



# **Dog owners**

**HANDBOOK**

2023/24

The Dog Owners Handbook  
is revised and issued on 1 July annually.

**Dannevirke Service Centre**

26 Gordon St, Dannevirke  
PO Box 115, Dannevirke 4942  
Ph: 06 374 4080 (24 hours)

**Woodville Service Centre  
& Library**

45 Vogel St, Woodville  
Ph: 06 376 0200 (24 hours)

**Pahiatua Service Centre**

136 Main Street, Pahiatua  
Ph: 06 376 0110 (24 hours)

**Eketahuna Service Centre  
& Library**

31 Main Street, Eketahuna  
Ph: 06 376 0219 (24 hours)

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# 1. Obligations of a dog owner

You must be at least 16 years of age to be a registered dog owner.

The obligations of dog owners are defined as follows:

- To ensure that the dog is registered\* immediately in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996, and that all relevant territorial authorities are promptly notified of any change of address or ownership.
- To ensure that the dog is kept under control at all times.
- To ensure that the dog receives proper care and attention and is supplied with proper and sufficient food, water and shelter.
- To ensure that the dog receives adequate exercise.
- To ensure annual check-ups and vaccinations are up to date.
- To take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not cause a nuisance to any other person, whether by persistent and loud barking or howling, or by any other means.
- To take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not injure, endanger, or cause distress to any person.
- To take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not injure, endanger, or cause distress to any stock, poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife.
- To take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not damage or endanger any property belonging to any other person.
- To comply with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996, and of all regulations and bylaws made under this Act.

**\*All dogs must be registered  
by 3 months of age**



## 2. Classification of owners and dogs

### Owner classifications

- General owner
- Probationary owner
- Disqualified owner

### Dog classifications

- Menacing dog classification
- Dangerous dog classification
- Urban domestic dog – entire
- Urban domestic dog – desexed
- Rural domestic dog
- Working dog
- Preferred owner status – dog entire
- Preferred owner status – dog desexed
- Over-65 canine companion
- Disability assist dog

## 3. Fees

Dog registration fees are set by Council annually on 1 July. For current fees and charges, refer to Council's website: [www.tararua.govt.nz](http://www.tararua.govt.nz)

### Definition of working dogs

“**Working dog**” has the same meaning as defined under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Dogs that are used for hunting or pest control are not classed as working dogs. Should you wish to claim any other breed of dog as a working dog, you may be required to provide a practical demonstration of the dog's ability.

“**Stock**” means:

- (a) Any live horse, cattle, sheep, swine, alpaca, llama, bison, donkey, hinny, mule, or water buffalo that is not in a wild state.
- (b) Any deer, goat, thar, rabbit, opossum, or other animal that is kept within a fence or enclosure for domestic or farming purposes.

# 4. What your registration fee pays for

24 hours, 7 days a week

## 4.1 Response to complaints

- Barking dogs.
- All wandering dogs.
- Dogs causing traffic hazard.
- Dogs fouling in public places.
- Dogs scavenging in rubbish.
- Dogs damaging property.
- Attacks on people, domestic pets, stock, or protected wildlife.

## 4.2 Performance target

Complaints to be dealt with within the priorities of danger and public safety.

## 4.3 Education programme

- Visits to schools when requested.
- Provide information pamphlets.
- Initiate education of owners with problem dogs.

## 4.4 Registration

- Keeping an up-to-date record of dogs within the district.
- Sighting unregistered dogs in preparation for prosecution.
- Issuing infringement notices where applicable.
- Having all local data uploaded to the National Dog Database.

## 4.5 Impounding and pound facilities

- Maintenance of an accurate Pound Register.
- Notifying known dog owners if their dog is impounded.
- Impounding roaming dogs.
- Re-homing suitable dogs to suitable owners.
- Destruction and disposal of unclaimed dogs.



## 4.6 Prosecutions\*

- Dogs attacking persons/animals.
- Dog Control Act and Bylaw offences.
- Failure to register.
- Failure to control dog.
- Barking dog.

\* For offences relating to registration under the Dog Control Act 1996, refer to Section 6.1 of this handbook.



## 5. Microchipping

As of 1 July 2006, all newly registered dogs are required to be implanted with a functioning ISO standard microchip transponder. Your vet clinic will be able to assist you with this. It is a good idea to get this done at the same time as your dog's vaccination. Working dogs are exempt, but it is a good idea to chip them in case of theft, or if the dog slips its collar.

All dogs that are impounded and are unregistered, or any dog that is impounded for a second time and does not have a microchip, are also required to be microchipped before release.

It's a good idea to **microchip**  
your **working dog**



## 6. Infringement fee offences (instant fines)

There are a series of offences that are subject to fines or can be put before the Court.

The full fine is to be paid within 28 days from receipt of the notice.

### 6.1 Dog Control Act 1996 offences relating to registration

#### Section 41 – Penalty for false statement relating to application for registration

Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 who, in making an application for the registration of a dog, makes any written statement knowing that statement to be false.

#### Section 42 – Offence of failing to register dog

(1) Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 who is the owner of a dog of a greater age than 3 months unless the dog is registered under this Act for the current registration year.

(2) If a territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has failed to comply with subsection (1), a dog control officer or dog ranger may—

- (a) seize and impound the dog; and
- (b) for the purposes of paragraph (a), enter, at any reasonable time, any land or premises (except a dwellinghouse) occupied by the owner of the dog.

#### Section 65 – Infringement offences

- (1) In this Act, infringement offence means an offence specified in Schedule 1.
- (2) Where any person is alleged to have committed an infringement offence, that person may either—
  - (a) be proceeded against by filing a charging document under section 14 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011; or
  - (b) be served with an infringement notice as provided in section 66.

## 7. Hydatids

New Zealand has been declared provisionally free of hydatids. Continued controls and vigilance are now needed to stop the disease returning.

## 8. Safe feeding

- Never feed raw offal to your dog. Offal must be boiled for 30 minutes before feeding to dogs.
- Always freeze sheep or goat meat to  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  for seven days or cook throughout.
- Do not let your dog scavenge. Owners must ensure dogs are controlled so they are not able to access offal in carcasses that may be lying undetected on properties.

# 9. Barking

## 9.1 How to stop problem barking

Barking can arise from boredom or from seeking attention. Barking may occur as a sign that an intruder is about, or through excitement when playing, but a dog will rarely bark without there being a reason. The dog barking from boredom or to seek company can be a source of great irritation. Ask neighbours to monitor your dog if it is left at home alone.

If your dog's barking creates a nuisance causing neighbours to complain, and you do not comply with the Animal Control Officer's instructions to abate the nuisance, your dog may be removed from your property.

## 9.2 To prevent excessive barking

- Keep your dog occupied.
- Ensure that the dog is comfortable.
- Ensure that the dog is exercised regularly.
- Ensure that the dog has toys to amuse itself if left alone – e.g. bones, balls, and familiar objects.
- Leave the dog with friends or have neighbours visit the dog while you are out.
- House the dog so that it is unable to see things to bark at.
- House the dog near other pets for companionship. Even a caged bird can be company for a dog.

# 10. The aggressive dog

## 10.1 What should I do if an aggressive dog attacks me?

1. DO NOT RUN! It may trigger the dog's hunting instincts.
2. Try speaking quietly and firmly to the dog.
3. Back off slowly. Do not challenge the dog by staring, but keep the dog in view.
4. Have something to hold out between you and the dog (e.g. remove a jacket, use a briefcase or laptop) in case it attempts to bite you as you back away.
5. Make no sudden movements and leave as quietly as possible.
6. Notify Animal Control of any attack.

## 10.2 What if my dog attacks someone on my property?

You are in breach of the law if your dog attacks someone, even on your own property. Any person with reasonable grounds must be able to walk to your door without being attacked.

## 10.3 What if my dog attacks a person, another dog or cat?

You are in breach of the law if your dog attacks a person, stock, poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife, and your dog may be destroyed.

Your dog may be seized and held by the District Council if it believes the dog is a threat.

# 11. Control

Your dog must be controlled and confined in a manner that it cannot freely leave your property. It is your responsibility to keep your dog on your property.

- A fenced property is the best solution.
- Provide physical exercise for your dog.
- Provide positive stimulation for your dog with obedience training.

## 11.1 Dog pound fees

**Pound fees are set by Council annually on 1 July. For current fees and charges, refer to Council's website: [www.tararudc.govt.nz](http://www.tararudc.govt.nz)**

Dogs are only held for 7 days. After this, the dog becomes the property of Tararua District Council and will be disposed of as Tararua District Council sees fit.

## 11.2 If your dog is missing

Contact Tararua District Council Animal Control, as soon as possible, at any time of the day or week:

Dannevirke	06 374 4080
Eketahuna	06 376 0219
Pahiatua	06 376 0110
Woodville	06 376 0200

- If Animal Control impounds the dog and the owner can be identified, the owner will be notified as soon as possible (by phone and/or mail).
- Dogs are held for 7 days. After this time the Council may dispose of the dog as it sees fit.
- Suitable dogs may be available for rehoming.

### 11.3 Care of your dog's health

- Ensure your dog receives an annual vaccination for:
  - Kennel Cough
  - Leptospirosis
  - Parvovirus
- Have a regular worming programme.
- Have your dog desexed. A female dog will normally come into “season” or be “on heat” twice a year.

### 11.4 Welfare

For animal welfare issues contact:

RNZSPCA	0800 INSPECTOR (0800 467 732)
MPI	0800 008 333

### 11.5 Holidays

Accommodation for your dog:

- Decide who will look after your dog.
- Boarding kennels – book in advance.
- Friends and neighbours – either have someone stay in your house or leave your dog at their place.
- DO NOT leave your dog home alone.

If you choose to take your dog on holiday with you, ensure that it is okay to have your dog where you are staying and observe that district's bylaws.

DO NOT leave your dog in the car in the summer or on a warm day. Your car may reach high temperatures very quickly even with the windows down and your dog may die.

If your dog is **left without access to proper and sufficient food, water, or shelter**, then it may be seized by an animal control officer or ranger.





## 12. Where can I walk my dog?

Dogs are prohibited in areas where there is intense public use and where the presence of dogs may detract from the enjoyment of the area or may create a danger to the health and safety of people in the vicinity.

### Exemptions

Certain dogs that serve a specialised function are exempted from the provisions of this section. These dogs are:

- Any disability assist dogs carrying out services such as blind, or deaf assistance etc, or accompanying any person engaged in bona fide training of the disability assist dog.
- Any dogs kept by the Police, or any Department of State, solely or principally for the purposes of carrying out the functions or duties of that department.
- Any dogs owned by a security guard defined in Section 4 of the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act 1974 and kept solely or principally for the purposes of carrying on the business of a security guard.
- Any dogs present in connection with search and rescue training or work.

### 12.1 Dog prohibited areas

- All public reserves, wildlife reserves, sports grounds, and sports stadiums situated in urban areas.
- All public libraries administered by the Council.
- All public swimming baths.
- All cemeteries administered by the Council.

## Exemptions to dog prohibited areas

- Any areas specifically set aside as dog toileting areas or dog exercise areas.
- Any dog attending a veterinary clinic.
- Any disability assist dog.
- Any dog kept by the Police, or any constable, or any Department of State when used for the purposes of carrying out the functions, powers and duties of the Police, or Department of State.
- Any dog owned by a security guard as defined in Section 4 of the Police Investigators and Security Guards Act 1974 when used for the purposes of carrying out the business of a security guard.
- Any dog present in connection with search and rescue training or work.

## 12.2 Leash controlled areas

With the exception of the areas described in 12.1 above, dogs shall be permitted in the following places, provided they are on a leash:

All streets in the residential, commercial or industrial areas of:

- Dannevirke
- Eketahuna
- Norsewood
- Ormondville
- Pahiatua and Pahiatua River Walkway
- Pongaroa
- Woodville

## 12.3 Areas where dogs can be exercised unleashed but under continuous control

Dannevirke:

- Railway embankment, Stanley Street.
- Railway reserve, Mangatera (grassed area at the corner of Ruahine and High Streets – adjacent to Mangatera Hotel).
- Upper Wahipai Reserve, High Street (beside the Mangatera carpark, opposite the hotel).

Pahiatua:

- A designated area at Victory Park.

## 13. Keeping three or more dogs on a property (urban and rural zones)

If you wish to keep three or more dogs on an urban property or a rural property, you are required to make an application for a permit to keep three or more dogs. Working dogs are exempt.

You can obtain an application from our website or any Council Service Centre.

An application fee applies.

Dogs must  
be kept  
**under  
control**  
at all times



## 14. Preferred owner status

Council wishes to recognise responsible owners and offers a reduction in the annual registration fee. However, strict criteria must be met.

You can obtain an application from our website or any Council Service Centre.

An application fee applies.

## 15. Over-65 canine companion

Council recognises that canine companions are very important to senior owners, especially if the owner lives alone. As such, we offer an over-65 canine companion reduced fee.

If you are an urban dog owner, are over 65 years of age and not a preferred dog owner,

you may apply for over-65 canine companion status for a discount to the regular dog registration fee. Application forms are available on our website or at any Council service centre. Proof of age is required, and application must be made prior to the current registration year or it will not take effect until the following year.

**For further information please call a Dog Control Officer or visit our website for copies of Council's Dog Control Policy, Control of Dogs Bylaw, and also the Dog Control Act.**

[www.tararua.govt.nz](http://www.tararua.govt.nz)

We have a wide range of free educational material. Please call us if you would like information or advice on a particular subject.