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CONNECTICUT LAWS ON PET SHOPS AND ANIMAL IMPORTERS

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You asked for a summary of state laws on pet shops and animal importers. We present the information in a question and answer format.

What requirements does the law place on pet shops?

State law defines a “pet shop” as a place at which animals not born and raised on the premises are kept for the purpose of sale to the public ([CGS § 22-327\(9\)](#)). No one may maintain a pet shop until he or she has obtained a license from the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner ([CGS § 22-344\(b\)](#)). DoAg will issue a license to an applicant upon written application and payment of a \$200 fee if the applicant complies with applicable state regulations (see below) and municipal zoning regulations. Licenses are renewable annually.

The law places certain other requirements on pet shops. For example:

1. before offering a dog or cat for sale, and every 15 days until the animal is sold, a pet shop licensee must have the animal examined by a Connecticut-licensed veterinarian and the pet shop must maintain a record of the veterinary services for each dog and cat offered for sale ([CGS § 22-344b\(a\)](#));
2. pet shops must comply with the “pet lemon law,” under which pet shops must replace or refund the purchase price of a dog or cat that (a) within 20 days after sale becomes ill or dies of an illness that existed at the time of sale or (b) within six months after sale is

diagnosed with a congenital defect that adversely affects its health (consumers may also request reimbursement from the pet shop of up to \$500 for veterinarian expenses without having to return the animal) ([CGS § 22-344b\(b\)](#));

3. pet shops must post a sign on the cage of each dog offered for sale containing the breed of the dog, where the dog was born, and any identification number on the official veterinary inspection certificate from the state of origin ([CGS § 22-344d\(a\)](#));
4. for each dog sold or offered for sale, a pet shop licensee must have a certificate of origin identifying the name and address of the breeder and the person or entity that sold the dog to the pet shop ([CGS § 22-354\(b\)](#));
5. pet shops must post a sign that (a) includes DoAg's telephone number for filing complaints about diseased or disabled animals offered for sale and (b) states: "The following information is always available on all our puppies: date of birth, the state of birth, breed, sex and color, the date the pet shop received the puppy, the names and registration numbers of the parents (for AKC registerable puppies), record of inoculations and worming treatments and any record of any veterinary treatment or medications received to date" ([CGS § 22-344d\(b\)](#)); and
6. euthanasia by a pet shop of a warm-blooded animal offered for sale but not sold or transferred to another owner must be by lethal injection of sodium pentobarbital administered by a Connecticut-licensed veterinarian or a person under his or her supervision ([CGS § 22-344a](#)).

In addition, a pet shop licensee is prohibited from purchasing a dog or cat for resale from a breeder or other person or entity located outside of this state that does not possess a current license from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and any applicable state agency ([CGS § 22-354\(b\)](#)).

What do state regulations require of pet shops?

DoAg has promulgated state regulations detailing further pet shop requirements (Conn. Agencies Regs. 22-344-16a to 25c). For example, the regulations require that the facilities for housing animals be structurally sound and maintained in good repair to prevent injury to the

animals. All buildings, premises, and containers must be maintained in a sanitary manner and there must be proper storage and disposal of waste material to control vermin, insects, and obnoxious odors.

The regulations require that pet enclosures be designed and constructed to provide adequate physical comfort to the animals. Among other things, each animal must be able to turn about freely and easily sit, stand, or lie in a comfortable, natural position.

Pet shops must be sufficiently heated to protect the animals from the cold and provide for their health and comfort at all times, generally between 65 and 78 degrees Fahrenheit. Animal housing must be adequately ventilated at all times and have ample, well distributed lighting by natural or artificial means for a minimum of eight hours in each 24-hour period.

Pet shops must provide animals with (1) food that is wholesome, palatable, and free from contamination at least once a day and (2) potable water at all times. Food and water containers must be cleaned and sanitized regularly.

Pet shop owners or their representatives must observe the animals daily in order to recognize general symptoms of injury, illness, or disease. Any dog or cat that exhibits such symptoms must be (1) isolated and treated by a veterinarian and (2) verified as healthy by a veterinarian before being offered for sale.

Pet shops must remove dogs confined in cages at least once daily for exercise.

Lastly, pet shops must maintain records on each animal for at least two years.

Are pet shops subject to inspection by the Department of Agriculture?

By law, the DoAg commissioner may inspect a pet shop at any time ([CGS § 22-344\(f\)](#)). If in his judgment, the pet shop is not being maintained in a sanitary and humane manner or in a manner that protects public safety, or if he finds that contagious, infectious, or communicable disease or other unsatisfactory conditions exist, the commissioner may (1) fine the pet shop up to \$500 for each affected animal, (2) issue orders as necessary to correct the conditions, and (3) quarantine the premises and animals.

Additionally, if the pet shop owner fails to comply with the commissioner's orders or the state laws and regulations, the commissioner may revoke the pet shop's license.

What are animal importers and what requirements does the law place on them?

The law defines an "animal importer" as someone who brings a dog or cat into Connecticut from another sovereign entity to offer the animal for sale, adoption, or transfer in exchange for any fee, sale, voluntary contribution, service, or other consideration. It includes any commercial or nonprofit animal rescue or adoption, humane relocation, or delivery organization that is not otherwise required to be licensed under state law ([CGS § 22-344\(e\)\(3\)](#)).

Among other things, the law requires animal importers to (1) annually register with DoAg before importing any dog or cat into the state and (2) notify DoAg and local zoning officials before offering the animals for sale, adoption, or transfer ([CGS §§ 22-344\(e\)\(1\) & \(2\)](#)). But the law's registration and notice requirements do not apply to an animal importer who offers a dog or cat for sale to a state-licensed pet shop, if the animal is delivered directly to the pet shop ([CGS § 22-344\(e\)\(4\)](#)).

Additionally, animal importers must, within 48 hours after importing a dog or cat into the state and before offering it for sale, adoption, or transfer, and every 90 days until the transaction is complete, have a state-licensed veterinarian examine the animal. The importer cannot sell, transfer, or give an imported animal up for adoption unless a state-licensed veterinarian examined it within 15 days before the transaction and issued the importer a certificate attesting to the animal's good health. The importer must maintain records of the veterinarian services for three years after they were rendered ([CGS § 22-344f](#)).

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