

Animal Site Registry FAQ

Q1. What is the purpose of the animal site registry?

The registry will provide the Board of Health and the Police and Fire Departments information on the location, kinds and approximate number of livestock on properties within the Town and how to contact the appropriate person in the event of an emergency. That information will help those agencies protect public health and safety and prepare for emergencies. The information will also help ensure that all locations with livestock are inspected under the Mass. Department of Agriculture's Barn Book inspection program.

Q2. Is there a filing fee?

There is no filing fee.

Q3. How often do I have to file?

Only once, there is no renewal. However, changes to the kind of livestock you have or the contact information should be reported through an updated registration form.

Q4. Who will be able to see the information?

The information will be provided to the Board of Health who will share it only with the Police and Fire Departments. It will be made available to the animal inspectors who are state-approved to conduct Barn Book inspections. The information will be kept confidential from other agencies or the public under the state law governing public records.

Q5. What animals do I need to list?

Only livestock need to be listed. Livestock are animals kept for agricultural purposes including, but not limited to, cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, equines (e.g. horses, mules and donkeys), camelids (llamas and alpacas), rabbits, chickens, turkeys or other fowl. It does not include companion animals (household pets), wild and exotic animals or bees.

Q6. Do I need to list my pets?

No. Animals that are primarily kept indoors in a residential dwelling for non-commercial purposes and are not used for human consumption are exempt from registration.

Q7. When does the registration need to be filed?

The filing deadline is on or before January 7, 2020 or 30 days after the date the first livestock arrive on the property, whichever is the later date.

Q8. How and where can I file the registration form?

The form is available online at <https://www.westport-ma.com/board-health> or from the Board of Health office at the Town Hall Annex, 856 Main Rd. You can submit the completed form in person, by mail, fax (508-636-1016) or by email to Health@Westport-MA.gov.

Q9. What if the registration is filed without complete information or is unsigned?

An incomplete or unsigned registration form will not be considered valid. You will be contacted by the Board of Health to complete and refile the form.

Q10. What if the kinds of livestock on the property changes after the registration is filed?

If additional kinds of livestock are kept on the property, you should contact the Board of Health or download and file an updated registration form within 30 days from the date the change occurs.

Q11. What if the contact information changes after the registration is filed?

You should contact the Board of Health or download and file an updated registration form within 30 days from the date the change occurs.

Q12. What if the numbers of livestock change after the registration is filed?

You are not required to update the registration information if the number of livestock changes. If the number substantially increases from reported estimate/range it would assist the Board of Health and Police and Fire Departments if the change was voluntarily reported to the Board.

Q13. What can happen if I do not file a registration?

The Board of Health will send you a notice that there is no valid registration in our records. The notice will set a deadline by which the registration must be filed. A copy of the notice will also be provided to the Agricultural Commission. The Commission or the Board may then contact you and see if there is any further information or concerns that can be resolved to have the registration filed by the given deadline. If the registration is not filed by the deadline, the Board may assess a penalty in accordance with the regulation.

Q14. Can I request a hearing before the Board?

Yes. You can file a written request for a hearing within 10 days from receiving a notice of a violation.

Q15. What is the amount of penalty?

If a registration is not filed on or before the filing deadline set in the notice from the Board of Health, a penalty of \$10, plus \$5 a day for each day after that until the registration is filed may be assessed.

Q16. What are the Barn Book inspections?

The Barn Book inspection program is a requirement from the Mass. Department of Agriculture. State law provides that all locations that have livestock in each town be inspected annually. The inspection includes a census of the kinds and numbers of livestock on each property, the health of the animals and the conditions under which they are kept.

Q17. Who performs the inspections?

The Barn Book program is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) and inspections are performed by Town of Westport animal inspectors who have been appointed by MDAR.

Q18. When do the inspections happen?

The inspections start each October and are completed by the end of year.

Q19. What happens to the information collected during the inspection?

The information reported in the Barn Books is confidential with access only by MDAR and MDAR appointed animal inspectors.

Q20. What if I have livestock for part of year but remove them all from my property before the start of the Barn Book inspections?

MDAR approved inspectors on the staff at the Board of Health will conduct an inspection of locations that regularly keep all their livestock for only those parts of year which fall outside the October to December period of time when the Barn Book inspections are conducted.

Q21. Does the registry set rules on how to care for livestock?

No. The Board's webpage and other sites have links to guidelines that contain recommendation on the how to avoid situations that can lead to poor sanitation, public health nuisances and conditions that can affect the animal's safety and health.