



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

*Joan Davenport, AICP, Director*

*129 North Second Street, 2nd Floor Yakima, Washington 98901*

*Phone (509) 575-6183 • Fax (509) 575-6105*

*[www.yakimawa.gov/services/community-development](http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/community-development)*

# MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor Byers and City Council Members  
Bob Harrison, City Manager

From: Glenn Denman, Code Administration Manager  
Tony Doan, Supervising Code Inspector

Date: September 7, 2021

Subject: Follow-up Information Report Pertaining to Processes for Code Compliance, Animal Control, Citations, Penalties and Uncollectible Debt

### Introduction

This memo is in response to previous requests from City Council for clarification on:

- Animal control licensing procedures, including number of licensed dogs confirmed by Animal Control since May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Animal control citation numbers
- Code compliance citations, penalties, fees and costs

### 1. Animal Control Licensing Procedure

On all Animal Control Case Types, when contact is made with a dog, licensing is checked by way of tags worn by the dog or confirmation through the Utilities data base. On May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 the Animal Control Division added workflow steps to track licensing on new cases. Of 472 events, 72 times the dogs were confirmed as licensed. However, this does not mean that the 400 other dogs were not licensed. A dog that does not display license tags and the owner is unknown is logged as such. However, the dog could actually be licensed, but we will not know unless the dog is claimed at the humane society. If the dog is not claimed, the license status remains unknown. The primary objective is to get dogs licensed.

A dog may display tags, but its license may not be up to date. Further investigation is needed. If a tag is not attached and the Animal Control Officer doesn't know where the dog resides, the animal is taken to the Yakima Humane Society for sheltering, and the dog may be picked up by its owner. If the dog is unlicensed, the owner will be required to complete licensing before pickup. If the dog is not claimed within 3 days and is not chipped, it becomes the property of the humane society (5 days for dogs chipped and not claimed) and the dog will be available for adoption. The adoption process requires licensing when the new owner resides within city limits, so there may be some dogs that originated in the City of Yakima, but end up elsewhere.

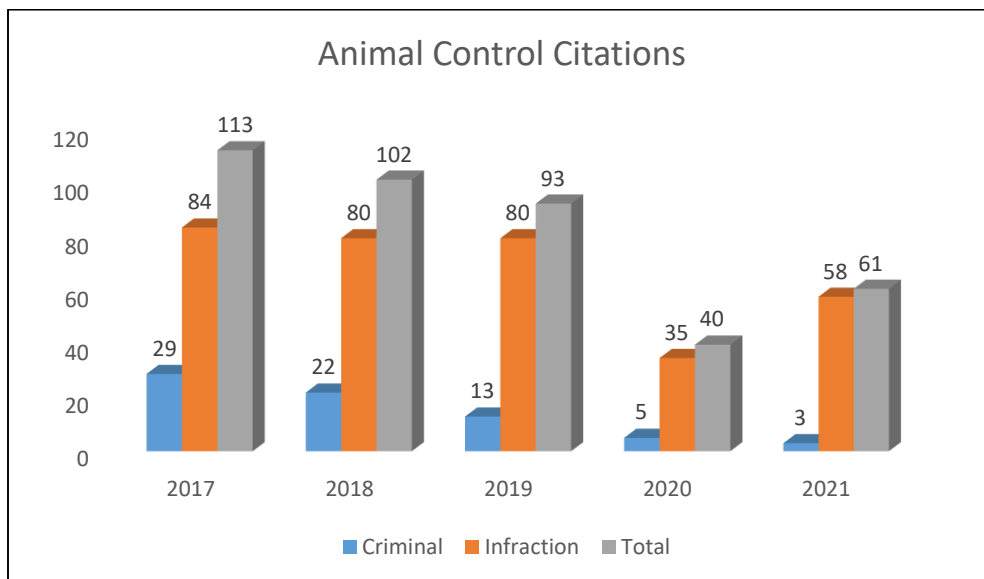
Licensing that takes place through the Yakima Humane Society is reported once a month, and then entered into the City of Yakima's licensing system. If an ACO responds to a case that is not specific to licensing, the dog will be checked for licensing. If the dog is not licensed, the ACO will issue a warning, with information on how to complete the licensing process.

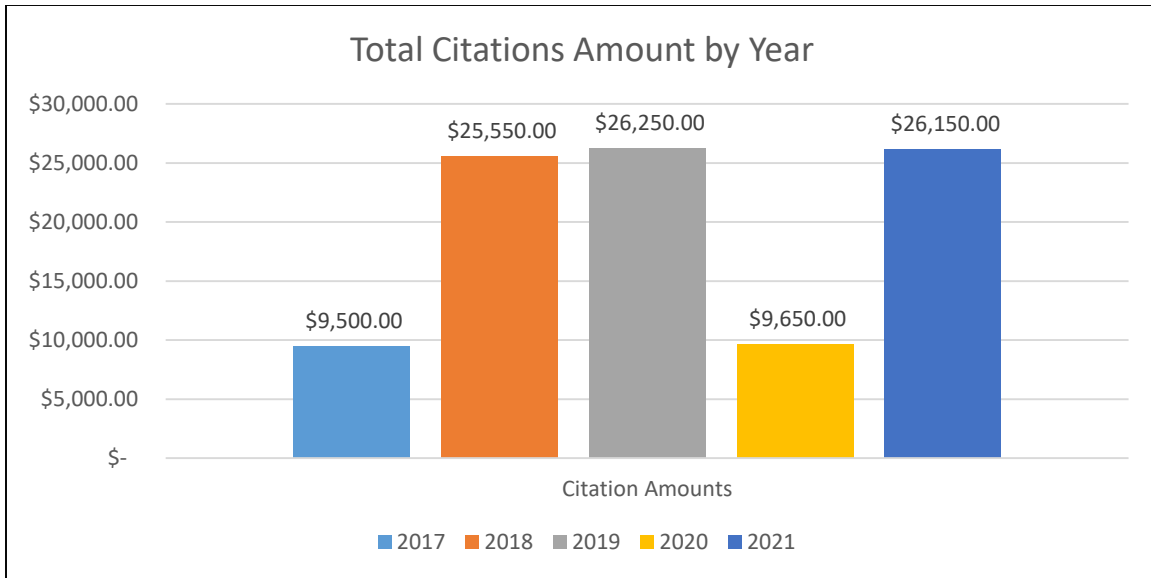
There are times where the dog's place of residence is known, but the owner of the dog is not known. This creates a challenge for issuing citations. Even though the address is known, the dog may belong to a renter or a relative, or the dog is there temporarily. In these cases there is not enough information to issue a citation. Despite leaving door hangers, sending letters and making phone calls, there are times when that information remains unknown.

There is a misnomer that microchipped dogs are licensed. Microchip information must be updated after changes occur such as different owner, or a phone number or address that is no longer valid. Therefore, with all these variables, it can take months of follow up and processing to verify licensing status.

## **2. Animal Control & Code Compliance Citations, Fees, Costs and Penalties**

Animal Control Officers issue the majority of the Code Administration Division's citations. The Yakima Municipal Code YMC 6.20 determines the penalties issued to the dog owners. Below is a chart that represents the number of citations issued by year for Animal Control. This is not considered uncollectable debt by the Codes Administration Division, as we are not involved in the collection of funds after the citation has been issued. Those go through the municipal court system for collection consistent with other citations the court handles.

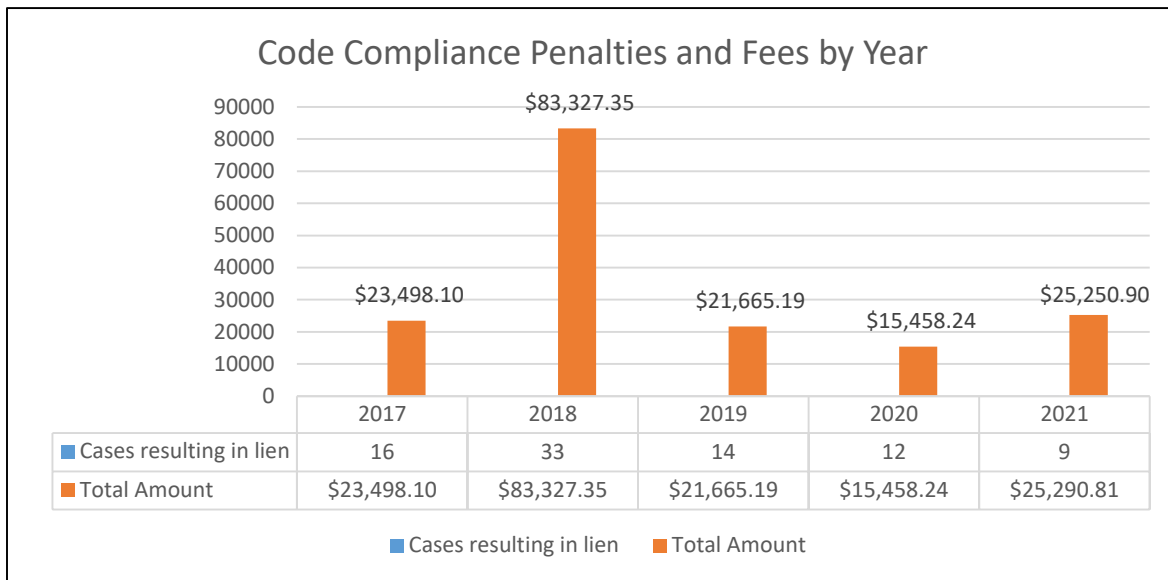




### 3. Code Compliance Citations

Code Compliance Officers respond to a broad range of complaints, most of which are successfully abated before penalties are necessary. Zoning violations (YMC 15.25) often do not result in citations. Parking in the Front Yard violations (YMC 11.09) may involve citations (14 citations were written by officers since 2017). The International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) was adopted in 2021, and those penalties, fees and costs are assessed as liens against the property, rather than citations. Citations are not considered uncollectable debt as they are collected by the municipal court. Liens are not considered uncollectable debt, as these are eventually collected through the property tax rolls.

In contrast, 84 cases out of 13,423 have resulted in costs needing reimbursement, penalties and fees since 2017. The chart below shows the dollar amount and number of cases by year since 2017 that resulted in costs, penalties and/or fees, with cost recovery being a major factor.



Prior to the adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) in March of 2021, the City of Yakima Municipal Code utilized a Community Review Board to set administrative fees and abatement recovery costs. These amounts were recovered by way of payment to the City; or in the case of no payment, recovered through a lien placed on the property's tax roll. The IPMC has a violation penalty ranging from \$250-\$1,000, and a \$50/day penalty for lack of abatement after a given time frame to allow the property owner to abate the violation.

Fee recovery may also occur by way of payment directly to the City; or in the case refusal, recovered through a lien placed on the property's tax roll. Cost recovery through this process can take time, however, it is a very effective tool for recovering those penalties, costs and fees. For that reason, we don't consider those amounts as "uncollectable".