

**REGULATION FOR THE POSSESSION,
SALE, AND DISTRIBUTION OF FERRETS**

BE IT ORDAINED by the New Hanover County Board of Health that the following regulations are hereby adopted, pursuant to authority granted by Chapter 130 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, and shall apply throughout New Hanover County for the possession, sale, and distribution of ferrets.

Section 1. Possession, Sale, and Distribution of Ferrets. It shall be unlawful in New Hanover County to possess, sell, distribute, trade, barter, exchange, adopt, or give ferrets:

- (1) that are younger than three (3) months of age;
- (2) that do not have a written statement from a licensed veterinarian verifying that the ferret has been spayed or neutered;
- (3) that do not have a current rabies vaccination from a licensed veterinarian.

Section 2. Permits Required for the Sale of Ferrets. It shall be unlawful in New Hanover County to sell a ferret without purchasing an annual permit from the New Hanover County Animal Control Division. To obtain a permit, the current fee established by the Board of Health must be paid, and the following information shall be submitted to Animal Control:

- (1) legal business name, address, telephone number, and tax number;
- (2) current license number from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.

Establishments shall display permits in an area common to the general public. Establishments shall also have a complete copy of the New Hanover County Ferret Regulation for the purchaser/adopter to review.

Establishments shall not sell/adopt any ferret to any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years nor shall any ferret be sold to an individual who is purchasing the ferret as a gift for another person.

Non-profit Ferret Rescue Organizations approved by the New Hanover County Board of Health shall be exempt from paying the annual permit fee. The following information shall be provided to the Board:

- (1) Legal business name, address, and telephone number.

Failure to comply with any permit requirement shall mean immediate revocation of the establishment's permit, and the establishment shall have seven (7) working days to remove all ferrets from New Hanover County. In addition, the establishment shall furnish New Hanover County Animal Control with the name, address, and telephone number of the new owners within the seven (7) days. The establishment shall not be issued a new permit until twelve (12) months after revocation.

Section 3. Permit Housing Requirements. Establishments selling/adopting ferrets shall not allow the public to have any physical contact with any ferret until a ten percent (10%) refundable deposit is placed on the ferret. After obtaining a deposit, the store employee shall allow the adopter to handle the ferret in an enclosed room inaccessible to the public.

Section 4. Purchase/Adoption Requirements for Ferrets All purchaser/adopters shall complete a four-part purchase/adoption form approved by New Hanover County Board of Health. The purchaser/adopter shall wait for seven (7) days before removing the ferret from the establishment. Copies of the form will be distributed as follows:

- (1) One copy will be given to the purchaser/adopter at the time of deposit;
- (2) One copy shall be sent to New Hanover County Animal Control within twenty-four (24) hours;
- (3) The two remaining copies shall be held by the establishment selling/adopting the ferret.

Establishments shall supply the purchaser/adopter with materials explaining the care and behavior of ferrets. During this seven (7) day waiting period, the purchaser/adopter shall review the information.

After the seven-day waiting period, the purchaser/adopter shall complete the remaining two copies of the form and shall be permitted to remove the ferret from the establishment. The third and fourth copy of the purchase/adoption form shall be distributed as follows:

- (1) One copy of the completed form shall be filed by the establishment for a period of seven (7) years;
- (2) One copy of the completed form shall be sent within twenty-four (24) hours to New Hanover County Animal Control and filed for a period of seven (7) years.

Section 5. Unwanted Ferrets. No New Hanover County ferret owner shall sell, distribute, trade, barter, exchange, adopt to or give their ferret to another New Hanover County resident. Unwanted ferrets shall be turned over to New Hanover County Animal Control or to a ferret organization approved by the New Hanover County Board of Health.

Section 6. Pet License Required. All New Hanover County residents shall purchase an annual pet license for each ferret they are housing. License fees will be established by the New Hanover County Board of Health and shall expire at the time that the annual rabies vaccination expires for each ferret. Proof of a current rabies vaccination by a licensed veterinarian must be submitted to purchase a ferret license. All licenses issued are non-transferable. Citations shall be issued to violators. If a license is not purchased within three days of the issuance of the citation, Animal Control shall seize the ferret and

remove it from the County and/or give it to an approved ferret organization. Citations for license violations shall not be voided.

Owners of ferrets who have moved from another County or State shall have thirty (30) days to purchase their ferret license.

Section 7. Rabies Vaccination Required. All ferrets three (3) months of age or older shall have an annual rabies vaccination. Only a licensed veterinarian shall administer vaccinations. Copies of the rabies vaccination certificate will be distributed as follows:

- (1) Top copy to New Hanover County Animal Control;
- (2) Second copy to ferret owner;
- (3) Third copy veterinarian retains.

Owners found without a current rabies vaccination for their ferret will be issued a citation and given three days to have their ferret vaccinated for rabies. If the ferret is vaccinated within the three days, the citation shall be voided.

If the ferret is not vaccinated within the three days, Animal Control shall seize the animal and remove the ferret from the County and/or give it to an approved ferret organization.

Section 8. Bite Requirements. All ferret bites shall be reported to New Hanover County Animal Control immediately. Any ferret that has bitten shall be surrendered to New Hanover County Animal Control for euthanasia and rabies testing. Any other ferret that had contact with the suspected rabid ferret shall be confined at a location designated by the Health Director or his agent until the test results are conclusive. If the test results are positive, all confined ferrets must be surrendered for euthanasia and rabies testing.

If the results are negative, all confined ferrets shall be released from confinement. Owners shall receive a bite citation, if it is discovered that they have allowed their ferret to run at large, or the victim did not provoke the bite. Victims shall be cited if it is determined that they provoked the ferret.

Section 9. Death/Loss/Transfer of Ownership. New Hanover County Animal Control shall be notified within seventy-two (72) hours of the death of any ferret. Notification of death shall be by a written statement from a licensed veterinarian and/or by the ferret owner presenting the ferret's body to New Hanover County Animal Control. Notification of a lost ferret shall be in writing to Animal Control within seventy-two hours.

Transfer of ownership of any ferret in New Hanover County shall be to an approved ferret rescue organization. Within seventy-two (72) hours of transfer, New Hanover County Animal Control shall be provided a written statement from both the rescue organization and the former ferret owner giving the following information:

- (1) name, address, and telephone number of both;
- (2) description of the ferret.

Ferret owners who transfer ownership of their ferrets to individuals outside of New Hanover County shall provide New Hanover County Animal Control within seventy-two (72) hours the following information:

- (1) name, address, and telephone number of both;
- (2) description of the ferret.

Section 10. Under-Aged Ferrets. Ferrets under three (3) months of age shall be seized by Animal Control and removed from the County.

Section 11. Ferrets Not Spayed or Neutered. Owners of ferrets who have moved from another County or State shall have thirty (30) days after arriving in New Hanover County to have a licensed veterinarian spay or neuter their ferret. Ferrets not altered after the thirty (30) days shall be seized by Animal Control and removed from the County and/or given to an approved ferret rescue organization.

Section 12. Animal Control Officers are authorized to enforce the provisions of this section and shall have the right of entry pursuant to G. S. 130A-17 for this purpose.

Section 13. This act shall be effective the 3rd day of May, 1995.