

Canine Good Citizen – Responsibility and Care

The below information is intended as a guide only and should not be considered as an exhaustive list of a dog owner's responsibilities. Your CGC questions will be taken from this section and possibly, from legislation and relevant regulations and by-laws from the area you will be sitting the assessment. It is recommended you are familiar with these regulations and by-laws.

1. Dog Weight Guidelines

From: Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Dogs
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, c/- Ministry of Agriculture, PO Box 2526, Wellington
Code of Animal Welfare No. 20, ISBN 0-478-07459, ISSN 1171-090X, May 1998

- a. Dogs shall be **fed to maintain** their **body weight** within the normal physiological range, no matter how much physical activity they have.
- b. **Ideal body weight depends on breed and age.**
- c. The **food** offered should be **sufficient in amount** and appropriately **balanced in nutrients** to meet their physiological needs.
- d. As a general rule, dogs should be **fed at least once a day**, and it is generally best to **divide** their daily **ration** into **two**, fed in the morning and in the evening.
- e. **Working dogs** should be fed at the **end** of their working **day**. A **small meal an hour or two before exercise may be beneficial** before prolonged periods of work.
- f. **Body condition** can be **scored** from **0** to **5** as follows:

0	Emaciated;	Dogs with body condition 0 or 1 are likely to have a dull lustreless coat . Body condition scores 1 is undesirable and body condition score 0 is unacceptable .
1	The outline of all ribs readily felt or (in short-haired dogs) seen ;	
2	The outline of the last two ribs can be readily felt or (in short-haired dogs) seen ;	Working dogs and some leaner breeds are in ideal condition at body score 2 .
3	All ribs (or all but the last two) lightly covered by fat;	Body condition score 3 is ideal for most dogs.
4	Ribs covered by a layer of fat , outline not readily felt ;	Body condition score 4 should be taken as a warning to reduce meals quantity and/or increase exercise.
5	Obese , ribs cannot be felt without considerable pressure.	Body condition 5 is undesirable .

- g. There are many good quality, complete and balanced commercial dog foods available. Diets may be **home-mixed** provided they are **complete** and **balanced**. An **all-lean-meat** diet, such as farm-killed lean mutton, does **not** provide a **balanced** diet.
- h. **Certain prohibitions** apply to the feeding of **meat** and **offal** from **livestock** to **dogs**.

2. The legal obligations of a dog owner (Section 5, Dog Control Act 1996)

- a. All dogs must be **registered** with a relevant **Local Authority** **before** the age of **three months** and thereafter, during the month of July each year;
- b. All relevant **Local Authorities** are promptly **notified** of any **change** of **address** or **ownership** of the dog;
- c. To ensure that the **dog** is kept **under control** at all times.
- d. To ensure the **dog** receives proper **care** and **attention** and is supplied with proper and sufficient **food**, **water** and **shelter**.

- e. To ensure the **dog** has adequate **exercise**.
- f. To take all reasonable steps to ensure that **dog** does not cause a **nuisance** to any other **person**, whether by persistent and loud barking or howling or by any other means.
- g. To take all reasonable steps to ensure that **dog** does **not injure, endanger or intimidate** or otherwise cause distress to any **person**.
- h. To take all reasonable steps to ensure that **dog** does **not injure, endanger or distress** stock, poultry, domestic **animals** or protected wild life.
- i. To take all reasonable steps to ensure that **dog** does **not damage or endanger property** belonging to any other person.
- j. To **comply** with the **Dog Control Act** and all regulations and bylaws made under the Act.

3. Further responsibilities of ownership

The following is a guide to responsible ownership, for your dog and the public:

- a. Do not **feed** the dog from your plate but **from its own bowl**.
- b. Dogs like a **bed of their own**, so provide one.
- c. **Bathing** is sometimes necessary but should be done in **moderation**.
- d. Your dog should **not** be **allowed** out on its own **to wander** the neighbourhood.
- e. Do **not allow** the dog to **foul** in an inappropriate place.
- f. If fouling does occur in a public place, always **clean up** after the dog.
- g. **Never take** your dog into a **restaurant** or a **shop** that sells food.
- h. Do not leave your dog **unattended** if you go away on **holiday**.
- i. **Consider neutering** (talk it over with your vet) to **avoid** unwanted **puppies**.
- j. If you want your bitch to have **puppies**, **seek the advice of professionals** before doing so (eg, the breeder of your dog, your vet, local breed club). This way, you are able to make an informed and responsible decision.
- k. Always **ensure** that your **dog is wearing** a collar of some type, with a **current Local Authority identification tag** attached. This tag must be registered to the dog wearing it.
- l. Dogs need to be able to **feel part of the family** (its “pack”). However, the dog **must not become a leader** of their family (its “pack”).

4. Health and illness

- a. To keep a dog in good health, you should:
 - i. take your dog **to the vet at least once a year** for a full **health check-up and vaccinations**. If a dog displays any of the symptoms mentioned in b. below, you should immediately take your dog to the vet;
 - ii. rub your hands over the dog's body to **check for burrs, thistles ticks or lumps and bumps**;
 - iii. regularly **clean and groom** your dog and ensure no part of the coat becomes matted;
 - iv. **give**, along with your contact details, your **vet's address and phone number** to the person looking after your dog **whilst** you are **away**;
 - v. **check and control fleas and/or ticks** – Fleas are usually found around the neck, abdomen and tail areas on the dog. If there is an allergy/infection from flea infestation, veterinary advice should be sought.

- vi. **dose for worms** – Roundworm and Tapeworm can infest pups and dogs. It is recommended dogs be wormed every six months, pregnant bitches and puppies more often.
- b. A dog should display the same demeanour from day-to-day. So, should any of the following occur, you should immediately seek veterinary advice:
 - i. A dog, with a normal healthy appetite, **refuses to eat**.
 - ii. A normally active dog **becomes lethargic**.
 - iii. A dog **vomits** several times.
 - iv. It has **loose motions** or **diarrhea**.
 - v. There is **loss of blood**.
 - vi. A dog is **unconscious**.
 - vii. A dog has a fit or **seizure**.

5. Dogs traveling in a vehicle and the responsibilities of the owner

- a. **Never** leave your **dog** in a vehicle parked in the **sun**. Even in mild weather, a vehicle can heat up and kill your dog very quickly.
- b. Should you be in a position where you have to leave your dog in a vehicle, **always park** your vehicle **under shade**, even in the winter months. Without compromising security, leave **windows open** for **ventilation**.
- c. Be aware that dogs may become **territorial** when in your vehicle. This can lead to aggressive (protective) **behaviour** towards strangers who may inadvertently approach your vehicle. If present, **reprimand** any territorial behaviour. **Advise people** to never put their hand through a window or door.
- d. Dogs should **leave** the vehicle in a **controlled manner**, either on a lead or under strict control to stay with you.
- e. Avoid **carsickness** problems or **stress** by **gradually** but **consistently** taking your dog out for **short** trips.
- f. Try to keep your dog in a **calm** state of mind whilst traveling.
- g. Dogs should **not distract** the driver.
- h. Dogs should be **secure** in a vehicle; either in a cage, station-wagon barrier; or dog car harness.
- i. **Never** let your dog travel with its **head out of the window**.
- j. How a dog behaves in a vehicle on the first few journeys will form its habits for its lifetime.

6. Equipment

- a. A dog's lead **must** be **used** or **carried** by the handler **whenever** your dog is **in public**. It should be **comfortable** to hold at any part of its length. It should be in **good condition** (ie, no worn stitching, chewed areas or a clip that may not be reliable).
- b. There are many types of “collars” available on the market to help you walk your dog in a controlled manner (eg, haltie, gentle leaders, harness leaders, slip chain, etc). Make sure you have the type that **suits your dog**. Seek advice on the **correct method** to use each type of restraint.
- c. With the **exception** of a standard leather or webbing **collar**, **no** restraint should be **left** on your dog whilst **unsupervised**.
- d. Choose a **restraint** that will **not break** under strain and check that it **fits correctly** (eg, if a dog suddenly backs up, it cannot slip out of its collar).

- e. The dog's current **Local Authority registration tag** belonging to the dog must always be worn in public.

7. Dogs and children

It is the **adults total responsibility** to protect children from the dog and the dog from the children. Hence, **children must be taught** how to behave around dogs. Specifically:

- a. **Never** make **sudden movements** close to a dog.
- b. Always **ask permission** before touching a dog they do not know.
- c. **Never scream** or suddenly yell close to a dog.
- d. **Never lunge** at or startle a dog, particularly if it is asleep.
- e. **Never** put their **face close** to a dog's face.
- f. **Never** eat **food** close to a dog.
- g. **Never tease** or pull a dog's body or coat.
- h. Always **wash** their **hands** after playing with a dog.
- i. If a dog gives a **warning growl**, instruct the child that it must **leave the dog alone**.
- j. Children should be reminded to **respect all dogs**.
- k. **Never** leave **child alone** with a dog and **supervise** all **play** between child and dog.
- l. Instruct the child to **leave a dog alone** if the **dog** is **eating**.

8. Babies

- a. When the family has a **baby**, it is natural that much attention will be given to the new arrival. It is therefore important that the dog does not become resentful of the new "pack member". Owners should ensure that the dog's **daily routine continues** and the dog **receives the same attention and discipline**.
- b. **Never** leave the **baby alone** with a dog and **supervise** all **interaction** between baby and dog.

9. Excessive barking

- a. **Excessive barking** is a nuisance and could lead to relations with your neighbours disintegrating. If your dog is barking excessively, find out the **reason why and put measures in place to stop it**.
- b. **Communicate with your neighbours** and tell them you are trying to find out the cause of the excessive barking and to put a stop to it. If need be, ask them to help, which will make them feel like you are being proactive and considerate.

10. Dogs off lead

- a. **Never** walk your dog **off lead** if there are **public notices** that **prohibit** this.
- b. Only take your dog **off lead** if it has a **reliable recall** back to you, in any environment and under any distraction.
- c. **Never** take your **dog off lead** if there is **traffic** around.
- d. **Obey Regional and Local Authority by-laws**, and **Department of Conservation regulations** with regard to off-lead and on-lead areas and times of year.

11. More than one dog

If owning more than one dog:

- a. make sure each dog gets **attention, affection and guidance**;
- b. **training all dogs at the same time** can lead to distraction, confusion and inter-pack competition. Set times aside for each dog to get the same one-on-one attention;

- c. once each dog is sure of obedience commands, make sure **all dogs obey at the same time and in the same manner**;
- d. “pack” behaviour is more evident in multi-dog families. **Learn about pack behaviour and body language from dog clubs, internet and books**, so you can avert bad intra-pack behaviour before it starts.

12. Socialisation

Socialising puppies and dogs is extremely important. To not do so can result in fear-aggressive behaviour later on in the dog’s life. Introduce the puppy/dog to everything it will encounter in its life (eg, people, other animals, children, cars, etc) in a gradual and controlled manner, so each part is not an overload and therefore frightening. You, as owner, should always be confident in each new situation, so the pup/dog will take its cue from you.

13. Territorial behaviour

- a. **Dogs are naturally territorial** (ie, they “protect” what they consider as their territory, which can include a vehicle). They display this behaviour usually by excessive barking and/or rushing behaviour, which can escalate out of control. Mankind domesticated the dog for his territorial (protection) attributes. Hence, we do not want to suppress them, only to control them.
- b. **Suggestions to “control” your dog’s territorial behaviour:**
 - i. **Distract** the dog by calling and then rewarding when the dog comes to you;
 - ii. Put the dog into a **down stay and enforce it** until the dog calms down;
 - iii. Put your dog in areas of the property that **reduces his excuse to protect** (eg, back yard, instead of front yard)

14. Playing with your dog

Play behaviour (eg, chasing and tugging) are watered-down predatory behaviours. These behaviours can be more pronounced in some breeds more than others (eg, a Border Collie is more likely to chase a ball, whilst a Staffordshire Terrier will tend to not let go with a tug game). Games are important to build a relationship with your dog. Main rule to follow is **YOU start the game and YOU finish the game**, as well as playing the game following your rules, not the dog’s.

15. Unacceptable or insecure behaviour

- a. **Constant company, excessive reassurance and/or touching given to a dog may cause stress when it is left on its own.** The result may be excessive barking, whining/howling, and/or destructive behaviour. Condition your pup/dog to separation, and do not give in to the dog demanding attention or patting.
- b. At **night**, if it is necessary to vocally **command** a noisy dog, it should be done **at a distance**. This avoids the dog learning how to call its owner back. Alternatively, **ignoring the behaviour** can extinguish it, as the dog realises it will not get the attention it wants and finally goes to sleep.
- c. **Excessive aggression** – There are several reasons why a dog can become aggressive. It is recommended to seek the advice of your local dog obedience club or the assistance of a professional dog behaviorist in the analyzing and correcting of any aggression problems.

16. How does a dog learn?

A dog is constantly learning. They learn by understanding what is to their **advantage or disadvantage** by:

- a. **Habit (repetition)** (if the dog is rewarded for sitting at the curb-side, it will eventually repeat a sit at every curb-side automatically);
- b. **Routine** of the dog within its family (when owners are getting ready to go to work, dog knows the place it will be put to spend the day);

- c. **Trial and error** – discovering pleasurable experiences (sitting under the dining room table in the hope of a dropped tit bit) and not so pleasurable experiences (disturbing the cat resulting in the dog getting a scratch);
- d. **Insight** – combining two experiences to form a new experience (owner gets the dog's lead, dog is then put in the car = time at the park);
- e. **Observation** – watching and imitating (a new dog in the household learns behavior from the older dog already there);
- f. **Latent** – neither reinforced or discouraged (a dog finds its way home through a familiar neighbourhood).

When teaching a dog good behaviour, it must be remembered:

- a. **inconsistency** causes confusion. If you let a dog pull on the lead sometimes and other times, you don't, the dog will be confused and it will delay the learning process;
- b. **praise or discouragement** allied to the dog's behaviour **must be immediate**. The dog will only recognise the praise or discouragement to a particular behaviour within two seconds of the act;
- c. when **play, praise** and **rewarding** are linked to teach a dog, the result is a happy dog;
- d. when there **is a problem** with your dog's learning, don't immediately work at the symptom. Instead, try to **think like a dog** to find the cause of any problems before attempting to reverse it.

17. Legislation and Local Authority Dog Regulations

(See also, paragraph 2 of this Responsibility and Care section)

- a. Each **Local Authority** has their **own bylaws** which essentially describes how dogs must be controlled in public places to reduce the likelihood of dangerous behaviour and nuisance situations arising. These Bylaws are specific to that area and can include:
 - i. **control** of dogs **on leash**;
 - ii. **dog exercise** areas
 - iii. **public places**;
 - iv. **fouling** in public places
 - v. **permit** to keep **more than one dog**;
 - vi. **dog** control **fees**.

It is essential to make yourself familiar with your particular Local Authority dog control rules.

- b. One of the penalties for dog owners **failing to comply** with any part of the Local Authority bylaw(s) is an **infringement notice fine**.
- c. **Make sure to make yourself familiar with the Dog Control Act 1996**. These pertain nationwide. This **Act was amended** and key provisions came into force on **1 December 2003**.
- d. **Schedule 4** of the Dog Control Act 1996 **restricts** the **importing, breeding** and **sale** of the following **breeds/type** of dogs. They currently are:
 - i. **American Pit Bull Terrier**;
 - ii. **Dogo Argentino**;
 - iii. **Brazilian Fila**;
 - iv. **Japanese Tosa**.

These breeds are currently classified as menacing.