



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VETERINARY COMMAND  
2050 WORTH ROAD, SUITE 5  
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS 78234-6005

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

MCVS

17 February 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

**SUBJECT: US Army Veterinary Command (VETCOM) Information and Guidance - Pet Policy for Privatized Housing under the Army's Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) Privatization Program**

1. A recent RCI Privatized Housing policy has banned the following dog breeds from Privatized Housing: Pit Bulls (American Staffordshire Bull Terriers or English Staffordshire Bull Terriers), Rottweilers, Doberman Pinschers, Chows and wolf hybrids. The policy further bans "exotic animals such as, but not limited to, reptiles, rodents (other than hamsters and guinea pigs), ferrets, hedgehogs, skunks, rats, raccoons, squirrels, pot bellied pigs, monkeys, arachnids, or any farm animal".
2. DODVSA and VETCOM were contacted prior to RCI issuing this policy. Our response was that although we support regulations and policies to protect the public from dangerous dogs, we feel that breed bans are not warranted and are an inadequate solution to the problem. VETCOM supports our profession's consensus on dangerous dog legislation as described by American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) policy, which states, "The AVMA supports dangerous animal legislation by state, county, or municipal governments provided that legislation does not refer to specific breeds or classes of animals. This legislation should be directed at fostering safety and protection of the general public from animals classified as dangerous". A comprehensive approach versus breed bans is a more realistic method of controlling dog bites within a community.
3. In an effort to focus our efforts on animal care and prevent expectations that VETCOM personnel will perform functions for which they are not trained, the following guidance applies to all VETCOM personnel, Appropriated Fund (AF) or Nonappropriated Fund (NAF):
  - a. VETCOM personnel will not determine an animal's breed(s) for any contentious or legal purposes. Appearance alone is not an accurate method to determine breed(s), and this type of breed determination should be made based on official registration papers or DNA testing. Any other determination is based on "best guess".
  - b. VETCOM personnel will not perform temperament testing. Training and certification of VETCOM personnel will not be a requirement, and any requests for our personnel to obtain this training and certification will be referred to the District Veterinary Command Commander.

MCVS

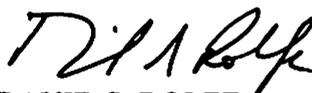
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Valid temperament testing includes AKC Canine Good Citizen, Delta Test, Tuskegee test or referral to a board certified veterinary behaviorist.

4. Veterinary Treatment Facilities will inform clients of this new RCI policy prior to permanent change of station moves; providing clients a copy of the RCI policy is recommended. Clients must be aware that they may not be allowed to move into government housing if they have a pet that resembles any of the breeds mentioned in paragraph 1. Assist clients whenever possible to make informed decisions on options that are available to them. Prospective dog owners should be made aware of existing policy that may affect their choice of pet.

5. As veterinary medical professionals, I expect all VETCOM Soldiers with animal care responsibilities to be knowledgeable on the subject of dangerous dogs and to actively participate in the creation and revision of animal control regulations whenever the opportunity arises.

6. Point of contact is MAJ Gerald Sargent, Chief, Animal Medicine Division, at 210-221-8018 or DSN 471-8018.



DAVID S. ROLFE  
Colonel, VC  
Commanding

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