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# Humane Tethering & Penning

A Public Service Message from [NCRAOA](#)

## About Tethering

Animal activists would have the general public believe that tethering is inherently cruel. This is due in part to a desire to humanize dogs and convince the public that it is impossible for any dog to be happy unless it lives in the house.

Activists use only the worst examples of chained dogs in heart wrenching, emotional displays, posters, websites, and lobbying materials for anti-chaining campaigns. The physical act of chaining or tethering itself is not cruel.

Rather it is the deliberate and uncaring act of the owner chaining the dog improperly and failing to provide necessary shelter and sustenance that is the cruel act. Any capable of such cruelty does not even need a chain, but can inflict misery on a dog locked in a shed, crated inside the house, or penned and forgotten.

The goal of the anti-tethering lobby is to spread enough misinformation about tethering until all people automatically believe that tethering in any form is animal cruelty.

The more restrictions these animal rights lobbying groups, such as the Coalition to Unchain Dogs, PETA, and HSUS, can devise to upset animal management practices the more difficult it becomes for professionals, hobbyists, hunters, and dog owners in general to continue their activities.

## Tethering Facts

Tethering can be the safest method of controlling a hard to contain animal. There are dogs that can escape from anything.

They can chew through fencing and even chain link, break out windows, open doors, climb or dig under fences, and destroy wire and plastic shipping crates in seconds. These dogs can only be contained securely (and humanely) with a well thought out tether system.

A dog in a 10 X 10 ft kennel has 100 feet of play room. A dog on a 10 ft tether has 360 ft of play room; a dog on a 20 ft tether has 1256 ft of play room.

Tethering is a primary means of control and training of hunting dogs; sled dogs, and dogs that compete in weight pull competition.

Some communities may restrict fencing or have regulations in place regarding type and height which may make them unsuitable for containment.

Cornell Study: The purpose of this study was to determine whether tethering was detrimental to the dogs' welfare. The study charted a wide range of behaviors, and noted those behaviors and the increase or decrease of such in a pen and on a tether.

Their conclusion, "There was no indication that tethering was more detrimental to the dogs' welfare than housing in a pen." Further they stated that tethered dogs did exhibit more stereotypic behaviors, believed to be an indicator of animal welfare.

*Yeon Seong C., Golden Glen, Sung Wailani, Erb Hollis N, Reynolds Arleigh J, Houpt Katherine A Comparison of Tethering and Pen Confinement of Dogs Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science 2001 4(4)257-270*

## Proper Tethering

All methods of containment, tether, pen, crate, if done properly are humane and are better left to the discretion of responsible dog owners and hunters. In a good

tethering situation, a dog has access to food (when appropriate), water and shelter and a play area.

- Minimum chain size should be 10 ft and of suitable weight for the dog's size.
- A small airplane tie down works well as an anchor for the chain.
- The area should be clear so there is no danger of entanglement.
- Dirt or grass is preferable to the chained area being concrete as it is better for the dog to lay on; the area must provide access to dry ground in case of heavy rains.
- The dog should be wearing a flat, buckle collar (not harness).
- The dog needs a dog house appropriate for the climate and shade in summer.
- To ensure water bowls or buckets do not tip over, secure them to the dog house (if wooden) or secure to stakes.

The act of tethering itself is not cruel. Neglect and abuse are the problem. Imposing time limits discriminates against people who work and prefer to leave the dog outside; and denies their animal access to the outdoors for the work day.

Rather than eliminate the practice of tethering, it is more rational to enforce existing animal welfare and anti-cruelty laws to handle cases of abusive tethering.

## Kennel Runs (Pens)

Hand in hand with anti-tethering legislation comes the idea to establish kennel sizes with near ridiculous requirements per dog. The suggested minimum space for a c ^ is generally 100 SF for each 20# dog, and the ordinance continues to specify increasing sizes based on the dog's weight.

There is no logic or basis in either science or animal husbandry to dictate these pen sizes.

Legislating kennel sizes, which therefore sets limits on the number of dogs that can be kenneled outdoors, is simply another tactic by animal rights advocates to impose restrictions on hunters and dog hobbyists.

Tethering, crating, fenced yards, kennel runs, etc., are each responsible options for humane restraint. Dog owners need a full range of choices in order to choose what works best for their situation.

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