

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER

KEEPING YOUR PET HEALTHY

Register your dog with your local vet

Don't wait for an emergency. Details will be in the Yellow Pages.

For additional information or advice on the following, consult your vet or pharmacist.

Vaccinations and worming

Every dog should be protected against potentially fatal diseases.

- First vaccinations are given at about eight weeks. Puppies should not be allowed on the street or mix with other animals until your vet advises.
- Always keep your dog's vaccination certificates. You may need them in the future.
- Regular booster vaccinations are necessary, at least once a year.
- Roundworms and tapeworms (intestinal parasites) can affect dogs at any age, so they should be treated regularly for worms. Worms can cause sickness and diarrhoea in young animals but adult dogs may show no signs. Worming is easy, effective and costs little using a worming preparation obtained from your pharmacist, vet or petshop. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

Adult dogs should be wormed at least every 6 months. Pregnant dogs and dogs with young puppies should be wormed more frequently. It is essential that puppies are wormed when they are about 2 weeks old and then treated at regular intervals until they are at least 6 months old. Always seek veterinary advice before worming your cub.

Grooming

It is important to keep your dog clean by grooming at least once a week and bathing sporadically. Start at puppy stage so it becomes a pleasure not a chore.

Fleas

If your dog gets fleas treat him with a reliable spray, dusting powder, or wash. Also clean the areas your dog uses and sleeps in.

Neutering

Unless you are sure you want your dogs to have puppies and you can find good homes for them, you should have her spayed. Your vet will also be able to give you details on hormonal control of seasons. Ask your vet about whether your dog should be neutered.

DOGS AND THE LAW

Dog owners and non-dog owners have the right to live side-by-side. There are, however, several rules which should be followed. Most are straightforward and many are concerned with safeguarding the environment - for the benefit of everybody.

All dogs must wear a collar and clearly-displayed tag

The tag must bear the name and address of the dog's owner.

Local Dog control measures

Local authorities are empowered to make local rules known as bye-laws. Bye-laws have the force of law and create criminal offences. Dog control bye-laws can require Dogs to be held on leads in certain areas and indeed ban dogs altogether from other more sensitive areas. In England and Wales bye-laws can also require you to clean up after your dog. In Scotland it is already an offence to allow your dog to foul in a public place. This offence is punishable by a fine.

Countryside code

The main countryside rule is - DOGS MUST NEVER WORRY LIVESTOCK. Even letting your dog walk in the same field as farm animals may be considered as "worrying". Remember the farmer is entitled to kill your dog if it is worrying livestock.

Dangerous Dogs

Dogs bred for fighting, such as pit bull terriers, the Japanese tosa, the Dogo Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro must be kept on a lead by someone who is sixteen or over and must be muzzled in public. No-one may keep these breeds without registering them with the police.

Stray Dogs

You must keep your dog under control at all times. Make sure you know the telephone number for your local authority so that you can contact the Dog Warden if your dog goes missing. The local authority has the responsibility to collect strays and will charge you for kennelling a dog, so act quickly to ensure you aren't put to unnecessary expense. If a dog is not claimed within seven days the authority has the right to find him a new home, or destroy him.

Going on holiday. When you give your dog to the person who will be caring for him while you are away, make sure you also give them the number of your local authority in case he strays.

Penalties

Penalties for breaking dog rules can be tough and in extreme cases may allow for the destruction of the dog. The courts and police have a range of powers to deal with

offenders. For example, owners who allow their dogs to get dangerously out of control - can be imprisoned for up to two years and/or fined.

For more information

Contact your local Dog Warden at your local council office or call the Pet Advisory Committee.

WHAT ALL DOG OWNERS SHOULD KNOW

Owning a dog brings great happiness but is also a lifelong responsibility to the dog. You will need to care for him properly and responsibly including staying within the law. This information gives some essential tips to current and prospective dog owners.

DECIDING TO GET A DOG

Before getting a dog, consider the following:

Lifestyle

Do you have the time, suitable accommodation and willingness to care properly for a dog?

Environment

Are there suitable facilities near you to exercise a dog?

Budget

Dogs need a nutritionally balanced diet and will have to visit the vet for vaccinations and possible emergencies. Do you need additional insurance to cover vet bills or in case your pet causes an accident or damage to property? Can you budget cope with these costs?

TRAINING

A well trained dog is a happy dog and, he will not be a nuisance to others if he's under control. You must never allow your dog to be dangerously out of control he must not injure any one or frighten anyone into thinking that they might be injured, it is an offence to let your dog behave in this way.

When do I start?

Preferably while he's still a puppy. It's never too late to train but an older dog may need professional help from a dog training class. The Kennel Club can supply a list of clubs or look in your local newspaper or ask at your vet or library.

How do I start?

The basic first lessons are:

- walk beside you on and off the lead "heel"
- stay when told "sit and stay"
- come when called "come"
- toilet training "clean" or "busy"

Corrections and rewards

Dogs learn by linking actions and results so if you praise your dog immediately after he does something well, he'll learn to repeat it to get the same result.

TOILET TRAINING

Dog owners should not allow their pets to foul indiscriminately in public areas (see 'Dogs and the Law'). Toilet training at cub stage is therefore vital. If, however, your dog should foul in a public place, be prepared to use a "poop-scoop" to clean up the mess.

- **How to start:** A cub goes to the toilet very frequently so begin by putting him outside in a suitable spot as soon as he seems to want to go. Keep repeating this and praise him when he finishes his business in the right place.
- **Regular Times:** Build up regular times to take him out - in the morning, after a meal and at night.
- **Going on Command:** Once your puppy can use the garden, you need to train him to go on command there so he won't foul in undesirable places.
- Use a command word such as "clean" or "busy" just as he is about to go to the toilet. Always use the same tone of voice and praise him when he has finished.
- Ideally your Dog should be trained to "go at home", but when out in public places, remember to take a "poop-scoop" and clean up after your dog. Many local authorities make these available and provide disposal bins in special dog walking areas.

Your council is responsible for keeping public places clean, which means that any mess not cleared by dog owners becomes a cost to the community.

12 BASIC TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

- **Train your dog in elementary obedience.**
- **Feed your dog at regular times and with a nutritionally balanced diet.**
- **Feed your dog from his own dish.**

- **Keep your dog on a lead anywhere near a road, or where there are other animals.**
- **Train your dog not to foul in public places - if it does, "Scoop the Poop"!**
- **Remember your dog's bark can be a nuisance.**
- **Provide your dog with his own bed.**
- **Never take your dog into a food shop - always tie its lead to a post.**
- **Keep your dog clean and regularly groomed.**
- **If you do not want your dog to have cubs, obtain advice from your vet.**
- **Make sure someone is caring for your dog when you go on holiday and that he knows the local dog warden's telephone number.**
- **Register your pet with a vet of your choice.**