



**If you require advice or further
information, please contact**

Dog Warden Service
Environmental Health Department
Tel: 028 9448 1304

a guide to
**responsible
dog ownership**





a guide to **responsi**

CONTENTS

- page 2** Fouling
- page 4-5** Licensing Regulations
- page 6** Stray Dogs
- page 7-8** Barking
- page 9-10** Tips for Caring for your Dog
- page 12** Neutering
- page 13-14** Toxocara – The Facts
- page 15-16** Attacks on Livestock
- page 17** Keep your Dog Under Control
- page 18-22** Aggression



FOULING

Are you fed up with dog mess on the street? How many times have you walked in it? How many times have you complained to friends, family or local authorities? The situation doesn't improve.

Under the Litter Order (N.I.) 1994, it is illegal for anyone in charge of a dog not to clean up after the animal. All dog faeces must be removed from public places.

Dog fouling is a complex and emotive issue. Look in any local newspaper and you will see a catalogue of complaints. Many will direct their wrath at local councils for not promptly removing the mess – rather than at the root cause of the problem; irresponsible dog owners who show every contempt for their environment and neighbours. Ironically, those who profess to be offended by dog fouling are often the offenders.

Punishment

Like any crime, dog fouling is punishable. If detected, allowing your dog to defecate without cleaning-up, the owner (or the person in charge of the dog at the time) may face an on-the-spot fine of £50. The owner (or person in charge of the dog) is given the choice of paying it or going to court. If taken to court and found to be guilty of the offence the owner could then be subject to a maximum penalty of £500 plus court costs.

Council Action

Councils are forced to clean-up dog waste as a necessary measure in protecting the local community from the dangers of infected dog faeces.



a guide to **responsi**

KEEP YOUR DISTRICT CLEAN!

Every year, it is estimated that many millions of pounds is spent by local councils on street cleansing. Taxpayers' money could be better directed if a small minority of dog owners stopped to pick up their mess. Owners should automatically bring a poop-scoop or a disposable plastic bag with them before leaving home with their dog.

At present local councils are keen to deter offenders and some councils have employed the following action:

- Extra wardens for patrol at peak times – the early mornings, evenings and weekends when owners are most active with their dogs
- Increase in the number of dog bins in public areas
- Borough wardens visiting schools and libraries, educating children and adults on the importance of dog care and control
- Special machines for removing dog mess

Don't give dogs a bad name.
Clean up after your dog!



LICENSING REGULATIONS



Where can you obtain a dog licence?

You can obtain a dog licence application at Antrim Civic Centre, 50 Stiles Way Antrim, BT41 2UB or www.antrim.gov.uk (or in some cases at your local post office).

How much does it cost?

The cost of a dog licence is £5 or if you have more than three dogs and you meet certain criteria you may apply for a block licence costing £12.50. A breeder's licence is also available for breeding establishments. For anyone over the age of 65 and living alone, there is a concessionary rate of £2.50 for the first dog licence and the normal price of licence for a second dog.

What are the benefits?

1. A dog's licence offers some proof of ownership. Under the Dogs Order (NI), it is a legal requirement that anyone in possession of a dog must hold a valid licence. As details of dog owner and dog are officially registered with the local council, each owner who registers his or her dog with their local council is issued with a licence and licence disc which bears the dog's very own personal identification number.
2. Many stray dogs are impounded by council Dog Wardens. Those dogs wearing a valid licence identification disc are more likely to be reunited with their rightful owner. The identification number on the licence disc enables the Dog Warden to check the council's licensing records and trace and advise the owner of the dog's whereabouts, and prevent the dog from being rehomed or unnecessarily destroyed.

When are you required to license a dog?

Before taking possession of a dog or puppy, owners should ensure that they have already purchased a dog licence. If a puppy stays with its mother it must have a licence by the age of six months.



a guide to responsi

If your dog dies and you have a valid licence for it, it is possible to transfer the licence should you gain another dog (certain time restrictions apply).

Is a dog licence transferable from one person to another?

No.

Value for money?

The dog licence was introduced in 1983 costing £5. Against other indices of inflation the dog licence today must be seen as exceptional value. Against the rate of inflation the licence should have risen to the amount of £20 per dog and it has been argued that the dog licence fee should be increased because:

1. The dog warden service should be paid for by the dog owners licence fee rather than subsidised by non-dog owners in their rates bill.
2. The licence would be taken more seriously by people who regard £5 as insignificant and as such, not worth bothering about.
3. People would take dog ownership more seriously if it cost them £20 to own a dog and would deter individuals from obtaining a large number of dogs which they cannot afford to keep in the first place.

Additional means of identification

Microchipping and tattooing gives owners added peace of mind, that if lost, their dogs can be traced back to them. Microchipping is a veterinary procedure in which a computerised capsule, the size of a grain of rice containing the dog's medical history and owner details, is injected under the dog's skin. The microchip stays in place for an average of 25 years, longer than a dog's lifespan.



STRAY DOGS

Dog Wardens will patrol areas where dogs have been reported to be regularly out unattended. S/he will also, if provided with the name and address of an offender, visit and discuss the matter with the dog owner. If a dog is caught and has a licence disc every attempt will be made to return the dog home or notify the owner.

If a dog is caught without identification it will be seized and kennelled, a fee will be charged to reclaim the dog. At present, all dogs seized will be taken to the Council Kennels, the number for which can be obtained by phoning 028 9448 1304. Any fee must be paid to the kennel before the dog is released to its owner.

If the dog is unclaimed after seven days, all attempts will be made to rehome it. Failing that, the dog will be humanly destroyed.

Please be aware that under the NI Dogs Order 1983 Article 22, that by allowing your dog to stray you are committing an offence.





a guide to **responsi**

BARKING

Your dog's barking has got out of hand and you think you know why:

- A – It is bored
- B – It is guarding its territory
- C – It misses you
- D – You inadvertently reinforce the barking
- E – It hears strange noises
- F – It is afraid
- G – It gets easily excited or is highly strung
- H – It is in the habit of barking
- I – It just loves to bark

Dogs bark for all of the above reasons and if you have a nuisance barker on your hands, you should first determine why. Dogs that bark incessantly in the yard could be bored. Owners should try to relieve the dog's boredom by:

1. Taking it for regular walks
2. Providing chew toys and bones
3. Change the position of the dog's kennel etc

Some suggest that because dogs are essentially sociable animals they should be given companionship but often another dog will only add to the barking problem. Dogs in confined spaces may bark more than if they were in wide, open spaces.

If your dog barks as a result of separation anxiety (if it suffers when separated from the owner) then consider:

1. Leaving the radio or television on when you're away to distract the dog.
2. Provide it with mirrors so it can watch itself play
3. Ensure it has access to a busy view of the outside world via a window or patio
4. Supply it with interesting bones and chews

Tackling the problem

If your dog loves to bark then consider correcting it when it barks inappropriately:

- Spraying your dog with water from a spray bottle or squirt gun, shaking a can of pennies or immediately reprimanding your dog with a sharp vocal command "NO!" are good ways to treat the problem. You can also reward the dog every time it obeys your "NO!" command.
- Train dogs when puppies – if they are never allowed to bark freely, they'll never know it's an option.
- Teach your dog to bark and be quiet on command. This may seem counterproductive but because the dog is aware of its bark, it is less inclined to use it excessively.
- If a dog constantly barks to gain your attention – ignore him. Eventually, he will tire and be quiet. At this point, reward the dog for his quietness. The dog will catch on that barking is "bad".

ARE SOME BREEDS WORSE BARKERS THAN OTHERS?

Some dog breeds, due to the role to which they were developed, have bigger barks than others. Terriers, including Yorkshire, Cairn or Fox Terriers, herding dogs and scent and sight hounds have a strong bark.

HELP!

Many dogs drive their owners and neighbours to despair, so much so that the owners feel they have no choice but to hand their beloved pets into local pounds, animal shelters or USPCA quarters. Quiet perseverance does pay off. If your dog does not respond to your attempts to quieten it, then contact your local vet who will put you in contact with an animal behaviourist.





a guide to **responsi**

TIPS FOR CARING FOR YOUR DOG

Every animal has five basic rights which must be upheld by its owner.

1. **Freedom of movement**

Dogs should not be curtailed for prolonged periods of time in their kennel, outhouse or chained up at the bottom of the garden.

2. **Water / Food**

Dogs should have constant access to clean, fresh water. Dogs should be fed at least twice per day. Puppies should be fed three to four times per day until they are six months old. Petfood manufacturers now produce breed-specific formulae which have a certain balance of protein and vitamins for that breed. eg. working dogs such as Siberian Huskies, Greyhounds or Border Collies require higher levels of protein than an average pet. Check dog food packaging for more details.

3. **Shelter**

Dogs should have a clean, draught free building or kennel which protects them from the elements. Kennels should be cleaned out every other day to ensure the dog's continued good health.

4. **Exercise**

Depending on the breed, dogs should receive anywhere between 30 minutes to one hour's exercise every day.

5. **Psychological freedom**

Like humans, dogs become stressed if unable to express their frustration. A stressed dog behaves in a way that will attract human attention. Barking, biting and chewing furniture, chasing, digging and forgetting its house training are all behavioural signs that the dog is not at ease with its environment.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Grooming

Depending on the breed, some dogs will require regular grooming. It is advised that dogs be brought to a professional groomer if they have long, difficult coats. In summer, be on the lookout for fleas and ticks on your dog's scalp.

Insurance

Insuring a dog will cover owners against third party liability; should your dog damage property or individuals the insurance company will be liable for damages. Insurance also covers the prohibitive costs of some veterinary treatment and surgery. Always check the individual policy beforehand. Please note: routine treatment like spaying and neutering, and treatment during pregnancy are not included in most policies. Consult your vet for more advice.

Neutering

Neutering prevents the misery of unwanted litters and promotes the health and well-being of your pet.





a guide to **responsi**

Vaccinations

Five serious infectious diseases threaten a dog throughout its life time: canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, canine parvovirus infection and two forms of leptospirosis. Prevention by vaccination is therefore important (a combined vaccination giving full protection against all five diseases is normally advised) and must be started in puppyhood and maintained by annual booster doses throughout the animal's life.

Older dogs that are rehomed from a shelter are normally vaccinated and the new owner will receive a certificate of vaccination. Vets normally advise that older dogs with no vaccination history do have a complete primary course followed by annual boosters.

Cars are death traps

Never leave your dog in a car in warm weather. A dog is incapable of dealing with high temperatures inside a car and will quickly suffer from heatstroke and eventually heart failure. Even parking in the shade is risky – the sun could move directly overhead.

When travelling, always ensure your pet is safely contained in a travel harness or kept in a travelling crate strapped into the back seat. Any dog allowed to wander loose in the back of the car is lethal baggage because in an accident a dog will hurtle forward, torpedo-like, often maiming itself and the driver, as well as proving a danger if ejected through the windscreen.

NEUTERING

Neutering is the process by which pets are surgically prevented from reproducing. In the case of males, the operation involved is termed castration; in females, it is called spaying. A dog can be castrated at any age but it is generally thought best to wait until he is physically mature before doing so. (This can vary from 6 months to 1.5 years depending on breed; smaller breeds mature much quicker). In bitches, spaying is normally done after the first season.

Despite many myths on the subject, veterinary experts confirm that neutering has many life-affirming benefits for pets.

- Neutering does not cause fat pets: a dog's ability to metabolise its food will lessen – therefore it is necessary to feed smaller portions of food than before.
- It is not 'good' for a bitch to have at least one litter before being spayed – if anything, it is more risk to them during pregnancy than if they were spayed after the first season.
- Neutering does not change a dog's personality – although some unwanted behaviours may cease – such as excessive territory marking, straying away from home, destructiveness and mounting, in male dogs.
- Neutering reduces the risks of womb infections and false pregnancies in older female pets. It also saves them from mood swings during season.
- Neutering does not reduce the efficiency of a working dog – in fact, it frees them from hormonal changes and frustrations leaving them better able to concentrate on their work.

You can also get help with the cost of neutering. Contact the Council for further details.



a guide to **responsi**

TOXOCARA

THE FACTS

1. What is toxocara?

Toxocara canis is the common roundworm found in dogs. *Toxocara* eggs are passed in the faeces of infected dogs, sometimes contaminating children's hands as they play. If infected eggs are then swallowed, there is a slight possibility of an illness referred to as toxocariasis.

2. How common is toxocariasis?

Toxocariasis is very rare – there are approximately two cases annually of illness due to infection per million of the population. On the rare occasions when human infection occurs, it usually only causes mild, flu-like symptoms. *Toxocara* antibodies are present in fewer than 2 in 100 healthy adults in the UK who have previously been exposed to infection with no ill effects.

3. Can toxocariasis cause blindness?

Total blindness from *Toxocara* infection is exceptional. It is rare even for the sight of one eye to be totally lost, though vision can be impaired. However, even one case is too many. It is so simple and easy to prevent by regular worming of dogs and cats.

4. Are all dogs faeces infectious for toxocariasis?

Freshly passed faeces are not a *Toxocara* hazard. Any eggs in the faeces take two or three weeks to mature and require very specific conditions before becoming infectious.

5. What can I do to prevent anyone catching toxocariasis?

Toxocariasis is easily preventable. If you are a dog owner, make sure that you worm your dog regularly. A better alternative is to train a dog at an early stage to 'go' on command at home. Whatever the situation, always clear up the faeces after your dog with a poop-scoop and dispose of them properly. Children should be reminded to wash their hands after stroking a pet, before eating and especially if they've been playing outside.

ble dog ownership 13:14

6. I've moved to a new home where the previous owner had a dog. Can I treat the garden to kill any remaining Toxocara eggs?

Most responsible pet owners do worm regularly, so there shouldn't be a problem. However, simple hygiene measures should always be advised, for example, wearing gloves whilst gardening and teaching children to wash their hands after playing, before eating and if their hands are dirty. Many normal gardening activities will greatly lessen the chance of significant contamination i.e. by digging and turning the earth and the composting of grass clippings and other vegetable matter. In situations where contamination of soil has occurred, some eggs may remain infectious for up to three years, then simple hygiene measures should be followed to avoid potential risk.

7. I think my child may have eaten some dog faeces – what should I do?

There is very little risk of Toxocara infection, however, you are advised to take your child along to your doctor for advice and any appropriate treatment.

8. How often should I worm my dog/puppy?

It is important to worm pregnant or nursing bitches and especially young puppies, which are more likely to be handled by young children. Adult dogs should be wormed every three months to prevent infection. Puppies should be wormed from the age of 2 weeks, every 2 weeks, until the age of 12 weeks. Pregnant and lactating bitches also need frequent worming. Bitches should be wormed before mating, after the first 45 days of pregnancy, after giving birth and whilst weaning pups. Seek the advice of a health professional if you are in any doubt about the advisability of worming, the age that worming should be carried out and the dosages involved. As with any treatment, read the product label carefully.





a guide to responsi

ATTACKS ON LIVESTOCK

Sheep worrying is one of the most notorious and heinous crimes that a pet dog can commit. Sheep worrying and its rampant devastation will leave any dog owner numb. Could your dog, gentle and loyal, be capable of such cruel and vicious attacks?

Yes. Regardless of size, breed or temperament ALL dogs pose a potential danger to livestock. Regrettably, it is part of a dog's genetic make-up to chase moving things, making all manner of things indiscriminate targets of a chase. Factors predisposing dogs to worry livestock include boredom, lack of socialisation or attention seeking methods.

Under the Dogs Order (NI) 1983, as amended by the Dangerous Dogs NI Order 1991, it is against the law for dogs to chase or attack livestock.

What happens to the dog that has sheep-worried?

The law states;

1. Where it appears to a court that a dog has chased livestock in such a way as might reasonably have been expected to cause injury or suffering to the livestock or to result in financial loss to the owner of the livestock the court shall:
 - (a) Make an order directing the dog to be destroyed; or
 - (b) Make an order directing the dog to be kept confined in a building, shed, yard or other enclosure from which it cannot escape.

Farmers' rights

The law presently states that if a dog is found unaccompanied in a field with sheep, and without the landowner's consent, farmers are legally protected in shooting the dog on the spot. Likewise, if all reasonable attempts to restrain the dog have been taken the farmer is equally justified in shooting the dog.

Country Code of Practice

1. When near livestock, hens, horses, sheep or cattle, ensure your dog is always on a lead or tied up.
2. Never leave your dog unattended – as it only takes a matter of seconds for a fluffy sheep to whet his desire.
3. Familiarise your dog with livestock before visiting rural, animal-populated areas.
4. Train puppies at a young age (before 12 weeks of age) and allow them to socialise with other animal species to reduce the fascination and the tendency to chase later in life. Training in the six commands of basic obedience – stay, come, sit, heel, wait and down – will give you confidence that you will be able to control your dog.
5. Reward your dog with a pat on the head or a special treat when he reacts mutely to livestock. Eventually, the dog will recognise the link between the treat and good behaviour.
6. Remain relaxed and non-plussed when your dog becomes excited around livestock; otherwise the dog will use it as an attention seeking technique.
7. Be wary of your pet congregating with other dogs especially those roaming at will, as this encourages the resurgence of primitive instincts. A dog's evolutionary schooling is based on the pack structure – hunting, chasing, barking and travelling in groups. Thus, when a dog is with its own sort, it is more likely to return to 'old' habits.





a guide to **responsi**

KEEP YOUR DOG UNDER CONTROL

A happy dog is a well-trained dog. Dogs should be taught the basic commands of obedience: sit, down, heel, stay, come and leave. These commands will allow you and your dog to live in harmony and mutual respect.

As leader of the pack, humans should ensure they have certain privileges over their dog. If these rights are observed from an early age then owners will have a well-mannered, considerate dog.

1. Never let your dog share your bed. Dogs should be kept as far away from the bedroom as possible to indicate that it is the lowest ranking member of the pack.
2. As master you have the right to eat first and this will ensure the dog knows its place. Never feed a dog from the table or throw him scraps. Wait until the table is cleared then feed the dog.
3. Owners should win nearly all games of strength. Depending on the size of dog, owners should never let their dog consistently win play games. This confuses a dog.
4. Owners should go first through doorways and upstairs. Allowing your dog to push ahead is sending out the wrong message – that it is superior in ranking. Teach your dog to wait at doorways and reward him for his good behaviour.
5. As master, every owner has the right to refuse or demand attention from his or her dog. If a dog acts inappropriately to gain your attention, ignore him. Then demand the dog's attention when he is otherwise engaged as this indicates to the dog who is in control.

If you require information on training schools in your area, check Yellow Pages, contact your local dog warden or local vet who will be only too happy to advise you.

AGGRESSION

Every year thousands of people are attacked or bitten by dogs. The question remains what makes a dog bite?

In the wild, dogs use their teeth to determine who is the strongest and domestic dogs have not forgotten this primal instinct. Pet dogs will therefore bite as a method of demonstrating their dominance over other dogs, animals and humans.

In the wild, dogs live in packs, where one dog assumes leadership. Over centuries of domestication dogs have relied on us as "leader of the pack" and they have learned to serve us accordingly. A dog is happiest when it is serving but a dog's willingness to serve and in turn its happiness can deteriorate for various reasons – including lack of training, inappropriate training methods, spoilt indulgent lifestyle, lack of exercise, lack of social contact, general neglect, etc. This causes the dog to resort to its primitive instincts. It should also be remembered that some breeds are naturally more aggressive than others.

SIGNS OF AGGRESSION

Aggressive dogs will:

- Crouch and hug the ground
- Have a stiff facial expression
- Have flattened ears
- Show general stillness

HOW TO AVOID AGGRESSION IN YOUR DOG

- Select the correct breed for your disposition and purpose
- Select a female rather than a male – most aggressive dogs are male
- Large, male dogs can be castrated to reduce aggression. Following castration, there is a marked reduction in the dog's dominance and aggression. The dog is more ready to obey commands.
- Always ensure that puppies are socialised from an early age: regular interaction with other dogs, animals and humans, as well as introduction to a variety of environments will make the dog less fearful.



a guide to responsi

nervous and aggressive in later life when faced with uncertain situations. Puppies may also “inherit” fears from their mothers.

GENERAL ADVICE

- Don't approach a strange dog, especially one which is tied up or confined.
- Before you attempt to pet a dog, ask permission from the owner. Let the dog become familiar with you by first allowing him to see and sniff the back of your closed hand.
- Never leave children unsupervised with any dog, no matter how trustworthy.
- If a dog is not to be trusted with children or visitors to the home, then consider muzzling it. Modern muzzles allow free air passage and drinking, and do not frustrate the dog.

IF THREATENED BY A DOG

1. Stand still.
2. Don't scream.
3. Avoid eye contact with the attacking dog but don't lose sight of him either. Try to remain motionless.
4. Keep your hands reasonably high. Moving hands tend to be the first part of your body to be bitten.
5. If you have anything to hand, like a briefcase or shopping bag, use it to block the approach of the dog. If you are a cyclist, don't cycle harder because most dogs can outrun a cyclist. Jump off your bike and position your bicycle between you and the dog.
6. If you are knocked down, lie still, curl into a ball, and play dead – this is especially important for children.
7. If you are carrying food, use it to distract the dog.
8. If these things are not getting the dog away from you and you cannot see the owner at hand, then shout 'sit' because most dog owners have trained their dog to sit and many dogs will obey it automatically.
9. Don't ever turn your back on the dog and never, ever run. The dog's natural instinct is to chase and catch prey. Most dogs do not have the courage to confront someone who is still but they may have a bite of someone's backside if they are on the run.

Responsible dog ownership 19:20

The Dog Warden Service, provided by Antrim Borough Council, is designed to combat these problems and to promote responsible dog ownership. You may well have seen the Dog Wardens patrolling the streets and parks of the Borough. We also need the support of the Borough's residents and responsible dog owners to report to the Dog Wardens any problems caused by irresponsible dog owners.

THE DOG WARDEN SERVICE

The Dog Warden Service, based in the Environmental Services Department, is in the front line in the fight against irresponsible dog ownership.

The aims of the service are:-

- To encourage dog owners to clear up after their pets (Your Dog Warden can provide you with scoops for the collection and disposal of dog mess.)
- To ensure all dog owners have a current licence for their pets, as required by law
- To patrol streets and public places collecting stray dogs and responding to other dog related problems
- To educate today's youngsters to become tomorrow's responsible dog owners
- To raise public awareness about responsible dog ownership
- To provide an information and advisory service for the public, on dog related matters
- Where appropriate and where education and advice do not resolve problems, to take enforcement action

Over recent years, there has been increased public concern expressed, at both local and national level, about dog related problems. So, what are the problems and who is causing them?

FOULING

IRRESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS – allow their dogs to foul footpaths, grass verges, parks and children's play areas.



a guide to **responsi**

STRAYS

IRRESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS – allow their dogs to stray causing a danger to people, livestock and a hazard to motorists.

NOISE

IRRESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS – let their dogs bark unnecessarily causing annoyance to neighbours.

CONTROL

IRRESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS – do not keep their dogs under proper control when in public places.

Fortunately, many dog owners are responsible in caring for their pets and considerate to their neighbours. It is the irresponsible minority who cause such problems. So, what can we do to combat the problems associated with irresponsible dog ownership?

We would like to appeal to the public to supply us with information on any of the above. This can be given anonymously.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

EVERYONE – Children at play, pedestrians, motorists, dog owners and non-dog owners alike.

So follow the:-

ANTRIM CANINE CODE

Don't let your dog foul parks, pavements, children's play areas and public places. **CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG.** Better still, if you have a garden, train your dog to use it and clear it up straight away.

Ensure that your dog is licensed and wearing an owner identification tag. It is a legal requirement for owners to ensure that their dogs wear such tags.

Don't allow your dog to stray. Think of the dangers not only to the dog but to motorists and others.

Report incidents on problems associated with irresponsible dog ownership to the Dog Warden.



ble dög ownership 21:22

