



Colorado Pet Animal Care and Facilities Act

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This issue brief provides an overview of state laws related to pet animal facilities. These facilities are licensed and regulated under the Colorado Pet Animal Care and Facilities Act (PACFA).

Under PACFA, any place used to keep pet animals for adoption, breeding, boarding and grooming, or selling must be inspected and licensed by the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA). Pet animals include dogs and cats, various rodents, ferrets, birds, aquatic species, and other animals legally sold or kept as a household pet. Livestock and animals that are used for working purposes on a farm or ranch are not considered pet animals.

Facility Licensing

All pet animal facilities must be licensed under PACFA by the CDA, and licenses must be renewed annually. It is unlawful, and considered a deceptive trade practice to perform any of the acts of a pet animal facility without possessing a valid license. Licenses may be denied, suspended, or revoked under several circumstances, including if the applicant has been convicted of cruelty to animals or animal fighting.

Number of PACFA Licensees in Colorado as of October 2025

License Type	Number of Licensees
Grooming & wash facilities	1,270
Pet boarding/training	590
Small-scale animal shelter	156
Pet animal retailer	146
Pet handler	143
Small-scale dog breeder	131
Small-scale animal rescue	115
Independent pet groomer	82
Pet transporter	79
Large pet rescue	71
Bird leg band	32
Small animal breeder	30
Retail aquarium	25
Large-scale dog breeder	24
Commercial pet animal facility	23
Animal sanctuary	17
Large pet shelter	17
Cat breeder	12
Bird breeder	10
Reptile/amphibian breeder	10

Data Source: [CDA](#).

Administration and Enforcement

The Commissioner of Agriculture enforces the provisions of PACFA and may adopt rules setting minimum standards for pet animal facilities related to sanitation, ventilation, heating and cooling, space requirements, nutrition, humane care, and medical

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treatment.¹ The commissioner may conduct inspections of facilities to ensure a licensee's compliance with PACFA regulations. If an inspector believes that a violation has occurred and immediate enforcement is required, the commissioner may issue a cease-and-desist order. Penalties for violations of PACFA range from a civil penalty to a class 2 misdemeanor depending on the violation. Annually, PACFA employees issue approximately 2,200 licenses, conduct 3,000 inspections and perform 750 complaint investigations.

Exemptions

Several types of entities and individuals are exempt from the provisions within PACFA, including:

- veterinary hospitals that board pet animals for veterinary medical care;
- any research facility, circus, zoological park, or petting zoo licensed under the federal Animal Welfare Act of 1970;
- hobby breeder facilities;
- pet animal training facilities where the pet animal owner is present during the duration of the animal's stay;
- wildlife regulated by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife;
- livestock;
- any owner, breeder, handler, or trainer while transporting a pet animal to or from,

exhibiting, or competing at any event licensed, regulated, or sanctioned by a nationally recognized registering organization;

- wildlife sanctuaries;
- individuals boarding no more than three pet animals at one time; and
- any company that is not a pet animal facility that uses technology in its business model.²

Recent Legislative Action

Over the last several years, the General Assembly has made several changes to PACFA regulations:

- [House Bill 21-1102](#) requires pet stores licensed to sell cats or dogs to provide specific information about each pet's breeder, purchase price, and financing information;
- [House Bill 24-1354](#) requires that licensed pet care facilities notify patrons of a suspected infectious disease outbreak within 24 hours of discovery; and
- [House Bill 25-1180](#) prohibits any entity not licensed under PACFA from selling or transferring a pet animal in any public space.

¹ 8 CCR 1202-15

² Section 35-80-103, C.R.S.