

Firefighters death benefits bill advances in the House

Capitol Update

FRANKFORT — A bill to expand death benefits for Kentucky's paid and volunteer firefighters cleared its first hurdle on Tuesday.

Rep. Kim Banta, R-Fort Mitchell, is the primary sponsor of House Bill 34, which would add nine additional cancers to the list recognized as occupational cancers for firefighters.

Banta told the House Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Protection Committee it is the general assembly's responsibility to help first responders when they ask for it.

"These guys run into fires, and I think it's our responsibility to help them when something drastic happens to them because of their job," she said.

Deaths from mesothelioma, esophageal, lung, rectal, thyroid, intestinal, multiple myeloma, buccal and pharyngeal cancer would be considered line-of-duty deaths under HB 34.

Bladder, brain, colon, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, kidney, liver, lymphatic or hematopoietic, prostate, testicular, skin, cervical and breast cancer are already covered in current statute.

Banta was joined by Jeff Taylor, the legislative and political affairs director for Kentucky Professional Fire Fighters. He told the committee cancer is the now the leading cause of line-of-duty death for firefighters.

Taylor said exposure to toxins and other carcinogens while on duty, especially during a fire, is causing the rise in cancer-related deaths for firefight-

ers. Synthetic materials, diesel, chemicals used in turnout gear, chronic exposure to benzene, formaldehyde, heavy metals and more are to blame.

"Here in Kentucky, since 2002, we've lost more firefighters to occupational cancer than to fires, cardiac events, or other on-scene incidents combined," Taylor said.

Taylor said expanding presumptive cancer coverage is supported by modern science and medical evidence.

"(It will) provide fairness for those who risk their lives daily, reduce long term costs by enabling early detection and treatment, and ensure families receive the benefits they've earned and they deserve," he added.

Rep. DJ Johnson, R-Owensboro, said he supports the legislation.

"This question I'm going to ask is not going to impact my 'yes' vote at all, but it's a question I think we have to ask," he said. "And that is, do you have any idea what the fiscal impact is going to be from the bill?"

Banta said the fiscal reports always come back as "indeterminable" each time she's requested one.

"Because we don't know how many are going to pass away with these cancers or these new cancers that are added," she said.

The committee unanimously voted to approve the bipartisan legislation. HB 34 is now before the full House for consideration.

Tax filing season is open for Kentucky

Team Kentucky

FRANKFORT — The Kentucky Department of Revenue began accepting state individual income tax returns on Monday, Jan. 26, and will begin processing refund requests on Monday, Feb. 2.

The deadline for Kentuckians to file 2025 returns is Wednesday, April 15.

The Internal Revenue Service also began accepting federal individual income tax returns this week.

Electronic individual income tax returns typically take four to six weeks to process. Taxpayers may check the status of their refund online by entering their Social Security number and exact dollar amount of the expected Kentucky refund.

Each year, DOR partners with the IRS to operate Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites across the state. At these sites, knowledgeable staff provide free tax filing assistance to eligible individuals and families, as well as Kentucky state government employees.

This free service is available to help individuals with an annual income of \$67,000 or less or any Kentucky state government employee, regardless of income. In-person assistance will be offered by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Feb. 10 to April 14.

If you believe you qualify and would like to take advantage of this service, schedule an appointment by contacting the nearest regional taxpayer service center.

For Northern Kentucky, the regional taxpayer service is at Turfway Ridge Office Park, 7310 Turfway Road, Suite 190, Florence, with a phone number of 859-371-9049.

ONLINE

Kentucky also offers KY File, a no-cost option to file Kentucky individual income tax returns. KY File is free and is designed to be the simple electronic equivalent of a paper form.

KY File will provide basic mathematical and error checks, but unlike tax software, it does not ask about or explain tax scenarios.

There are no income limitations to use this service.

Before using KY File, taxpayers should complete their federal tax forms. KY File will allow you to file your returns electronically and receive a paper check sooner. Direct deposit is not an option with KY File. To learn more, visit filetaxes.ky.gov.

Taxpayers who have questions or require assistance may submit a general inquiry on the DOR website at "Get Help" or contact DOR taxpayer assistance at 502-564-4581. Representatives are available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

OTHER LOCAL OPTIONS

AARP Tax Aide is offering free tax preparation services from 2 to 6 p.m. every Thursday from Feb. 5 to April 9



in the Maple Room of the Pendleton County Extension Office, 45 David Pribble Drive.

No appointments are required. Services will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no age or membership requirement.

"We are limited by the IRS as to the types of returns that we can prepare," John Goodzey, local Tax Aide coordinator, said. "For example, we cannot prepare returns with farm income, returns with depreciation, or returns for small businesses that have a net loss."

Taxpayers need to bring ID and Social Security cards, and printed copies of all tax documents.

For more information, call 888-687-2277 or email taxaide@aarp.org.

FEDERAL

IRS Free File is available for federal returns. IRS Free File Guided Tax Software allows taxpayers to prepare and submit returns electronically.

Eight private-sector partners are offering guided tax software products through IRS Free File to taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$89,000 or less in 2025.

Taxpayers with an AGI above \$89,000 can use the Free File Fillable Forms.

Taxpayers can find the right product by visiting IRS.gov/freefile and:

Select "Explore Free Guided Tax Software", then select the "Find a Trusted Partner" tool for help in finding the right product, or use "Browse All Trusted Partners" to review each offer; choose the product that best fits their situation; and follow the links to the trusted partner's website to begin their tax return.

Partners participating in IRS Free File for 2026:

- 1040Now
- Drake (1040.com)
- ezTaxReturn.com (offers English and Spanish)
- FileYourTaxes.com
- On-Line Taxes
- TaxAct
- TaxHawk (FreeTaxUSA)
- TaxSlayer

For more information or to get started, visit [IRS Free File: Do Your Taxes For Free](http://IRS.gov/FreeFile).

CITY OF FALMOUTH ORDINANCE NO. 2025:12-2

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING § 90.30 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FALMOUTH, KENTUCKY, TO GRANT THE MAYOR AUTHORITY TO DECLARE AND HANDLE VICIOUS DOGS

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Falmouth, Kentucky, has reviewed § 90.30 of the Code of Ordinances, which establishes regulations relating to vicious dogs; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that the public needs of the community require granting the Mayor administrative authority to declare and handle vicious dogs to ensure public safety and efficient enforcement, while preserving reference to applicable state law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is authorized under KRS 83A.080 and KRS 83A.085 to amend the code of ordinances to promote the effective administration of city government; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance shall be published and adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Kentucky Revised Statutes;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF FALMOUTH, COUNTY OF PENDLETON, COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY:

Section I

(A) See KRS 258.095 to 258.365.

(B) The Mayor, after reviewing evidence, may declare a dog "vicious" when found to qualify as vicious under state law or the provisions of this code. Said dog shall be destroyed, banned from any domicile in the City of Falmouth, or kept confined as the said Mayor's Order shall provide. A copy of any such order shall be served on the "owner" of the dog by the City Police by either personal service or posting a copy on the residence of the owner, accompanied by mailing by regular mail as in a proceeding for forcible detainer. The owner shall have five (5) business days to appeal the finding to circuit court. Said order shall be thereafter effective. Regardless of and pending any such appeal the following subsection (1) through (8) shall apply:

(1) The vicious dog shall be confined by the owner in an enclosure constructed satisfactory to the Mayor to preclude the possibility of the dog escaping. All such enclosures shall be designed to prevent the entry of small children and shall be suitable to confine the vicious dog. Such enclosures shall be securely closed and locked, and shall be designed to prevent the dog from digging out or otherwise escaping from the enclosure.

(2) The enclosure shall display a sign warning of the vicious dog which shall be visible and legible from the public roadway or public access, if applicable.

(3) The vicious dog shall not be permitted outside of the enclosure except to obtain necessary veterinary care or under the direction of the Mayor, in which case (3) The vicious dog shall not be permitted outside of the enclosure except to obtain necessary veterinary care or under the direction of the Mayor, in which case it shall be under the direct control and supervision of its owner and shall be muzzled and restrained with a lead or leash not to exceed three feet in length, or placed in a secure animal carrier.

(4) Should the Mayor deem the enclosure to be inadequate to protect the public then the owner shall promptly deliver the dog to the Animal Shelter for confinement pending any such appeal; the owner shall pay to the Animal Shelter the sum of Ten (\$10.00) Dollars per day for such period of confinement in the Shelter.

(5) The owner of a vicious dog shall immediately notify the Mayor and the City Police if the dog is loose, unconfined, has attacked an animal or human being, or is deceased.

(6) The foregoing subsections (1) through (5) shall apply to any dog declared "vicious" under state law or under this code, in the latter case, should the Mayor's Order provide for confinement in lieu of euthanization or banishment. However, in the case of a dog being ordered confined and such dog is found later to be running at large, such dog shall be seized immediately and either banished or euthanized.

(7) Any dog that is declared to be "vicious" by the Mayor and is not ordered euthanized must be marked with a readable micro chip at the cost of the owner.

(8) The owner of a vicious dog must at all times while owning the dog provide evidence of his financial responsibility as provided in KRS 258.235(1)(c) or its successor.

Section II

That the remainder of § 90.30 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Falmouth shall remain in full force and effect, unchanged by this amendment.

Section III

That should any section or part of any section or any provision of this Ordinance be declared invalid by a Court of competent jurisdiction, for any reason, such declaration shall not invalidate, or adversely affect, the remainder of this Ordinance.

Section IV

That this Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force when passed, published, and recorded according to the law.

CITY OF FALMOUTH

ATTEST:

Megan Crouch, City Clerk

Sabrina Hazen
Sabrina Hazen, Mayor

CITY OF FALMOUTH ORDINANCE NO. 2025:12-3

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTION 90.08 AND THE DEFINITION OF "PIT BULL DOG" IN SECTION 90.01 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FALMOUTH, KENTUCKY

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Falmouth, Kentucky, has reviewed Section 90.08 of the Code of Ordinances, which prohibits the ownership, keeping, or harboring of Pit Bull dogs within the city limits, and the corresponding definition of "Pit Bull Dog" in Section 90.01; and

WHEREAS, breed-specific legislation has been increasingly recognized as ineffective in improving public safety, as it targets dogs based on appearance rather than individual behavior or responsible ownership; and

WHEREAS, breed-specific restrictions have faced constitutional challenges on grounds including vagueness, due process, and equal protection, with courts in various jurisdictions finding such measures problematic when they lack a rational basis or fair enforcement standards; and

WHEREAS, several Kentucky communities have recently repealed similar breed-specific prohibitions to promote fair and effective animal control policies; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is authorized under the Kentucky Revised Statutes to amend or repeal ordinances to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Falmouth; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance shall be published and adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Kentucky Revised Statutes;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF FALMOUTH, COUNTY OF PENDLETON, COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY:

Section I

§ 90.01 DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this chapter the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

"ABANDON." To forsake entirely, or to neglect or refuse to provide or perform the legal obligations for care and support of an animal by its owner, or his or her agent. Such abandonment shall constitute the relinquishment of all rights and claims by the owner to such animal.

"ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER." A civilian employee who is hired by the city in a full or part-time capacity, for the purpose of humanely capturing animals that are considered to be running at large within the City of Falmouth.

"AT LARGE." Off the premises of the owner, and not under the direct control of the owner or his or her agent either by leash, cord, chain, or otherwise. Direct control includes the power to manage and direct the animal and is not limited to physical control.

"DOMESTIC ANIMAL." Animals that are habituated to live in or about the habitations of human beings, and which are kept, cared for, sheltered, fed, or harbored for use as a pet or as a source of food raw materials, or income.

"EXOTIC ANIMAL." Any animal not indigenous to the United States.

"LIVESTOCK." Cattle, sheep, swine, goats, emus, ostriches, horses, chickens, turkeys, pigeons, ducks, rabbits, or any other animals of the bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine, ratite, or equine species, or domestic fowl, or leporida species; provided, however, that a service or therapeutic animal with proper documentation, kept for medical purposes, and registered with the city, shall not be considered livestock.

"OWNER." Every person having a right of property to an animal and every person who keeps or harbors an animal, has it in his or her care, or permits it to remain on or about the premises owned or occupied by him or her.

"PIT BULL DOG." Any pit bull terrier, which shall be herein defined as a Staffordshire Terrier breed of dog or any mixed breed of dog which contains as an element of its breeding the Staffordshire Bull Terrier or American Staffordshire Terrier or American Pit Bull Terrier, or which has predominate physical characteristics which are those of either the American Staffordshire Terrier or the Staffordshire Bull Terrier or the American Pit Bull Terrier, as to be identifiable as partially of the breed of Staffordshire Bull Terrier or American Staffordshire Terrier by a qualified veterinarian duly licensed as such by the Commonwealth.

"POLICE OFFICER." A sworn police officer for the City of Falmouth, responsible for the safety and protection of the citizens of Falmouth.

"WILD ANIMAL." Any animal not domesticated or not ordinarily tame and which by its nature an animal that lives apart from human beings.

Section II

Section 90.08 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Falmouth, prohibiting Pit Bull dogs, is hereby repealed in its entirety.

Section III

That should any section or part of any section or any provision of this Ordinance be declared invalid by a Court of competent jurisdiction, for any reason, such declaration shall not invalidate, or adversely affect, the remainder of this Ordinance.

Section IV

That this Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force when passed, published, and recorded according to the law.

CITY OF FALMOUTH

ATTEST:

Megan Crouch, City Clerk

Sabrina Hazen
Sabrina Hazen, Mayor

