

Being a responsible dog owner

20-PR00-167



Find out more: phone 09 301 0101
or visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

1. Introduction

Auckland Council has created this booklet to help you understand the Dog Control Act 1996 and other dog control bylaws, and to help you to obtain a Responsible Dog Owner Licence (RDOL).

Dogs are great companions. Dog ownership is a lifestyle choice many of us make. The rewards come with some responsibilities: to other people, their animals, and their property – and to the dog.

Dog owners who act responsibly and care for their dog so it is happy, healthy and does not cause problems for others are recognised and rewarded with an RDOL. This licence means you can receive a discount on your annual dog registration fee.

Your dog is a social animal with instincts that need to be managed. How your dog behaves is usually related to the training and control you have over it.

We hope this booklet will inform and help you in being a responsible dog owner.

For comments on animal management please contact:

dogregistration@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

2. Responsible Dog Owner Licence requirements

To obtain a Responsible Dog Owner Licence from Auckland Council you need to be able to meet the requirements listed below.

- You must have been a registered dog owner in NZ for at least 12 months before you apply.
- Your dog must be registered.
- You must not have had any abatements, seizures or infringements under the Dog Control Act 1996 during the 12 months before you apply.

- Your dog must not have received a proven complaint or been impounded under the Dog Control Act 1996 during the 12 months before you apply.
- You must pass a basic written test to check your dog owning knowledge.
- The property where your dog will be kept should be suitable for your dog, be kept clean and tidy.

Your property must have:

- a fully-fenced area to contain your dog (not necessarily a fully fenced garden/yard)
- a secure entrance with a gate
- shade and shelter for your dog, and fresh water.

Note: a sonic barrier is not a good enough barrier for your dog.



3. Dog owner obligations

Under the Dog Control Act 1996 as a dog owner you need to:

- register your dog
- advise the council of changes of address or a change of owner for your dog within 14 days
- keep your dog under control at all times
- give your dog proper care and attention, provide it with enough food, water and shelter
- make sure your dog has enough exercise
- make sure your dog is not a nuisance to others
- make sure your dog does not injure, endanger, intimidate or upset people
- make sure your dog does not injure, endanger or frighten stock, poultry, domestic animals or protected wildlife
- make sure your dog does not damage other people's property
- comply with the Dog Control Act 1996 and the regulations and bylaws made under it.

4. Dog registration

- All dogs must be registered. It is your responsibility as a dog owner.
- The dog registration year runs from 1 July to 30 June.
- Your dog must be registered before it reaches three months of age.
- Dogs older than three months must be registered immediately.
- Your dog must wear its registration tag.
- Tell us if the address where your dog is mainly kept changes.
- Tell us if your dog's owner changes.
- You can be the registered owner of a dog from age 16.
- Your puppy needs to be microchipped after its first registration.

If you don't register your dog on time you will need to pay a late payment fee and could receive an infringement fine of \$300. Your dog could also be impounded. You will also lose your Responsible Dog Owner Licence.



5. Microchipping your dog

Microchipping your dog helps with reuniting you and your dog if it goes missing. It also helps our animal management officers to identify roaming dogs and find their owners.

Microchipping also helps Animal Management to keep track of dangerous or menacing dogs as they move around the country.

Which dogs need to be microchipped?

- All dogs registered for the first time in New Zealand after 1 July 2006.
- Any dog never registered in New Zealand.
- Any unregistered and impounded dog.
- Any registered dog impounded twice since 1 July 2006.
- Any dog classified as dangerous or menacing after 1 December 2003.

Working dogs kept mainly for herding or driving stock are exempt from microchipping.

Note: Registration and microchipping are two different processes. Dogs need to be registered each year by 1 July but only microchipped once.

You can be fined \$300 for not microchipping your dog.

When your dog has been microchipped, you need to send a copy of the microchip certificate to us.

If your dog is found, the microchip contains a number identifying your dog and your contact details (please remember to keep your details updated).

6. Control of your dog

In public places

Auckland has many reserves and open spaces for exercising and recreation for you and your dog.

Your dog can be exercised off leash in these areas as long as it is kept under control.

Areas not suitable for dogs

Some areas of Auckland are not suitable for dogs. These are often areas where wildlife needs special protection. Please see the Dog Management Policy and Bylaw on our website for more information.



7. Control of dogs on the dog owner's property

When your dog is on your property, you must make sure either:

- (a) it is under the direct control of a person over 16 years of age or
- (b) it is confined in a way it can't freely leave the property.

Section (b) means your dog is controlled by a fence, pen, cage, chain or something similar and not just a sonic barrier.

If your dog can freely leave your property, it can be seized and removed and/or you may receive a fine of \$200.

Remember, your dog must be kept under control at all times. Dogs wandering in the community cause problems for others by acting aggressively, fouling and ripping open rubbish bags. These kind of behaviours from your dog could mean you receive a fine. Wandering dogs may also be hit by vehicles or cause accidents.

If your dog is aggressive towards people it may be because of:

- previous experiences your dog has had
- the situation at the time
- the way the person is behaving
- if your dog feels they or you are under threat.

Most problems can be solved if your dog is kept under control.

8. Barking and howling

Most people accept a dog will bark sometimes. It is different if a dog barks, howls or whines for long periods and causes a nuisance.

We receive a large number of dog barking complaints.

There are many reasons why your dog may bark including:

- boredom
- loneliness (separation anxiety)

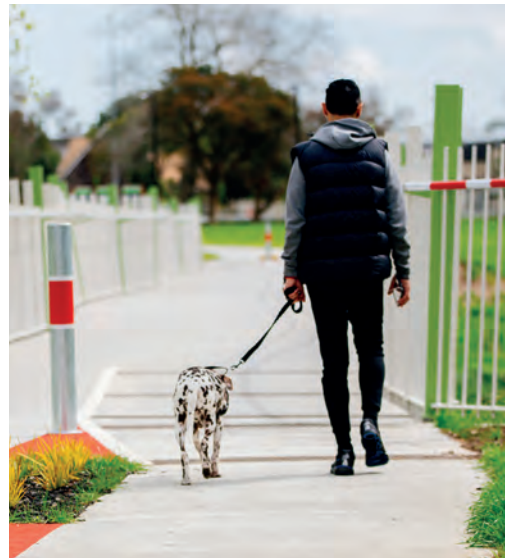
- territorial behaviour
- pain
- hunger.

It is important you spend time with your dog and try to work out the things that cause it to bark. Dog owners often don't realise the effect their barking dog has on neighbours as barking usually happens when they are not home.

One way to prevent barking problems is not to leave your dog on its own for too long. Dogs are social animals and need to live in groups in order to feel safe and secure. If you go away on holiday, make sure your dog is either put into a good boarding kennel or looked after by friends who will care for it as if it were their own.

Some ways to reduce barking:

- give your dog toys, balls or bones to play with
- make sure you exercise your dog daily
- make sure your dog is comfortable
- make sure your dog can't see things to bark at
- keep your dog occupied.



9. De-sexing your dog

Our advice is to have your dog de-sexed. De-sexing female dogs will prevent unwanted puppies and problems caused by female dogs in season.

A de-sexed male dog is unlikely to roam. De-sexing may also stop your male dog from urinating in the house and will make him less aggressive and better behaved.

De-sexing is carried out by a vet while your dog is under anaesthetic.

Usually, you will be able to take your dog home the same day and then take it back after around 10 days to have the stitches removed. The cost of de-sexing varies between vets. Some charities offer discounts for de-sexing.

The one-off cost of de-sexing your dog will be money well spent over the life of your dog.

Note: If you have a good reason not to de-sex your female dog you should make sure she is kept secured when she is in season.

10. Exercise

All dogs need regular exercise. Walking or running with your dog is a great way for both of you to keep fit and gives your dog an opportunity to socialise with other dogs and people.

Auckland has a large coastline, wonderful beaches and many parks and reserves. Many of these allow you to exercise your dog off-leash.

Visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/dogwalking for full details of the on and off leash areas near you and the times they are available.



11. Your dog's health and veterinary care

Vets can provide advice on flea and worm treatments for your dog along with suggestions for a healthy diet.

All dogs should visit a vet at least once a year for their vaccinations and a health check. Regular vet visits allow for early detection and treatment of health problems that could be serious or life threatening.

There are many serious, sometimes fatal diseases that can be prevented by regular vaccinations. Vaccinations are used to prevent disease. They can't help your dog once it is sick.

Some vaccines will now protect dogs against parvovirus, distemper and infectious hepatitis for up to two years. For full details please check with your vet.

Dog diseases include:

Canine parvovirus

This is very contagious for dogs and is often fatal, particularly in puppies.

Distemper

A virus affecting the brain and nervous system. Dogs may initially have a cough and then suffer fits.

Hepatitis

A viral disease which damages the liver and can quickly become fatal. Signs include fever and abdominal pain.

Kennel cough

A very contagious persistent hacking cough often linked with close contact with other dogs.



Follow these three easy steps to keep your dog healthy:

- have your dog fully vaccinated as a puppy and then follow up with annual health checks and vaccinations as needed
- feed your dog a good diet, keep your dog lean rather than overweight
- treat your dog for worms and fleas.

Diet

You can stop your dog from becoming overweight by reducing its food portions and increasing its exercise. Talk to your vet if you think your dog is overweight.

Puppies

Feed your puppy three times a day from six to 12 weeks, then twice a day until it is six to seven months old. Some foods may provide a complete balanced diet for your puppy.

Adult dogs

From six to seven months your dog can be fed once a day. Adult dog diets vary from dried dog biscuits, tinned food to dog sausage. Meat and household food scraps can be fed to your dog but should not be more than a quarter of its diet. Your local vet staff are trained in dog nutrition and can help make recommendations for your dog.

Older dogs may have special nutritional needs and, again, your vet can provide helpful tips.

Please remember your dog is not allowed to eat any raw offal (like liver, kidney and similar organ meat).

Worming

Puppies are born with roundworms. These worms may cause diarrhoea and stop your pup from gaining the weight it should. Treat your puppy for roundworm every month until it is six months. There are many good products on the market to control worms. Your vet can also help here with advice.

Fleas

It is recommended you de-flea your dog when you treat it for tapeworms. The flea carries the main tapeworm in dogs and the dog is infected by eating the flea. It is important to regularly dose your dog for worms. Worms can be passed from animals to humans so it is very important to teach children to wash their hands after playing with a dog.

Kenel/housing

Whether you decide to keep your dog inside or out you should make sure it is included in the family pack. As we mentioned before, dogs are social animals and need to live in groups to make them feel safe and secure.

If you do decide to keep your dog outside you should make sure its kennel/housing is:

- draught-free, on a hard surface and easy to clean
- gets some sun so your dog is warm
- kept clean
- has good drainage.

12 Fencing tips for your dog

Fencing of dogs information can be found on our website aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/dogs under 'Looking after your dog'.

