

Information sheet for dog owners – May 2009

Registration fees due 1 July

It's that time of year again. Please sign the enclosed dog registration form and pay the fee by 1 July 2009. Registration fees are the same as last year but be aware – late fees will incur a 50 percent surcharge.

You will also need to make changes on the registration form and sign it if:

- your dog has died
- you have had it desexed (certificate required)
- you have moved (either in or out of the Wellington City area)
- the ownership of your dog has changed.

In each case, we need the owner's signed authority so we can make changes to the dog register.

Once you have checked the form, please sign it and send it back (or drop it into your nearest library). We will mail your new dog tag to you. Please retain your receipt until you receive the new red tag – note, tags will not be available from libraries or the city service centre.

Registration tags

Registration tags for 2009/10 are changing from the blue strap tags of last year to a round, red disk tag for this coming year. All dog owners will receive a split ring for attaching the new disk tags to their dog's collar.

Responsible Dog Owner (RDO) status

This scheme rewards responsible dog owners with cheaper fees. To qualify, you need to apply before 30 April and meet a number of requirements, including paying your registration fees by the 1 July due date.

Those already approved under this scheme, but who don't pay by 1 July, will lose their Responsible Dog Owner status and have to pay the entire or desexed registration fee, plus a late fee.

For more information on how to qualify as a Responsible Dog Owner, check www.Wellington.govt.nz or phone 801 3222.

Review of the Dog Control Policy

The Dog Control Policy is being reviewed this year. The current policy provides for a large degree of access to Wellington City's public spaces. Dogs are welcome on a lead in most areas – except for the CBD during business hours and on certain beaches.

The review is to make sure that the Council's Dog Control Policy and associated Animals Bylaw deliver high quality public health and safety for Wellingtonians. This means striking a balance between the needs of the general public and those of dog owners.

As part of the review, all registered dog owners in Wellington City were surveyed in May 2008 to find out where they exercise their dogs and which designated dog areas they prefer. There were 3494 responses, 39 percent of registered owners.

The consultation period for the draft Dog Control Policy 2009 and the draft Animals Bylaw is from late June until early August. All registered dog owners will receive information directly about the consultation.

Unregistered dogs – infringement fines and seizures

Please register your dog by 1 July every year. Owners of unregistered dogs risk a \$300 fine. People who continue to refuse to register their dogs will have their dogs seized and impounded until full payment is made.

Dog registration is a legal requirement and exists to identify and monitor the dog population. It makes it possible to ensure dog owners get important information that could affect them and makes it easier to reunite lost dogs with their owners.

Microchipping

Microchipping has been in place for three years. All new puppies have to be registered at three months and must be microchipped during the following two months.

You must also microchip if:

- your dog is classified as dangerous
- your dog is classified as menacing
- your unregistered dog is impounded
- your registered dog has been impounded for the second time in the same registration year.

If your dog is already on our register and you are re-registering this year then you do **not** need to microchip your dog.

Microchipping was introduced by the Government to make it easier to track down lost dogs and to identify dangerous dogs.

For more information on microchipping, visit the Department of Internal Affairs website www.dia.govt.nz

Dogs in public places

Except for designated dog-exercise areas, dogs must be on a lead whenever they are off your property. This includes all walkways around the city and 'public places'. Most areas managed by the Council are considered 'public places'. You can find out more about dog exercise areas at www.Wellington.govt.nz or phone 801 3222.

Prohibited public places

Dogs are prohibited from certain areas. These include areas with children's play equipment, all sportsfields, and certain beaches. Dogs are also prohibited from the centre of the city between 8am and 6pm daily.

Daylight saving restrictions end

Some beaches have special dog restrictions that apply for the duration of daylight saving. You can now walk your dog during the day on the following beaches:

- Balaena Bay beach
- Hataitai beach
- Island Bay beach (from the pier to the western end of the beach)
- Seatoun beach (including Churchill Park)
- Worsler Bay beach

Please note: dogs must still be kept on a lead at all times in these areas. They can only be off-lead in designated dog exercise areas.

Dog poo

Help keep our streets and exercise areas clean – it is your responsibility to pick up and dispose of your dog's poo. Specially designed poo bags can be bought from Council service centres, supermarkets, pet shops and other places. Alternatively, supermarket bags work just as well.

Adoption of dogs

Did you know that Wellington City Council runs a dog adoption programme? DSS Animal Management is contracted by the Council to provide this service. To find out more, please contact the staff at the Moa Point shelter on 388 8212.