBERT AND BYLAW ENFORCEMENT**  
**ANIMAL CONTROL INCENTIVE:**

**“GET OUT OF POUND FREE” PROGRAM**

**INCENTIVE:** The benefits of the “Get out of Pound Free” Program should accrue to responsible pet owners whose licensed pet has accidentally become at-large for the first time.

A Program whereby licensed pets “will be provided with one free ride home with no charge being filed if the pet is found at large” and/or “waiver of pound fees if the pet is impounded and redeemed within 24 hours.”

Currently Bylaw Enforcement provides a service for licensed pets and their owners whereby those licensed pets found running-at-large are returned directly home if contact can be made with the pet owner or alternate contact. This service will not be terminated.

Under the proposed “Get out of Pound Free” Program, this pet-returned-home service will be complimented by a warning being issued rather than a running-at-large fine for first time offenders – a combination that yields significance and value for license purchasers.

To qualify for this program:

- your dog or cat must be **licensed and spayed or neutered**;
- must be a first time offence.

Pet owners not eligible for this Program include:

- 1) Pet owners whose pet is not licensed.
- 2) Pet owners whose pet is not spayed or neutered.
- 3) Pet owners who are irresponsible as evidenced by repeat offences. These should suffer significant consequences and the existing fine system is structured to mete out such consequences for undesirable conduct.
- 4) Pet owners who wilfully and purposely allow their animals to run at-large in an area where at-large animals are prohibited.
- 5) Pet owners whose animals have acted aggressively as established by the evidence available to Bylaw Enforcement in making an independent assessment.
- 6) Pet owners of animals deemed dangerous by a court order.

## **The “GET OUT OF POUND FREE” PROGRAM**

The Program is designed to provide an incentive for pet owners to license their pet and receive a pass for a “free ride” with no charge when their dog or cat is found running at large and/or a waiver of the impound fee if the pet is redeemed within 24 hours.

The Program will also hopefully encourage spaying and neutering of pets by making spaying or neutering a prerequisite for receiving the benefits of this program.

You get one “Get out of Pound Free” Benefit per pet licensed and is available only once in the lifetime of the pet.

Once the “Get out of Pound Free” Benefit is provided by Bylaw Enforcement or the Prince Albert SPCA for a first time offence, the next time your pet is caught running at large or impounded, the appropriate fines or payment will be due.

### **PROGRAM’S OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Meet City Council’s objective of providing pet owners who license their pets with the benefit of a cost free recovery of their animal should it be found at-large.
- 2) Increase pet licensing compliance by providing a clear and easily identifiable benefit for pet license purchasers.
- 3) Increase the number of animals redeemed from the Pound.

A pet owner will receive one “GET OUT OF POUND FREE” Benefit for each licensed pet they own.

*\*\* Pet must be spayed or neutered to receive the Program Benefit.*

This Program benefit is available only once in the lifetime of the pet.

**Effective December 1, 2010, each pet owner will receive a “Get Out of Pound Free” Benefit when they purchase a pet license (pet must be spayed or neutered).**

**The tracking of the “Get out of Pound Free” Program will be electronic. The Prince Albert SPCA Electronic Tracking System will be used to track pet owners eligible for the Program Benefit and when the Program Benefit is applied.**

Once the Program benefit is used, the pet owner will not be eligible for the Program for that pet.

## **BENEFIT of the “Get out of Pound Free” Program**

- ✚ The waiver of a running-at-large fine for a first time offence (available only once in the lifetime of the pet)
- ✚ The waiver of the *impound fee if the pet is redeemed within 24 hours* (available only once in the lifetime of the pet)
- ✚ The waiver of both running-at-large and *impound fee if the pet is redeemed within 24 hours*

With respect to either a running-at-large fine, pound fees, or, where applicable, both of these simultaneously when it relates to the same incident, the **benefit is a one time benefit. It must be a first time – offence.**

**\*\*\* Owner will be responsible for all sustenance fees incurred.**

### **Exceptions**

Benefits extended:

- i) Where an animal has been deemed dangerous by court order,
- ii) In a situation where an animal has been acting in an aggressive manner as established by a Bylaw Enforcement Officer, or
- iii) In a situation where an owner has wilfully and purposely allowed their animals run loose.

### **WHEN CAN YOU USE YOUR “GET OUT OF POUND FREE” PROGRAM BENEFIT:**

- 1) Bylaw Enforcement picks up a licensed pet that is running-at-large for the first time and is able to contact the pet owner or alternate contact at their home.
  - a) Bylaw Enforcement would return pet to its home.
  - b) Bylaw Enforcement would issue a warning instead of a running-at-large fine.
  - c) Electronic Tracking System would note use of Program Benefit.
- 2) Bylaw Enforcement picks up licensed pet that is running at large for the first time and must take it to the Pound because contact could not be made with the owner or alternate contact.
  - a) Owner would receive a warning rather than a running-at-large fine and the pound fee would be waived if the pet is redeemed within 24 hours.
  - b) Owner would be responsible for all applicable sustenance fees.
  - c) The pet must be redeemed within 24 hours.
  - d) Electronic Tracking System would note use of Program Benefit.

- 3) Bylaw Enforcement chases home a licensed pet that is running-at-large for the first time. Bylaw Enforcement is able to contact owner or alternate contact.
  - a) Bylaw Enforcement would issue a warning instead of a running-at-large fine.
  - b) Electronic Tracking System would note use of Program Benefit.
- 4) Bylaw Enforcement notifies a pet owner that a complaint with a signed witness statement has been received. This statement alleges that their pet was seen running-at-large. This is a first offence for this pet.

Bylaw Enforcement would inform the pet owner that they can be served with a Notice of Violation and fight the charge in court or have the running-at-large fine waived as a first time offender.

- a) If the pet owner chooses the latter option,
    - i) Electronic Tracking System would note use of Program Benefit.
    - ii) Bylaw Enforcement would issue a warning instead of a running-at-large fine.
    - iii) Bylaw Enforcement would inform complainant.
  - b) If the pet owner chooses to fight the issue in court,
    - i) the "GET OUT OF POUND FREE" Program not valid with a Court matter.
- 5) Bylaw Enforcement addresses a pet owner found allowing their pet to run off-leash in an area where this is prohibited. The pet is a licensed pet and is running-at-large for the first time.
  - a) Bylaw Enforcement would issue a Notice of Violation with the appropriate running-at-large fine as the pet has not accidentally gone running-at-large. The owner knowingly allowed the offence to occur. The "Get out of Pound Free" Program would not be applicable.
- 6) Bylaw Enforcement picks up a licensed pet that is running-at-large for the first time. The pet has been reported behaving aggressively with credible evidence available.
  - a) Bylaw Enforcement would not offer any waiver of the running-at-large fine or pound fees.
  - b) Bylaw Enforcement would proceed as normal with a dangerous animal complaint.
- 7) Bylaw Enforcement picks up a licensed dog that is running-at-large for the first time. The pet has been deemed a dangerous animal by court order.
  - a) Bylaw Enforcement would not offer any waiver of the running-at-large fine or pound fees.
  - b) Bylaw Enforcement would proceed as usual with a dog that is in violation of a court order.

**BENEFITS OF PROGRAM:**

It is also prudent to focus on another positive – the enhanced community rewards generated through a successful increase in pet licensing compliance. A successful increase in the compliance level will position Bylaw Enforcement to deliver better services in overall, which is certainly a positive with the community. Note these enhanced services would include more effective Bylaw Enforcement. As well, a successful increase in the compliance level will reduce the general tax burden associated with providing animal services as this cost will now be borne by pet owners.