

**AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 2 THE ARLINGTON COUNTY CODE TO  
INCLUDE PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION, KEEPING AND PERMITTING  
OF POISONOUS OR DANGEROUS REPTILES IN ARLINGTON COUNTY  
EFFECTIVE 60 DAYS AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE ORDINANCE.**

**BE IT ORDAINED** that Chapter 2 of the Arlington County Code is amended, reenacted and recodified as follows:

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**ARTICLE V.**

**REPTILES**

**§ 2-18. Definitions.**

The following words or phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them in this section:

*Reptile* shall include all species of reptiles.

*Poisonous or dangerous reptiles* shall refer to any reptile, including snakes, which is either venomous or dangerous to a human being.

~~Running~~ *To be at large* shall mean refer to any reptile as defined in this section, which, through any method of movement, is off the property of its owner or custodian and or not under its owner's or custodian's immediate control, whether it has escaped accidentally or been purposefully released.

**§ 2-19. Keeping and handling of reptiles**

**(a)** No person shall keep, or permit to be kept, any poisonous or dangerous reptile, as defined in § 2.18, for any purpose, except that this prohibition shall not apply to zoological or educational animal exhibitions, circuses, wildlife rehabilitators, animal shelters or veterinary clinics which are properly licensed by the Federal Government or the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**(b)** Poisonous or dangerous reptiles lawfully kept for the purposes stated herein shall not be allowed by their owner or custodian to be at large or to be exhibited or displayed in such a manner that persons other than their handlers can pet, fondle, or otherwise come in direct physical contact with such reptiles.

(c) It shall be unlawful for the owner or keeper of any reptile to keep any such reptile in any manner that will not sufficiently confine any such reptile as to prevent its escape or to knowingly permit such reptile to run at large.

(d) Any poisonous or dangerous reptile found to be at large shall be captured and confiscated by the animal warden and the owner of that reptile shall be required to pay a fee, to be determined by the animal warden, which covers the county's actual cost in locating and capturing or otherwise disposing of the reptile.

(e) It shall be unlawful for any person to purposely release a poisonous or dangerous reptile into the community.

**~~§ 2-20. Handling or using reptiles so as to endanger human life or health. Penalty.~~**

~~It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to display, exhibit, handle, or use any poisonous or dangerous reptile in such a manner as to endanger the life or health of any person.~~

Any person violating any of the provisions of this article, except § 2-19(e) shall be deemed guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor. Each day a violation of this article shall continue constitutes a separate offense; and for each poisonous or dangerous reptile kept, a separate offense shall arise. Any person convicted of violating § 2-19(e) this Article or who commits a subsequent violation of any other section of this Article shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

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