

Dog registration

A dog owner is legally required to register his or her dog with the appropriate local government if it is more than three months old. The registration period is from 1 November to 31 October the following year. It is an offence not to register your dog and you can be given a \$100 on-the-spot fine.

It costs \$10 per year to register a sterilised dog and \$30 to register an unsterilised dog. For each new registration made after 31 May in any year, half the full cost of registration is charged. A discount also applies if you register your dog for three years.

Pensioners receive a 50% concession on these fees.

Local governments use the fees to help recover a portion of their costs not only in licensing dogs, but also in administration and enforcement of the Dog Act.

Name, address and registration tag

Your dog is required to wear a collar to which must be attached your name and address, as well as a valid registration tag.

Dog registration tags change in colour yearly, the colours for the next four years are:

Registration Period Ending	Colour
31 October 2011	Red
31 October 2012	Blue
31 October 2013	Green
31 October 2014	Yellow

The colours of the dog registration tags rotate in four-yearly cycles.

It is an offence for your dog not to wear a collar with these attachments, and you can be given an on-the-spot fine of \$50 for failure to do so.



More information

For more information or complaints about dog matters, contact your local government.



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Government of Western Australia
Department of Local Government

Laws for Responsible Dog Owners

The Dog Act 1976



The *Dog Act 1976* is administered and enforced by local governments within their respective districts. The Act addresses the control and registration of dogs; the ownership and keeping of dogs; and the obligations and rights of dog owners and others.

Everyone who is a dog owner has a responsibility to ensure that his or her dog is well looked after.

In addition, it is important that dog owners respect other people in the community. This can be achieved by keeping dogs adequately confined on their properties, on a leash in public places, preventing aggressive behaviour and controlling excessive barking.

As a nation of pet lovers, we rely on dog owners to responsibly look after their dogs to ensure that we can all live together peacefully and without fear.

Your responsibilities

Who is responsible for a dog?

Apart from the owner of the dog, a responsible person includes the occupier of any premises where the dog is ordinarily kept or permitted to live, or a person who for the time being has the dog in his or her possession or control.

Dog control

If you own a dog, you have a legal responsibility to keep it under control, either within a fenced area on your property or on a leash when in public.

As the owner, you can be given an on-the-spot fine of \$100 for not having your dog on a leash, or for allowing it to roam (except at designated dog exercise areas). If the matter goes to court, the penalty could be as high as \$1,000.

Dogs barking

You are also responsible for ensuring that your dog is not creating a public nuisance by barking excessively. The on-the-spot fine for allowing your dog to bark persistently is \$100. If taken to court, the fine could be up to \$2,000. Please consider the impact of your dog's behaviour on your neighbours.

Removal of dog droppings

Dog droppings are a source of annoyance to other users of footpaths and recreation areas. Most local governments have local laws that require the person in charge of the dog in a public place to remove their dog's droppings and adequately dispose of it. There are penalties for not doing so.

Any plastic bag may be used to pick up dog droppings. However, some local governments provide "poo bags" to the public.

Dog droppings in the garden should also be removed daily to reduce fly and health related problems.

People and animals have rights

Everyone is entitled to walk in the neighbourhood without being harassed or attacked by uncontrolled and often quite frightening dogs.

Even if your dog is well behaved, it can be frightening to other people if it is roaming unattended.

Although you may think your dog is unlikely to attack a person, roaming dogs often approach and sometimes attack other dogs. Responsible pet owners and their dogs are often targets of these attacks.

Dog attacks

\$10,000 fines for dog attacks

A dog attack is a very serious matter. If your dog attacks a person or another animal, you will be held responsible even if you are not there at the time. The only exemption is where the dog was provoked to attack (see provocation section).

A dog attack includes a dog aggressively rushing at or attempting to attack a person or animal, as well as tearing clothing, biting or causing physical injury.

There are penalties of up to \$10,000 for a dog attack and/or 12 months' imprisonment for inciting a dog to attack.

Local governments may seek a court order for a dog to be destroyed if it has attacked and caused injury or damage.

The dog's owner is also liable for any injury or damage resulting from a dog attack. A person who has been attacked may take private legal action for any injury or damage.

Provocation

Many people have dogs to help protect their homes. They feel safer when they have a dog and the law recognises their rights in this area.

The Dog Act provides a defence, in certain circumstances, for a dog owner to claim that their dog was provoked to attack.

For example, provocation may apply if your dog attacks someone who is on your property "without lawful excuse", such as a burglar.

A defence of provocation may be claimed if your dog attacks another animal that enters your property or behaves in a threatening manner towards you.

Provocation may also be a defence if your dog is in a vehicle and it attacks someone intruding into or upon the vehicle, or if the dog has been teased or assaulted.

Dangerous dogs

Thousands of dog attacks are reported in Western Australia every year. Some result in horrific injuries and trauma. If your dog displays aggressive behaviour, it is important you address it quickly with appropriate training.

Local governments may declare a dog "dangerous" if it attacks, shows a tendency to attack, or repeatedly rushes, threatens or chases people or animals. Once a dog is declared dangerous, it will have to be muzzled at all times in a public place.

Local governments may also impose further restrictions, such as requiring that the dog be kept on a leash when in dog exercise areas or that it be excluded from specific areas.

Any owner who fails to comply with a declaration order on their dog may be fined up to \$4,000.

Owners can appeal to the relevant local government or the State Administrative Tribunal if they believe that such an order is unfair. A dangerous dog declaration will only be removed by the local government if it is satisfied that the dog is safe (i.e. by passing an obedience training course. The muzzle requirement and any other restrictions will then be lifted.

For many offences, on-the-spot fines are doubled when the offence involves a declared dangerous dog.

Restricted breeds

Owners of certain breeds of dogs are required to abide by provisions similar to those that apply to dogs declared dangerous. These measures require the display of warning signs where these dogs are kept, stringent fencing requirements, muzzling and restraint at all times in public, age restrictions for owners and handlers, disposal notification, and that these dogs wear dangerous dog collars.

From March 2006, all restricted breed dogs must be muzzled, leashed and controlled by an adult who is physically capable of handling the dog, in any environment except prescribed enclosures. Restricted breed dogs are also required to be sterilised unless there are extenuating circumstances relating to the animal's physical condition or medical treatment.

These breeds currently include:

- Dogo Argentino (Argentinean fighting dog)
- Fila Brasileiro (Brazilian fighting dog)
- Japanese Tosa
- American Pit Bull Terrier and Pit Bull Terrier breeds
- Perro de Presa Canario or Presa Canario
- and any dog of a mixed breed that visibly contains any of these breeds.