

Rights and obligations of pet owners

Learn regarding some of the most important pet ownership laws as owning a pet entails a significant amount of responsibility.

Obligations

Welfare

Animal owners have an obligation to care for and support the well-being of their pets and it's a criminal offence to fail to meet their needs. Pets must have a suitable diet and living environment, be able to evince their natural behaviours and be shielded from discomfort, distress, wound, and illness, to name a few things.

Docking a dog's tail is unlawful unless it is done for medical reasons, it is destined to be a working dog or is under the age of five days. Regardless, only a licenced veterinarian can dock a dog's tail.

Dangerous Dogs

Pitbull Terriers, Japanese Tosas, Dogo Argentinos, and Fila Brazilieros are the four prohibited breeds that are illegal to own, produce, trade, disown, or give away.

If you possess any of these dogs then the jury can order to put down your dog unless they are confident that you are a suitable owner and your dog doesn't present a threat to the general public. In this case, the dog will be able to live with you under strict conditions such as neutering, microchipping, tattooing with a unique identity, third-party insurance, and registration on the Index of Exempted Dogs. Your dog must be restrained and kept on a leash.

Failure to follow these strict requirements could result in your dog being taken away and prosecuted.

Dangerously out of control

If your dog injures someone or makes someone worried it could harm them, then it is considered dangerously out of control. If your dog is dangerously out of control anywhere, you could be fined or sentenced to jail for up to 6 months, or both, and you

could be barred from owning a dog in the future. Your dog could even be put down. You may be charged with "malicious wounding" and sentenced to up to 5 years in jail if you intentionally use your dog to hurt others.

Environmental Protections

With certain exceptions, such as forest or land used for animal grazing, you must clean up after your dog in public. To avoid dog fouling, local authorities may issue Public Space Protection Orders which prompt the owners to wash up after their dogs or bring bags with them always. Owners can be given a fixed compensation notice and charged if they violate the law.

Nuisance

A nuisance can be described as a dog barking for an extended period of time or a cat's noise, odour, dust, and other types of pollution.

If the Council receives a complaint, they may investigate the noise as a possible statutory nuisance. If the noise is determined to be a statutory nuisance, the Council can issue a Noise Abatement Notice, which the dog owner has 21 days to plea. If the barking persists, the dog owner could be charged, and if found guilty, the perpetrator may face an unlimited fine as well as a Criminal Behaviour Order from the court.

Mandatory microchipping

All dogs and puppies over the age of eight weeks in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland must be microchipped as of April 2016, and the owner's information must be reported on one of the approved databases. Microchipping for cats is also being considered by the government. When in a public, even though it is microchipped, it must wear an appropriate collar and tag with the owner's information.

Owners who fail to register and microchip their dog may face a fine unless a veterinarian believes there is a valid medical reason not to microchip the pet.

Rights

Buying a pet

To purchase a pet, you must be at least 16 years old, and adults are responsible for their children's pets. Consider the Consumer Rights Act when purchasing a pet from a business seller, though you have fewer rights when purchasing from a private seller. You must have a valid payment receipt, accurate information, and a complete picture of the animal's health and history. You must have a written record about your pet, which includes email confirmation of facts, a signed puppy contract, or a commercial document from a pet store.

If your dog is attacked by another one

If another dog attacks your dog, the incident may be reported to the police.

You may take the owner to court under the "dangerously out of control" legislation, and the court will have to decide whether or not an offence was committed based on the circumstances surrounding the incident. You might also be able to get reimbursed for any veterinary bills incurred as a result of the attack. It's important to remember that filing a lawsuit in court can be a lengthy and costly process, and the result will be determined by the facts you can bring.

Disputes about pets

Dogs are referred to as "chattels," and in the case of a conflict over ownership, the courts may make a decision based on who bought the dog, whose name is registered on the microchip database or insurance policy, and who mostly looks after the dog and thus issue a declaration stating who the true owner is, as well as an order for the dog's return and damages.

It's becoming more popular for partners to create 'Pet-nup Agreements,' which spell out what should happen to the pet in the event of a divorce or breakup.

Animal Boarding

Anyone managing an organisation, whether a private residence or not, where a business operates for providing accommodation for other people's cats and dogs is required to obtain a licence under the Animal Boarding Establishments Act of 1963.

Can I take my pet to work?

Pets are normally allowed to accompany their owners to work as long as no rules are violated. There are no general laws prohibiting employees from bringing their pets to work, but it depends on the workstation.

It is generally up to the employer to determine if a pet should be brought into the workplace, and employers are not required to accept pets in the workplace. Pets can distract employees and result in decreased productivity, in addition to posing a health and safety risk.