

## DANGEROUS DOGS

Thousands of dog attacks are reported in Perth and country areas 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.

An 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 a local court 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.



## DOG REGISTRATION

A dog owner is legally required to register their dog with the 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. A 50% concession applies for each new registration made after 31 May in any year. A discount also applies if you register your dog for three years.

Pensioners receive a 50% concession of these fees.

Shire also requires notification within 28 days of change of address, ownership, death or sterilisation of your dog.

### NAME AND ADDRESS TAG

Your dog is required to wear a tag showing your name and address, as well as a registration tag. It is an offence for your dog not to wear a collar and tags, and you can be given an on-the-spot fine of \$50.

**For further information contact the City of Geraldton-Greenough Ranger Services on 9921 0504.**

City of Geraldton-Greenough, Ranger Services

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# RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ranger Services**

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Dog Act addresses the control and registration of dogs; the ownership and keeping of dogs; and the obligations and rights of people, both as dog owners and non dog owners.

### 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 their 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

Your dog must be under effective control at all times including exercising in designated areas. 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. If the matter goes to court the penalty could be as high as \$1000.

#### Barking Dogs

You are also responsible for ensuring that your dog is not a public nuisance by excessive barking. The on-the-spot fine for allowing your dog to bark persistently is \$100. If taken to court, the fine could be up to \$2000. Please consider the impact of your dog's behaviour on your neighbours.



## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT)

### Removal of dog excreta (droppings)

Dog excreta 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 a dog in a public place to remove their dog's excreta and adequately dispose of it. There are penalties for not doing so.

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

Dog excreta 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).

## DOG ATTACKS (CONT)

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 some penalties of up to \$10,000 for a dog attack and \$10,000 or 12 months gaol (or both) 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.