



Portage County Dog Licenses Online (Through the Auditor)

Portage County Dog Licenses Online Through the Auditor

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1781** —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit — billshometech.com/book

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Here is the whole guide in a nutshell. In Portage County, dog licenses are sold by the County Auditor, and they are renewed every year by January 31. Your renewal notice arrives in the mail with a QR code on it and a PIN printed beneath. Scan the code with your phone camera, or go to the Auditor's site by typing the address yourself, then enter the PIN, check your dog's details, and pay. If your dog is new to the county, register at portagecountyauditor.org and create an account. Always look for the real county addresses, which include portagecounty-oh.gov, and never pay by gift card. Save your receipt, and keep the tag on your dog's collar. If the fee, a late penalty, or a lost tag has you puzzled, call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560 or call me. That is exactly the kind of thing I help neighbors with.

1. What a Dog License Is

A yearly record that ties your dog to you.

A dog license is a small yearly record kept by the county. It says that a particular dog lives with a particular person at a particular address. You receive a metal tag to hang on your dog's collar, and that tag is the quick, visible proof that your dog is licensed.

In Portage County, this license is sold through the County Auditor's office. Many neighbors still picture a trip to a counter with a paper form and a checkbook. That way still exists, but there is also an online way that lets you take care of it from your kitchen table.

I wrote this guide for anyone who has never bought a dog tag online, or who tried once and got stuck. We will go slowly. Nothing here is a race, and you cannot hurt anything by reading ahead.

- The license is renewed every year.
- The tag goes on the collar.
- The Auditor's office sells the license.
- You can buy it online, on paper, or by phone for questions.

GOOD TO KNOW

Think of the tag as a name badge for your dog. If your dog ever wanders off, a stranger can see right away that someone is looking after this animal.

2. Why Dogs Are Licensed

Ohio law, and a safer ride home for a lost pet.

Ohio law expects dog owners to license their dogs, and the county is where that gets done. The rules come from the state, and each county carries them out. That is why you deal with the Portage County Auditor and not with a city hall or a state office.

There is also a very practical reason to do it. A licensed dog that gets loose can be matched to its owner much faster. A tag on the collar and a record at the county mean a worried owner and a found dog can find each other quickly, often without a stay at a shelter.

I will not guess at how the county uses the fees or at any figures, because those details change. What matters for you is simple: license your dog on time and keep the tag on.

- It follows state law.
- It helps lost dogs get home.
- It is renewed once a year.
- It is handled by the county, not the state.

TIP

If you are ever unsure whether a rule applies to your situation, call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560. They answer these questions all the time, and no question is too small.

3. Who Sells the License

The County Auditor, not the Dog Warden.

This surprises many people. The Dog Warden's office and shelter takes care of stray dogs and animal matters. But the license itself is sold by the Portage County Auditor's office. The Auditor also handles property values and a handful of other licenses, so dog tags are one of many things that office does.

The county website lists the Auditor's licensing page, which says that dog and kennel licenses are sold there. It also gives a phone number for questions and a link to buy tags online. I used that page, along with the Dog Warden's page, to write this guide.

If you ever feel lost about which office to call, start with the Auditor for anything about buying, renewing, or paying. Call the Dog Warden for a loose dog, a found dog, or the shelter.

- Buying or renewing a license: the Auditor.
- Questions about tags and fees: the Auditor's licensing line.
- Loose or found dogs and the shelter: the Dog Warden.
- A friendly hand with the computer: me.

GOOD TO KNOW

Both offices are on the official county website, which ends in dot gov. That is the safest place to start when you are looking for either one.

4. Which Dogs Need a License

The county's page names the age.

According to the Auditor's licensing page, dog and kennel licenses are for Portage County dogs that have reached the age of three months. So a very young puppy is not yet part of the yearly cycle, but once your dog reaches that age, it needs its license.

If you have just brought home a new dog, whether a puppy, a rescue, or a dog you adopted from a relative, take a moment to check the dog's age. Then plan to get the license soon after that three month mark. Do not wait for a letter to arrive, because a brand new dog may not be in the county's system yet.

Every dog in your home counts separately. Two dogs means two licenses and two tags. Keeping them in one folder makes the yearly renewal much easier.

- Three months old is the age on the county page.
- Each dog gets its own license and tag.
- New dogs need to be registered, not renewed.
- Older dogs are renewed every year.

TIP

Write each dog's name and birth month, or your best guess, on a note by the computer. When renewal time comes, you will have what you need in one glance.

5. The Yearly Deadline

Renew every year by January 31.

The county's online dog license notice says that dog licenses have to be renewed every year by January 31. That is the date to remember. Put it on your calendar the way you would a birthday.

It is a good idea to renew early in January or even before, when the renewal notice arrives in your mailbox. Waiting until the last day leaves no room if a password is forgotten or the website is slow. A few quiet minutes ahead of time beat a rushed evening on the final day.

Dogs that join your family later in the year are different. They are registered when you get them or when they reach the right age, and then they join the yearly cycle.

- 1 Watch your mailbox in the weeks around the new year for the renewal notice.
- 2 Set a reminder on your phone or wall calendar.
- 3 Plan to renew before the end of January.
- 4 Save your receipt when you finish.

WATCH OUT

Deadlines and late rules can change. Always confirm the date on the official county page or by calling the Auditor's licensing line before you assume.

6. What to Gather Before You Start

A few things on the table make this smooth.

A little preparation turns this from a chore into a ten minute job. Before you sit down at the computer, gather what you will need and put it all in one place.

- Your renewal notice, the one that came in the mail, with its QR code and PIN.
- A phone or computer with an internet connection.
- A way to pay, such as a card. The site will show what it accepts.
- Your dog's name, breed, color, and approximate age.
- An email address you can open, in case you create an account.
- A recent photo of your dog, if you want to add one.

If you are registering a dog for the first time, you will not have a renewal notice. That is fine. You will start from the Auditor's website instead, and we will cover that in its own chapter.

Have a glass of water, put on your reading glasses, and give yourself room to breathe.

TIP

Put the renewal notice in a sheet protector or a folder once you have it. It holds the PIN, and a lost PIN is the most common reason people get stuck.

7. Getting to the Real Website

Type the address yourself.

Start only at an official address. The Portage County Auditor's dog license site is reached at portagecountyauditor.org, and the county's own website is portagecounty-oh.gov. The county's licensing page also links to an online tag-buying page hosted at services.portageco.com. All of these were listed by the county itself.

Type the address into the bar at the very top of your browser. Do not click a link in an email or a text message, even if it looks official. Copycat websites exist, and some hope you will search for dog license, click the first result, and hand over your card number.

When you search, look past anything marked Ad. The real county pages come from portagecounty-oh.gov, which ends in dot gov. A site that asks for payment but has no connection to the county should make you stop.

- Type portagecountyauditor.org yourself.
- Or start at portagecounty-oh.gov and find the Auditor.
- Look for the dot gov on county pages.
- When in doubt, close the page and call.

WATCH OUT

The real county never asks for gift cards, wire transfers, or your password by phone. If anyone does, hang up and call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560 yourself.

8. The Renewal Notice and QR Code

What that square of dots is for.

The county's online dog license page explains that renewal now works through a QR code. A QR code is a square of tiny black and white dots that your phone camera can read. It works like a shortcut: scan it, and your phone opens the right website without any typing.

The renewal notice you receive in the mail has that QR code on it. Scanning it takes you to the county's renewal site. This saves you from typing a long web address and avoids the mistakes that come with that.

Do not worry if you have never scanned one. It is easier than it looks, and the next chapter covers it. If scanning does not work for you, you can still type the address of the Auditor's site, or call the licensing line for help.

- The QR code is printed on your renewal notice.

- Scanning it opens the county's renewal site.
- The PIN is printed beneath the code.
- Keep the notice flat and clean so the code stays readable.

GOOD TO KNOW

A QR code is only a shortcut to a web address. If your phone shows you the address before opening it, read it. Make sure it looks like an official county or Auditor address.

9. The PIN Under the QR Code

The county's one important warning.

The county's notice says, in capital letters, that you will need the PIN number under the QR code on your renewal notice to register your dog online. That is the key to the whole process, so it is worth understanding.

A PIN is a short number, like the one you use at a cash machine. Here, it tells the website which dog and which owner it is dealing with. Without it, the site cannot match you to your record.

Look at the renewal notice and find the QR code. The PIN is right beneath it. Read it slowly, and when you type it in later, check each digit before you press the button.

- 1 Find the QR code on your renewal notice.
- 2 Look directly beneath it for the PIN.
- 3 Copy the PIN onto a sticky note if the print is faint.
- 4 Keep the notice beside you while you work.

WATCH OUT

If the notice has been lost, do not panic. Call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560 and explain. Someone there can tell you the next step. I would rather you make that call than guess.

10. Scanning the QR Code With Your Phone

The camera does the typing for you.

Most modern phones can read a QR code with the regular camera. You do not need to download anything special for this. Just open the camera, aim it, and wait a moment.

Hold the renewal notice flat in good light, on a table if you can. Hold the phone steady about a hand's width above the code. When the phone recognizes it, a small message or

banner usually appears on the screen with a web address. Tap that banner to open the page.

If nothing happens, try moving a little closer or farther away. Glare from a window can also get in the way, so turn the paper slightly.

- 1 Open the Camera app on your phone.
- 2 Point it at the QR code, keeping the paper still.
- 3 Wait for a banner or link to appear on the screen.
- 4 Check that the address looks official, then tap it.
- 5 Have the PIN ready for the page that opens.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not comfortable with the phone camera? You can do the same thing on a computer by typing the Auditor's address yourself, then following the links for dog licenses.

11. Renewing Your Dog's License, Step by Step

The main task, in plain order.

Here is the renewal in the order you are likely to meet it. Screen wording may change over time, so I describe what to look for rather than exact button names. Take your time with each screen.

- 1 Scan the QR code on your renewal notice, or go to the Auditor's site by typing the address.
- 2 Enter the PIN from beneath the QR code when asked.
- 3 Look over your dog's information. Make sure the name and details are right.
- 4 Choose to renew, and pick the license length if the site offers a choice.
- 5 Review the total shown before you pay.
- 6 Enter your payment details on the payment screen.
- 7 Wait for a confirmation page, and do not close it too early.
- 8 Save or print your receipt.

If something looks different from what I describe, that is normal. Websites get small updates. The idea stays the same: identify your dog, confirm it, pay, and keep your receipt.

WATCH OUT

Do not press the back button or close the window while a payment is working. Wait until you see a confirmation, so you are not charged twice or left half finished.

12. Registering a Brand New Dog

For dogs the county has never licensed.

If you have never licensed a dog through Portage County, you will not have a renewal notice with a PIN. The county's online dog license page says new dogs can be registered at portagecountyauditor.org. That is your starting point.

The same page explains that the new site lets you create an account if you have never purchased a license through Portage County. After that, you can come back later and manage your dogs the same way.

Gather what you know about your dog: the name, breed, color, age, and any details the form asks for. Some people also keep proof of rabies vaccination handy, because county offices often ask about it. I cannot promise what the site asks, so call the licensing line if you are unsure.

- Go to portagecountyauditor.org by typing it yourself.
- Look for the area for dog licenses.
- Create an account if you are a first time customer.
- Add your dog's details carefully.
- Pay and keep the receipt.

TIP

Moving here from another county? Your old tag will not carry over by itself. Plan to register your dog in Portage County soon after you settle in.

13. Creating Your Account

One login for all your dogs.

The county says the online site lets you register for an account if you have never purchased a license through Portage County. An account is simply a login: a username or email, plus a password you choose.

The benefit is that your dogs, your history, and your details are saved in one place. At renewal time you will not start from scratch. You will sign in and everything will be waiting.

- 1 Find the option to create or register an account.
- 2 Type your email address carefully.
- 3 Choose a password you will remember.
- 4 Type the password a second time to confirm.

5 Fill in your name and address as the county would know them.

6 Finish, and check your email if the site says it sent a message.

Use a personal email you check often. If you share an email with a spouse, that is fine, but each account should have its own password.

Do not worry about getting every screen perfect on the first try. If a box turns red or a message says something is missing, read it gently. It is usually just a blank you skipped or a typo in the email address.

WATCH OUT

A password made from a short phrase is easier to remember than random symbols. Write it in a notebook kept at home, never in your wallet.

14. Signing In Later

Coming back to the site next time.

Once your account exists, using it again is easy. You go to the site, look for the sign in area, and type the email and password you chose. Then you land on a page that shows your dog or dogs.

For a yearly renewal, you might still use the QR code and PIN on your notice, because that is the path the county describes. If the site also lets you sign in, use whichever feels easier to you. Both lead to the same place: your dog's record.

If the page does not look like you remember, do not worry. Websites change their look from time to time. Look for the same clues: your dog's name, a way to renew, and a way to pay.

- Type the Auditor's address yourself each time.
- Use the same email you signed up with.
- Do not let a shared computer save your password.
- Sign out when you finish.

If you ever feel unsure whether you are signed in, look for your name or email near the top of the page. That small clue tells you the site knows who you are.

GOOD TO KNOW

Bookmarking the page you use saves typing. Bookmark only the real address, after you have confirmed it is the right one.

15. If You Forget Your Password

A small problem with a simple fix.

Forgetting a password is very ordinary. Nearly every website has a way to fix it, and the dog license site is likely to have one too. Look near the sign in boxes for words such as forgot password or reset.

Usually, the site asks for your email address and then sends a message with a link or a code. You follow that message to choose a new password. The email can take a minute or two, so be patient before asking for another.

- 1 On the sign in page, look for the forgot password option.
- 2 Enter the email address you used to create the account.
- 3 Open your email and look for the message.
- 4 Check your spam or junk folder if it is missing.
- 5 Follow the directions to pick a new password.
- 6 Sign in with the new one.

Never share the code from that email with anyone who calls or texts you. The code is meant for you alone.

WATCH OUT

If the email never arrives after a few tries, there may be a typo in the address stored on the account. That is a good time to call the licensing line at (330) 297-3560.

16. Paying Online

How to handle the payment screen calmly.

The payment screen is where most people feel nervous, and that is understandable. Take it slowly. You are paying the county for a dog license, and the amount should be shown to you clearly before you confirm.

The site will tell you which payment methods it accepts, and I do not want to guess. Most online county payments use a debit or credit card. Some sites add a small convenience fee for paying online, so read the total on the screen before you press the final button.

- Read the total shown before you confirm.
- Type your card number carefully, one group at a time.
- Check the billing address matches your card statement.
- Wait for the confirmation page to appear.

- Save or print your receipt.

Be sure you are still on the official address when you pay. If the web address in the bar suddenly looks strange, stop and call the licensing line.

If your card company texts you a code to approve the payment, that is normal when you started the purchase yourself. It is a safety step from your bank. Enter it only on the payment page you opened.

WATCH OUT

Never pay a dog license by gift card, cash app, or wire transfer. If someone asks you to, that is a scam, not the county.

17. Understanding the Fees

Described in words, confirmed on the official page.

I am not going to list dollar amounts in this guide, because fees can change and the printed number could become wrong. The county's Dog Warden site has a fee schedule page, and the Auditor's licensing page also has fee information. Those are the places to check.

What I can tell you is how fees tend to work. There is a regular price for each dog license. I am not certain whether the price differs for any kind of dog, so please check the fee schedule rather than assume.

The Auditor's licensing page also says that puppies three months old and younger are half price, and it gives a window of July through November for that. This is the sort of detail that is worth reading on the live page before you rely on it.

- Check the fee schedule on the county Dog Warden page.
- Read the total before you confirm payment.
- Ask the licensing line if any price is unclear.
- Keep your receipt as proof you paid.

TIP

If the amount on the screen does not match what you expected, pause. Call the Auditor's licensing line before you pay, not after.

18. What Happens If You Are Late

Penalties exist, so confirm the exact rule.

If you miss the January 31 deadline, a late penalty may apply. Sources from the county describe this in different ways. One county bulletin describes the cost doubling after a certain date, while the Auditor's application form describes a smaller late charge for dogs you have had more than thirty days.

Because the explanations differ, I will not guess which one applies to you. The honest answer is to ask. Call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560 and explain your situation. They can tell you exactly what you owe and why.

What matters most is not to hide from it. A late license is easy to fix, and the staff have seen this many times. Getting it done is far better than leaving it undone.

- 1 Find your renewal notice or your dog's information.
- 2 Call the Auditor's licensing line.
- 3 Ask what you owe and how to pay it.
- 4 Pay online or follow their directions.
- 5 Keep your receipt.

WATCH OUT

Do not pay anyone who contacts you out of the blue about a late dog license. Go to the county site yourself, or call the number I listed.

19. Your Confirmation and Receipt

Proof that you finished.

When your payment goes through, the site should show a confirmation page. It often includes a confirmation number and a summary of what you bought. Many sites also email a copy, but do not count on that alone.

This receipt is your proof that your dog is licensed. If the tag has not yet arrived in the mail, or if someone asks whether your dog is licensed, you can show it. Keep it with your other pet papers.

- Look for a confirmation page after paying.
- Write down the confirmation number.
- Check your email for a copy.
- Keep a printed or saved version in your pet folder.

If you do not see any confirmation, do not pay a second time right away. Check your email and your card activity first. If you are still unsure, call the licensing line and explain what you saw.

A good habit is to check the receipt for your dog's name and spelling before you file it. A small error is much easier to correct right away than months later, and the licensing line can help you fix it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Paying twice by accident is something offices can usually sort out, but it takes time. Waiting for the confirmation page is the easiest way to avoid it.

20. Printing or Saving Your Receipt

Two easy ways to keep a copy.

A paper copy is wonderful because it never needs a password and never runs out of battery. A saved digital copy is wonderful because it is hard to lose in a drawer. Many people keep both.

Both are simple on the confirmation page. You can use your browser's print option, which often appears in a menu near the top of the window. In the print window, you can send it to your printer, or choose a save as PDF option to keep a digital file.

- 1 On the confirmation page, open your browser's menu.
- 2 Choose Print.
- 3 Pick your printer for paper, or save as PDF for a digital copy.
- 4 Name the file something clear, such as Dog License Receipt.
- 5 Put the paper in your pet folder.

If you do not own a printer, a library can often print for a small charge. You can also write the confirmation number in a notebook as a backup.

Give the digital file a name you will recognize, and keep all your pet papers together in one folder on the computer. That way you can find them in seconds.

TIP

A photo of the receipt taken with your phone is a perfectly good backup. Put it in an album named Pets so you can find it later.

21. Your Dog's Tag

What it is and where it belongs.

The tag is the little metal piece that shows your dog is licensed. The county's materials mention that tags are part of the licensing process, and the Dog Warden's website has a page about dog tags. Check that page if you want to know what the tag looks like and how it is issued.

The tag belongs on your dog's collar, and it should be there all the time. A tag sitting in a kitchen drawer will not help a dog that has slipped out the front door.

Check the collar fit as well. You should be able to slide two fingers under it. A collar that is too loose can slip off, and one that is too tight is uncomfortable.

- Attach the tag to the collar the day it arrives.
- Check the ring and clasp now and then.
- Keep a phone number tag or microchip as well.
- Replace worn collars before they break.

GOOD TO KNOW

A license tag tells people the dog is licensed. It is smart to add a separate tag with your own phone number, so a neighbor can call you directly.

22. If a Tag Is Lost

Do not wait for it to turn up.

Tags get lost. They slip off collars, get chewed, and fall off in the yard. This happens to many careful owners, so there is no reason to feel embarrassed.

A lost tag does not mean you must buy a new license. Your license record is kept by the county. What you need is a replacement tag. Ask the Auditor's licensing line how to get one and whether there is a small charge. I cannot promise how it is done, so please call before you drive anywhere.

- 1 Check your yard, car, and the places your dog sleeps.
- 2 Look at the collar to make sure the ring is not just bent.
- 3 Call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560.
- 4 Tell them your dog's name and your address.
- 5 Ask how to get a replacement tag.
- 6 Put the new tag on right away.

In the meantime, keep your receipt handy, since it proves the license is current.

Meanwhile, keep your dog's collar and your receipt together in a drawer or a labeled envelope. It makes the call to the office quicker, because you will have everything in reach.

WATCH OUT

Check the tag attachment every few months. A tiny split ring can fail without warning.

23. Reporting a Lost Dog on the Site

A feature the county added.

The county's notice says the new renewal site lets you upload an image of your dog, so that you can report your dog as lost. It also says the site can help locate the owner of a lost dog. That is a welcome feature, and it is a good reason to have a clear photo of your dog on file.

Think of a good photo as a gift to your future self. If your dog ever goes missing, you will not have to describe it from memory in a panic. A clear picture, taken from the front and from the side, does a great deal of the work.

- Take a clear, well lit photo of your dog's face.
- Take one of the whole dog from the side.
- Add a photo to your dog's record if the site allows.
- Check the photo still looks like your dog as it grows or its coat changes.

I cannot tell you exactly where the report button is on your screen, because layouts change. Look for words about lost dogs or photos once you have signed in.

WATCH OUT

If your dog is missing, do not rely only on a website. Call the Dog Warden's office at (330) 297-6924, walk your neighborhood, and tell your neighbors.

24. Searching for a Dog Tag

A public lookup from the Auditor.

The Auditor's licensing page includes a link called Dog Tag Search. It points to a search tool hosted by a records company that serves the county. It is meant to help you look up dog license information.

This is useful for a neighbor who has found a wandering dog. It can also help you check that your own dog's license was entered properly.

As with any search tool, use plain information. Type a tag number or a name if the page allows it. You should never need to enter your card number or a password to search.

- 1 Go to the Auditor's licensing page on portagecounty-oh.gov.
- 2 Find the link labeled Dog Tag Search.
- 3 Enter the tag number or other information requested.
- 4 Read the result carefully.
- 5 Call the Dog Warden if you have found a dog and need help.

The county has not asked you to do anything unusual here. If a search page ever wants a password or a card number just to look something up, close it and call the licensing line instead.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you find a stray dog, do not approach one that seems frightened or hurt. Call the Dog Warden's office, which is built for exactly that.

25. Kennel Licenses

For people who breed or sell dogs.

Most households only need a regular dog license for each pet. A kennel license is something different, and it applies to people who breed, buy, or sell dogs. The Auditor's licensing page lists kennel licenses alongside dog licenses.

The county page also notes that buying a kennel license requires proof that you buy and sell dogs. I do not know what proof counts, so please ask the office. The Dog Warden's website has a kennel registration application, which is a good starting point to read.

If you only have one or two pets and they live in your home, you almost certainly want regular licenses. If you are not sure which fits, a quick phone call will settle it.

- Regular license: for pets in your household.
- Kennel license: for people who buy, sell, or breed dogs.
- Kennel licenses need proof of that activity.
- Ask the Auditor if you are unsure which you need.

The Dog Warden's website also lists a kennel registration application you can read. Reading it first gives you a good sense of what the office will ask, before you call.

WATCH OUT

Do not buy a kennel license just to save time with several pets. Ask first, so you choose the right one.

26. The Paper Application Option

No computer needed.

You are never required to use a computer. The Portage County Dog Warden's website offers a dog registration application you can print, and the Auditor's site has a dog license application form as well. You can fill one out by hand.

A paper form works well for people who prefer a pen, or who like to have a family member read through it with them. You then deliver it as the form directs, whether that is by mail or in person. Read the instructions printed on the form itself, since they explain where it goes and how to pay.

- 1 Get a paper form from the county, or ask the office to mail one.
- 2 Fill it in neatly in blue or black ink.
- 3 Include any papers the form asks for.
- 4 Follow the form's directions for paying.
- 5 Send or bring it to the address on the form.
- 6 Keep a copy of everything.

If you cannot print, many libraries will print it for you for a small charge.

GOOD TO KNOW

Photocopy your filled-out form before you send it. It is a small step that can save worry later.

27. Calling or Visiting the Auditor

The human option.

Sometimes the best answer is a person. The Auditor's licensing page says to call (330) 297-3560 if you have questions. The Auditor's main office number is (330) 297-3561. The office hours listed on the county page are Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

The Auditor's office is on the fifth floor of the Portage County Administration Building, at 449 South Meridian Street in Ravenna, Ohio. The mailing address is a post office box at the same city. If you plan to visit, call first to confirm hours and what to bring.

- Licensing questions: (330) 297-3560.
- Auditor's office: (330) 297-3561.
- Visit: Portage County Administration Building, fifth floor, 449 South Meridian Street, Ravenna.
- Hours listed: Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Be kind and patient, and say you are calling about a dog license. They will point you in the right direction.

The staff handle many calls, so a polite, clear question goes a long way. Say your name, that you are calling about a dog license, and what you need. If you reach voicemail, leave your number slowly and clearly, and say it twice.

TIP

Have your dog's name and your address in front of you when you call. It makes everything faster.

28. The Dog Warden's Office

Strays, shelter, and animal questions.

The Portage County Dog Warden's office and shelter is a separate office from the Auditor. According to the county website, it is at 8120 Infirmary Road in Ravenna, Ohio, and its phone number is (330) 297-6924.

The county page lists hours of Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, and Saturday from 9:00 am to noon, closed on Sundays and holidays. An after-hours number, (330) 296-5100, is listed for emergencies. Hours can change, so call to confirm before you drive over.

The Dog Warden's website also has helpful pages on dog tags, fees, and volunteering. If you love dogs and have a few spare hours, the volunteer page is worth a look.

- Address: 8120 Infirmary Road, Ravenna.
- Phone: (330) 297-6924.
- After hours: (330) 296-5100.
- Website: the Dog Warden section of portagecounty-oh.gov.

If you are bringing a dog in, keep the dog leashed or in a carrier. A shelter has many animals coming and going, and a calm arrival is safer for everyone, including your pet. Staff there can explain what they need from you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Use the Dog Warden for stray or lost dogs and shelter matters. Use the Auditor for buying and renewing licenses.

29. Phone, Tablet, or Computer

Use whatever feels comfortable.

The renewal site works on a phone, a tablet, or a computer. The steps are the same, though buttons may sit in slightly different places on a small screen. There is no right device. Choose the one you trust.

Because the renewal notice has a QR code, a phone is the most natural fit. But some people find a phone screen too small. If so, you can read the PIN from the notice and type the Auditor's address on a computer instead.

On a phone, the keyboard shows up at the bottom of the screen when you tap a box. On a computer, you click in the box and type. Either way, take your time and check what you typed before moving on.

- Phone: easiest for scanning the QR code.
- Tablet: a bigger screen, still easy to touch.
- Computer: comfortable for typing and printing.
- Any of them can reach the same site.

If you ever feel lost on a phone, pull down from the top of the screen to check that your internet is on. Wireless internet at home is the most dependable choice for payments.

WATCH OUT

If you start on one device and get stuck, switch to another. Your PIN and your notice do not change.

30. Making the Text Bigger

Comfortable reading matters.

If the words on the screen are too small, there is no need to squint. Every browser can enlarge a page, and every phone can enlarge text too. Changing it does not alter how the website works.

- 1 On a computer, hold Control and press the plus key to zoom in. On a Mac, use Command and plus.
- 2 Press Control and zero to return to normal size.
- 3 On a phone, spread two fingers apart on the page to enlarge.
- 4 In your phone's settings, look for display or accessibility to make text larger everywhere. Larger text is especially helpful on the payment screen, where small numbers are easy to mistype. Take your time and zoom in as far as you like.

If you use reading glasses, keep them next to the computer. It is a tiny habit that prevents typing errors.

If the page jumps around after zooming, do not worry. Scroll slowly with one finger or the mouse wheel. Nothing is lost, and you can shrink the page back at any time.

WATCH OUT

Good lighting makes a big difference as well. Sit near a lamp, and tilt the screen so you do not see window glare.

31. Using a Library or Borrowed Computer

Fine, with a little extra care.

If you do not have a computer at home, a public library or senior center is a good place to do this. Staff at these places are used to helping with online forms, and they will not mind a question.

When you use any shared computer, remember that the next person could sit down at the same machine. A few habits keep your information private. Bring your renewal notice with you, since the PIN is on it.

- Sign out of any account when you finish.
- Do not let the browser save your password.
- Close the browser window before leaving.
- Take your printed receipt with you.
- Do not leave your card or notice behind.

It is perfectly safe to pay on a public computer if you follow those habits. If you are uneasy about entering a card number there, ask about paying by another method.

Ask a librarian where the printers are before you start, so you can print your receipt without a rush. Many libraries also have quiet corners where you can concentrate without feeling watched.

WATCH OUT

If a shared computer asks to remember your password, choose No or Not Now. Saving is for your own devices at home.

32. Helping a Parent or Neighbor

Do it with them, not instead of them.

Many of the people I help are doing this for a parent or an older neighbor. That is kind, and it can go smoothly if you keep a few things in mind. The account and the dog belong to them, so let them see every step.

Sit together, with their renewal notice in front of you. If they are comfortable, let them type the PIN and the payment details while you read the screen aloud. That way they stay in charge and learn how it works for next time.

If you are paying with your own card on their behalf, tell them clearly, and keep the receipt in their pet folder. Clear records prevent confusion later.

- Use their email and their name on the account.
- Let them hold the notice and the PIN.
- Explain each screen before clicking.
- Leave a short note about where the receipt is kept.

If your helper lives far away, a phone call while you both look at the notice works well.

Read the numbers aloud slowly, and let the dog's owner do the final tap on the pay button.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are legally acting for someone, such as under a power of attorney, ask the Auditor's office how they prefer to handle it.

33. Scams Aimed at Dog Owners

Pressure is the giveaway.

Scammers like anything that involves a deadline and a small payment, because people want to be responsible and pay quickly. A dog license fits that pattern, so it helps to know the warning signs.

- A text or email saying your dog license is overdue, with a link to pay immediately.
- A caller who claims to be from the county and wants a card number over the phone.

- A website that looks official but does not end in dot gov or the Auditor's real address.
- Anyone asking for gift cards, wire transfers, or payment apps.

The county's genuine notices arrive by mail with a QR code and a PIN, and the county's pages are on portagecounty-oh.gov and portagecountyauditor.org. If a message does not match what you know, do not click. Type the address yourself, or call the licensing line.

It costs nothing to pause. A real deadline is still real after you take ten minutes to verify it.

WATCH OUT

The real county will never ask for your email password or a one-time code by phone. If you shared one, change your password immediately and call me at (330) 200-8042.

34. Keeping Your Information Private

Share only what the county needs.

A dog license involves your name, your address, and your payment details. That is not secret information, but it deserves normal care, the same you would give to any online purchase.

Use only the official site. Look at the address bar before you type your card number. Avoid doing this on public wireless internet at a cafe or airport if you can wait, since a home connection or your phone's own connection is safer.

When you upload a photo of your dog, choose one that shows the dog and not your home address or your house number. A tidy photo of the dog on a plain background is plenty.

- Type the Auditor's address yourself.
- Pay from your home network when you can.
- Do not photograph mail or documents with your address visible.
- Sign out after using any shared computer.

The county needs only enough information to match you and your dog. If any page asks for something that seems unrelated, such as a bank password or your Social Security number, stop and call the licensing line before going further.

TIP

Watch your card statement for a month or so after paying online. If a charge looks wrong, call your card company right away.

35. When Life Changes

Moves, new owners, and losses.

Life changes, and so does your dog's situation. You might move across town, adopt a new dog, give a dog to a relative, or lose a beloved pet. Each of these affects the county's record in some way.

I do not know the exact process for each case, and I would rather say so than guess. The Auditor's licensing line is the right place to ask. The office can tell you whether to update your address, transfer a license, or simply let the record end.

If you move, make a note to update your address with the county. A tag with an old address on file can make it harder to bring a lost dog home.

- 1 Decide what changed: address, owner, or dog.
- 2 Call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560.
- 3 Explain the change in plain words.
- 4 Ask what to fill out or update.
- 5 Keep a note of what they tell you.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your dog has passed away, you do not need to apologize to anyone. Just let the office know when you feel ready, and they will take care of the record.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

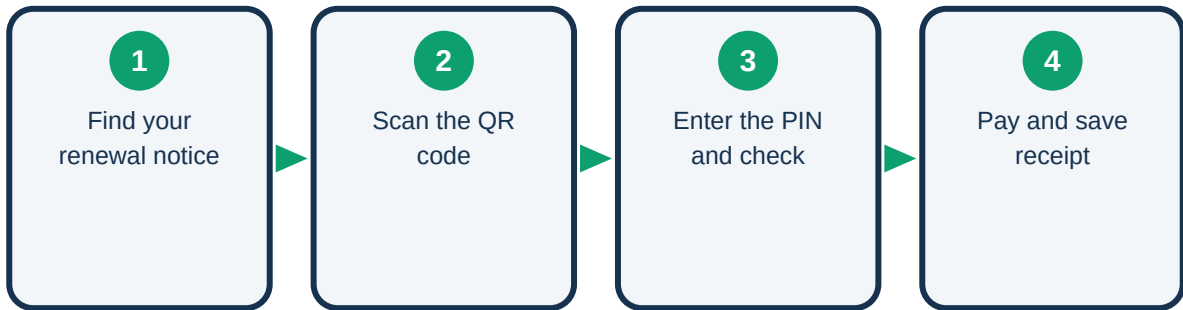
Keep this by the computer. I want to... Renew: scan the QR code on my notice and enter the PIN beneath it. Register a new dog: go to portagecountyauditor.org and create an account. Check a deadline: renewals are due every year by January 31. Ask about fees or penalties: call the Auditor's licensing line at (330) 297-3560. Report a lost dog: call the Dog Warden at (330) 297-6924. Keep proof: print or save my receipt, and write the confirmation number in a notebook. Fix a lost tag: ask the licensing line about a replacement. Get help: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Renew Your Dog's License

From mailbox to tag in four steps.



Renew every year by January 31.

Illustration - details vary by device, plan, and provider. Always check your own setup.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Who Handles What

Two county offices, two jobs.

**Licenses: Auditor. Loose dogs: Dog Warden.**

Illustration - details vary by device, plan, and provider. Always check your own setup.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.