

# Irish Kennel Club

## Canine Care and Responsibility

### Canine Care

As dog owners we must ensure we are aware of our dog's needs and welfare. The welfare of an animal includes its physical and mental state and we consider that good animal welfare implies both fitness and a sense of well-being. Primarily they are internationally defined by the 5 freedoms :

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease: by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour: by providing sufficient space and proper facilities.
5. Freedom from fear and distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

### NUTRITION

#### What do I feed my dog?

A healthy, balanced diet is essential and should be suitable for the different ages and lifestyles of the dog. A young growing pup requires higher protein levels than does an older dog. Many foods nowadays are made for different life stages and breeds of dogs, rather than previously when "one size fits all" was the norm.

Diet can affect behaviour, development and health so it is worth taking time to look at different foods available and check their ingredients. Discuss your dog's dietary requirements with you vet. or breeder or dog club.

Look at the feeding times as well : Large bodied dogs can be prone to gastric torsion, often fatal, which may be ameliorated by feeding two or more smaller meals rather than one large feed.

Ensure your dog has access to fresh, clean, water at all times.

#### What about my dog's kennel?

Your dog needs to have proper shelter when he's out in the garden. However, as a social animal, he should be included in the family unit. Occasionally it may be

necessary for your pet to stay outdoors for certain parts of the day.

If you must leave a dog outdoors for any length of time, make sure there is access to a temperature controlled kennel, or at a minimum shelter from rain, extremes of temperature and wind. Never, leave a dog unattended outside without shelter, food or water.

When in the house, set down rules for your dog's behaviour. Start as you mean go on with puppies: training them to know which areas in your home are "off limit" and which are 'permissible' areas. Be consistent to ensure your dog does not become confused. However, be mindful of weather conditions and avoid exercising in extreme conditions of heat and cold. Instead of walking in the middle of the day in hot summers walk in early morning or late afternoons.

## **EXERCISE**

### **Exercise! How much does my dog need?**

All dogs need exercise. Exercising your dog is breed and age specific.

## **GROOMING**

### **What products should I use if I wish to bathe my dog?**

Use a good quality dog shampoo; available from your vet or local pet shop. A dog's skin has a higher PH value than human skin so it is best to use a shampoo especially formulated for dogs. Pop a squirt of shampoo into a bowl of water to dilute it first; this means you're not putting neat shampoo directly onto your dog's skin. This helps when rinsing, because rinsing his coat clean and clear is vital. It is very important, especially in dogs with longer, shaggier coats, to brush them prior to bathing as well as afterwards.

### **How often do I brush my dog?**

You should brush your dog every day. It helps you bond with your dog and it stimulates the natural oils in your dog's skin. Use a mound mitt if you have a short-coated dog and a soft bristle or wire brush for other breeds.

## **RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP:**

### **SPAYING OR NEUTERING YOUR PET**

This is something that dog owners should discuss directly with their veterinary surgeon, dog trainer or behaviourist. Research shows that there are drawbacks and benefits to neutering in terms of health risks (some reduced and others increased) and time of neutering so it is worth finding out more information before deciding.

## **GENERAL PET SAFETY**

Sadly pets get stolen and lost every day so ensure you know who to contact in case your pet goes missing. If your pet goes missing it is a very emotional time for you and your family so knowing this information in advance will help.

Properly identify your pet with a collar and tag & microchip. A microchip is a permanent ID that cannot be removed or lost like collars and tags (for further details on microchipping please see Canine Responsibility section). If you change your phone number or move house make sure the microchip is registered with your new

details. When you buy your dog the breeder will transfer the registration details to your name. Ensure you get the details and check on line or with your vet.

- \* Keep your pet indoors or in a secure enclosed garden, especially when you are not at home.
- \* Know where your pet is at all times.
- \* Keep recent photos and written descriptions of your pets. If you had to put up a picture of your pet on a poster would they be easily identifiable from the photos you have of them?
- \* Do not let your pet roam free outside of your house. A dog wandering outside of private property without an owner is illegal, is classed as a stray and it may be picked up and brought to the pound by a dog warden or, worse still, get stolen or injured.
- \* Don't give out information about your dog to just anyone. If a stranger admires your dog, don't answer questions about your dog such as much you paid for your dog, or where you live.

### **Things You Can Do At Home:**

- \* Don't leave your dog out in the garden by themselves for long periods of time. Your dog may become a target if they are left unattended in your garden. Avoid leaving them in the front garden at all times as thieves may then see them and target them.
- \* Be especially careful where your garden is visible from the road
- \* Make sure fences, walls or hedges are tall enough and strong enough to take a dog jumping up at or attempting to get over them. Also ensure they can't easily be tunnelled under and seal any gaps in them. Check for nails or other objects which may injure the dog
- \* Ensure all outside gates have an alarm/bell or are locked so you can hear visitors enter your property.
- \* Make sure your doors and windows are secure. If doors are left open, especially if your dog often escapes when the front door is open, fit baby gates. Keep ground floor or low windows shut so they can't jump out, especially in summer.
- \* Maintain an up to date licence for your dog. Keep all of your ownership papers that prove you own your dog in one place. These papers would include kennel club registration, bill of sale from breeder, dog licence and most importantly microchip registration papers and chip number.
- \* Be aware of strangers in your area. Report anything unusual such as suspicious neighborhood activities or missing pets to the police.

### **Safety outside of the home**

- \* You should never leave your pet in an unattended car. Locking the car doesn't make it any safer for your pet. Besides the chance of your pet being stolen, there are possible health risks for your pet when they are left in the car. Dogs can quickly overheat in a car even with the window open / cracked and even on an overcast day. The upper lethal temperature can be reached in a car
- \* Never leave your dog tied up outside a shop. One owner should always stay outside with your dog. If you need to go shopping on your own leave your dog at home
- \* Don't let your dog off the lead in an unsecure area until you are 100% sure they will come back to you when you call them. You should only let your dog off lead in a

safe and secure area as dogs can get scared by sudden loud noises or see something to chase and they may run off. Dogs that are loose in a non secure area can easily be stolen, get lost, can cause damage to themselves, someone or something else or be injured especially on road

## **ILLNESS**

Your dog should display the same demeanour from day to day. Should you notice anything from the list below you should immediately seek veterinary advice:

- A dog with a normal healthy appetite refuses to eat
- A normally active dog becomes lethargic
- A dog having a fit or seizure
- A dog is unconscious
- A dog does not want to get up
- There is a loss of blood
- Persistent vomiting
- Increased urination
- Persistent coughing
- Hair loss or itchy skin
- Stiffness or lameness
- Changes in behaviour

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PET IS POISONED**

Rapid response is important; panicking can interfere with the process of helping your pet.

Take 30 to 60 seconds to safely collect and have at hand any material involved. This may be of great benefit to your vet as they determine what poison or poisons are involved. In the event that you need to take your pet to a local veterinarian, be sure to take the product's container with you. Also, collect in a sealable plastic bag any material your pet may have vomited or chewed.

If you witness your pet consuming material that you suspect might be toxic, do not hesitate to seek emergency assistance, even if you do not notice any adverse effects. Sometimes, even if poisoned, an animal may appear normal for several hours or for days after the incident.

Please note: If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic.

## **Be Prepared**

Keep the telephone number of your local Veterinarian & a 24 hour Emergency Clinic in a prominent location.

**Invest in an emergency first-aid kit for your pet.** The kit should contain:

Saline eye solution

Artificial tear gel (to lubricate eyes after flushing)

Mild grease-cutting pet shampoo or washing up liquid (for bathing an animal after skin contamination)

Forceps (to remove stingers)

- A muzzle (to protect against fear- or excitement-induced biting)
- A towel or blanket for wrapping them up in to stop them biting or scratching you
- A pet carrier

A lot of household cleaners can be poisonous to your dog as can food stuffs, e.g. onions, chocolate, raisins, grapes etc.

# Canine Responsibility

## TRAVELLING

Dogs in cars even on overcast summer days can easily overheat and suffer heat exhaustion and death. Australian studies showed that a car parked in shade and with a window open took only 15 minutes to reach the upper lethal temperature limit at which a dog would die.

It is important for your own, your passengers and your dog's safety that your dog be restrained when travelling in a car, either by harnesses and seat belts, separate travelling compartment or travel cages.

On long journeys be prepared to stop and allow your dog the opportunity to exercise, toilet and drink. Make sure you have your lead with you and easily accessible.

Before travelling enquire about local vets in the area of your final destination and contact details for the areas dog pound/ shelter and dog warden in case your dog goes missing or falls ill in this unfamiliar area.

## YOU, YOUR DOG AND THE LAW

There are over 20 Acts and Regulations pertaining to dogs.

Did you know:

- All dogs have to be microchipped and owner details registered on an authorised database one of which is the IKC.
- A change of ownership must be registered on the database.
- All dogs must be licenced either annually or by buying a "Lifetime " licence.
- Stray dogs are any dogs that are in a public place *unaccompanied* by an owner or responsible person
- A dog not under proper control is also considered to be a stray
- It is an offence to allow a dog to foul a public place and not remove the faeces.
- Excessive barking that causes nuisance is an offence.
- Tail docking and dew claw removal are banned by welfare legislation.
- Boarding kennels have to be inspected and licenced by the local authority

Certain breeds of dogs and their crosses / strains have special legislation: these breeds are

- American pit bull terrier
- English bull terrier
- Staffordshire bull terrier
- Bull mastiff

- Dobermann pinscher
- German shepherd (Alsatian)
- Rhodesian ridgeback
- Rottweiler
- Akita
- Japanese tosa
- Bandog

The rules state that these dogs (or strains and crosses of them) must:

- Be kept on strong lead not more than 2 m long by a person over 16 years who is capable of controlling them
- Be muzzled whenever they are in a public place
- Wear a collar bearing the name and address of their owner at all times.

## **YOUR DOG AND CHILDREN**

It is important to keep your dog wormed and to pick up faeces as there is risk to childrens' health from parasites.

It is an unfortunate statistic but there are many dog bites to children that can be avoided with a few simple precautions:

- Never leave a baby or young child alone with a dog
- Children, especially under 10, must be supervised when with a dog
- Teach your dog a good "drop" command and not be protective over possessions.

### **Teach your child**

- Never to approach a sleeping dog (it may startle and bite)
- Never to approach a dog when it is eating or has an object in its possession
- Not to approach a nursing bitch and its puppies
- Never to approach a dog that is tied up e.g .outside a shop
- To always ask an owner's permission before petting a dog