

the fairness of the award of damages in each instance. The county commissioners shall not change an award unless they have personal knowledge of its unfairness, or shall receive competent testimony to the effect that the award is in excess of a fair commercial valuation of the sheep, poultry or livestock injured or destroyed by dogs. (c) If the owner of the dog or dogs doing the damage be known, it is the duty of the county commissioners to notify the owner or owners to kill the dog or dogs immediately. [If the dog or dogs be killed by the owner, after notice as aforesaid, he shall be exempt from all further liability.] If the owner or owners refuse or neglect to kill the dog or dogs upon notice as aforesaid, the owner or owners shall be liable [to the county commissioners] for the damages to the same extent as he would be liable in case of negligence or malicious destruction of property. The county commissioners may in their discretion have special officers kill the dog or dogs. (d) In Howard and Montgomery counties, the county council shall prescribe by law the manner in which the powers, duties and responsibilities placed within its jurisdiction and control by this section shall be exercised. (e) In Washington County no payments shall be made under this section unless the occurrence is reported to a sheriff or any deputy sheriff, in order to have appraisers appointed, within 48 hours of the damage complained of, and unless the appraisers file their report with the County Commissioners of Washington County within 15 days after their appointment. (f) In Washington County, the appraisers to be appointed as provided by this section may also be appointed by the sheriff, or any deputy sheriff of the county. (g) In Kent County, the application to the sheriff shall be made within thirty days after the occurrence of the injury or destruction. (h) In Somerset and Dorchester counties, this section does not apply. (i) In Frederick County, the board of county commissioners shall prescribe by ordinance or resolution the manner in which the powers, duties, and responsibilities placed within its jurisdiction and control by this section shall be exercised.

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(d) The executive director shall employ investigators and inspectors whose positions shall be within the merit system established by Article 64A of this Code and may, if a particular case warrants, contract for the services of experts. The investigators, inspectors, or contractual experts shall investigate only home improvement complaints. The Attorney General of Maryland may appoint a qualified attorney-at-law who shall serve at the pleasure of the Attorney General to represent the Commission.

314.

Licenses shall expire on the thirtieth day of September next following their issuance or renewal and shall become