

**Excerpts from C.R.S 18-9-202.5: Impounded animals - costs of impoundment, provision, and care  
(Consult C.R.S. 18-9-202.5 for full text of C.R.S 18-9-202.5)**

(1) (a) (I) The owner or custodian of an animal that has been impounded by an impound agency because of alleged neglect or abuse or because of investigation of charges of cruelty to animals pursuant to section 18-9-202; animal fighting pursuant to section 18-9-204; mistreatment, neglect, or abandonment under article 42 of title 35, C.R.S.; or unlawful ownership of a dangerous dog as described in section 18-9-204.5, may prevent disposition of the animal by an impound agency by filing a payment for impoundment, care, and provision costs with the court in an amount determined by the impound agency to be sufficient to provide for the animal's care and provision at the impound agency for at least thirty days, including the day on which the animal was taken into custody.

(II) To the extent practicable, within seventy-two hours after an impoundment described under subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (a), upon request from the owner or custodian of the impounded animal, the impound agency shall allow a licensed veterinarian of the owner's or custodian's choosing and at his or her expense to examine the animal at a time and place selected by the impound agency, which examination may include taking photographs of the animal and taking biological samples for the purpose of diagnostic testing.

(b) The owner or custodian must file the payment:

(I) Within ten days after the animal is impounded; or

(II) If the owner or custodian requests a hearing pursuant to subparagraph (I) of paragraph (c) of this subsection (1), in accordance with subparagraph (IV) of paragraph (c) of this subsection (1).

(c) (I) Within ten days after the date of impoundment, the owner or custodian may request a hearing in a criminal court of competent jurisdiction. The owner or custodian must provide notice to the district attorney of his or her request for a hearing. If the owner or custodian requests a hearing, the court shall hold the hearing within ten days after the request is made.

(II) At the hearing, the court shall determine, as appropriate:

(A) Whether costs associated with the impoundment, care, and provision, as determined by the impound agency, are fair and reasonable and necessary, which costs shall be specifically itemized by the impound agency prior to the date of the hearing and shall include, at a minimum, an accounting of the costs of upkeep and veterinary services;

(B) Whether there was sufficient probable cause for the impoundment; and

(C) If the court finds probable cause for impoundment existed and the owner or custodian elects not to pay the reasonable impoundment, care, or provision costs to prevent disposition, release of the animal to the impound agency for disposition.

(III) A warrant issued in accordance with C.R.C.P. 41 (b) authorizing seizure of the impounded animal constitutes prima facie evidence of sufficient cause for impoundment.

(IV) If probable cause is found at a hearing conducted under this paragraph (c), the owner or custodian shall file payment for costs at the hearing.

(d) At the end of the time for which expenses are covered by an initial or any subsequent impoundment, care, and provision payment:

(I) If the owner or custodian desires to prevent disposition of the animal, the owner or custodian must file a new payment with the court within ten days prior to the previous payment's expiration.

(II) If the owner or custodian has not timely filed an additional payment for impoundment, care, and provision costs, the impound agency may determine disposition of the animal unless there is a court order prohibiting disposition. Unless subsection (4) of this section applies, the owner or custodian is liable for any additional costs for the care of, provision for, or disposal of the animal.

(2) (a) Failure to pay the impoundment, care, and provision costs pursuant to subsection (1) of this section results in the forfeiture of the right to contest those costs and any ownership rights to the animal in question.

(b) A dog that is not claimed by its owner within five days after being eligible for release from impoundment for investigation of a charge of unlawful ownership of a dangerous dog as described in section 18-9-204.5 is deemed abandoned and may be disposed of as the impound agency deems proper.

(c) If, in the opinion of a licensed veterinarian, an impounded animal is experiencing extreme pain or suffering or is severely injured past recovery, severely disabled past recovery, or severely diseased past recovery, the animal may be euthanized without a court order.

(3) The court shall order an impound agency to refund to the owner or custodian all impoundment, care, and provision payments made for the animal if, after trial, a judge or jury enters or returns in favor of the owner or custodian a verdict of not guilty for all charges related to the original impoundment of the animal.