

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
ANIMAL INDUSTRY DIVISION**

**VETERINARIANS AND BOARDERS OF ANIMALS**

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**44-14-490 Lien for treatment, board, or care of animal; right to retain possession.**

Every licensed veterinarian and every operator of a facility for boarding animals or pets shall have a lien on each animal or pets treated, boarded, or cared for by them while in their custody and under contract with the owner of the animal or pet for the payment of charges for the treatment, board, or care of the animal or pet; and the veterinarian or operator of a facility shall have the right to retain the animal or pet until the charges are paid. Facilities for boarding animals or pets shall include, but not be limited to, veterinary hospitals, boarding kennels, stables, livestock sales barns, and humane societies.

**44-14-491 Notice to owner; sale or disposal of animal; liability.**

- (a) (1) If the charges due for any services enumerated in Code Section 44-14-490 are not paid within ten days after the demand therefor on the owner of the animal or pet or if the animal or pet is not picked up within ten days after the demand therefor on the owner of the animal or pet, which demand shall be made in person or by registered or certified mail with return receipt requested and addressed to the owner at the address given when the animal or pet was delivered, the animal or pet shall be deemed to be abandoned and the licensed veterinarian or operator of a facility is authorized to dispose of the animal or pet in such manner as such veterinarian or operator shall determine. Such ten-day period will begin to run on the date the demand is postmarked or the date the verbal command is communicated in person and shall be noted on the veterinarian's or operator's file on the animal or pet. For the purposes of this subsection, the term "dispose of" means selling the animal or pet at public or private sale, giving the animal or pet away, or turning the animal or pet over to any humane society or animal shelter or other such facility. Where no such shelter facility exists within a 50-mile radius of the veterinarian or operator of a facility's place of business and the veterinarian or operator has been unable to sell or give the animal or pet away, then the veterinarian or operator is authorized to euthanize the animals in a humane manner.
- (2) On the day of the disposal of the animal or pet, the veterinarian or operator of a facility shall notify the owner in person, by telephone, or by registered or certified mail with return receipt requested at the address given when the animal or pet was delivered, of the date of the disposal and the manner in which the animal or pet was disposed.
- (3) The disposal of an animal or pet as provided in this Code section shall not relieve the owner or owner's agent of any financial obligations incurred for treatment, boarding, or care by a veterinarian or operator of a facility for boarding animals or pets.

(b) The giving of notice to the owner as provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section shall relieve the licensed veterinarian, the operator of a facility for boarding animals or pets, or any custodian who disposes of such animal or pet of any further liability for such disposal.

(c) Failure of the owner of any such animal or pet to receive the demand by registered or certified mail provided for in paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section shall not render the licensed veterinarian or operator of a facility liable to the owner of such animal or pet for the disposal thereof in any manner provided for in this Code section.

**44-14-492 Disposal of sale proceeds.**

When any animal or pet is sold as authorized in this part to satisfy a lien for any of the services enumerated in Code Section 44-14-490, any surplus realized from the sale after payment of the charges and any expenses incurred in making the demand for payment thereof in connection with the sale shall be paid to the owner of the animal or pet.

**44-14-493 Necessity of other legal proceedings.**

Other than compliance with the requirements of this part, no legal proceedings shall be necessary for the enforcement of the lien created by this part.

**44-14-494 Criminal liability under Code Section 44-14-491.**

It shall not constitute a violation of Code Section 16-12-4 if a licensed veterinarian or an operator of a facility for boarding animals or pets disposes of an animal or pet as provided for in Code Section 44-14-491.