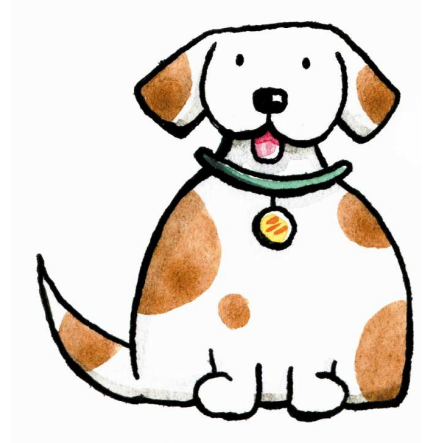




Dog Handbook

Introduction

The Lost Dogs' Home is Australia's largest animal shelter. We rescue and care for over 21,000 abandoned, injured and lost cats and dogs every year. One of the Home's most important services is our Adoption Program. Our aim is to place our animals into good homes with suitable owners. By obtaining your **Pet Licence 101**, we know you have the knowledge required to be a good pet owner.



In addition, The Lost Dogs' Home sees many cases of irresponsible pet ownership, resulting in dumped, lost, mistreated or surrendered animals. By educating the community about responsible pet ownership issues, we hope to improve the overall welfare of companion animals in our society.

After you have read this brief handbook, you will be able to complete the online test to obtain your **Pet Licence 101**. The online test should be answered by the intended pet owner (must be eighteen plus years old). The test will consist of a random selection of 25 questions from each section outlined below. It is not designed to exclude people from owning a pet, but rather to ensure potential owners have the knowledge and skills necessary to keep a pet responsibly. Our role as an animal welfare institution is to make sure our animals are adopted into good homes.

Once you have successfully completed the test, you will be able to print off a certificate.

Section 1 & 2: Council Registration & Pet Identification

All puppies/dogs must be **registered** with your **local council** from three months of age onwards. If you take ownership of a new dog that is three months of age or older, you must register it under your name with your local council. If you move house, you must register your dog(s) with your new shire or council. Failing to do this may result in a monetary fine. Your dog must wear its council registration tag on its collar.

In Victoria, legislation requires that all dogs and cats are **microchipped** for *new* council registrations. So if you have a new dog/puppy or need to register it in a new council or shire area, you must have it microchipped.

Council registration tags, collar identification tags and microchips are all different. It is ideal for your dog to have a:

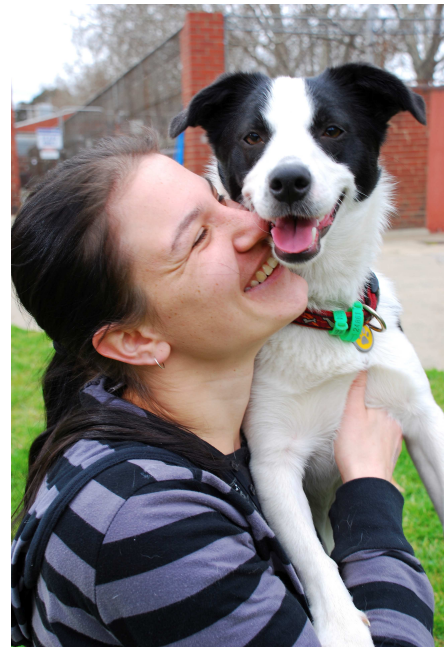
- collar identification tag obtained from a pet register such as the National Pet Register,
- council registration tag (compulsory for dogs three months of age and older), and
- microchip (compulsory for new council registrations but recommended for all pets).

Even if your dog already has a microchip, it must wear a council registration tag on its collar and preferably an identification tag. Many pet owners think that collar ID tags are unnecessary if their pets are microchipped. This is not true. If a lost dog is wearing collar identification and is found by a member of the public, it can be reunited with its owner without going to a pound or vet clinic to be scanned for a microchip. To release your dog from a pound, you must pay pound release fees.

Microchips and collar ID tags are only effective if you keep your contact details up-to-date with the register storing your pet's microchip record. Many people move house or change phone numbers and forget to update their pet's microchip records! Microchipping is a quick and simple process. You can have your pet microchipped at a veterinary clinic or by a qualified implanter at a council microchipping event.

If your dog becomes lost and ends up at a pound or vet clinic, a microchip and a pet register collar identification tag can help ensure its safe return **if** you have kept your contact details updated on the database storing your pet's microchip number. Microchips are a good form of permanent identification in pets and help prevent the heartache of a lost animal.

If your dog ends up at a pound and is unidentified, you cannot be reunited, unless you visit in person to identify your dog. Pounds are only required to hold stray and impounded dogs for eight days, after which they may be euthanased or rehoused.



Section 3: Desexing

Dogs should be **desexed** from eight weeks of age by a veterinarian. Older dogs can also be desexed and there are health benefits in doing so, such as a reduced risk of your pet developing certain types of cancer. Desexing your pet will not change its personality or make it fatter. Desexing your pet early will:

- prevent unwanted pregnancies
- lessen the chance of your pet developing medical problems
- reduce the risk of your pet developing mammary or prostatic cancers
- reduce nuisance behaviours such as urine marking, roaming, fighting and territorial behaviour.

There are already many unwanted pets in the community. Desex your pet to prevent more unwanted or unowned animals being born.

Section 4: Veterinary Care

Ensuring your pet has access to regular **veterinary care** is an essential part of being a responsible pet owner. Veterinary treatment is available through private veterinary hospitals, clinics and animal welfare organisations. There are also options for owners to take out private pet health insurance.

The Australian Law associated with owning a dog requires that veterinary care must be provided to an animal if it is suffering. As a pet owner, you can be prosecuted under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* if you fail to do so.

Giving your dog the right **parasite (worm) treatment** is an important aspect of being a responsible pet owner. Heart worm, tape worm, intestinal worm and fleas can all harm your dog. Intestinal worms can transfer to humans and cause serious health problems. Heartworm is fatal in dogs. You should worm your pet at least every three months, depending on the product being used. To be sure you are using the right product, you should consult your vet.

Your dog requires C5 **vaccinations**. Puppies require their first vaccination at 6 to 8 weeks of age. After that, you should consult your vet about booster vaccinations. This is to ensure your dog is immunised against distemper, parvo virus, hepatitis and two types of canine cough.

Your dog **should visit the vet at least once per year** for vaccinations and a general health examination. If your dog is seven years of age or older, you should see the vet more often. Sick dogs also require more veterinary attention. In an emergency situation, such as your dog swallowing poison, you should phone your local veterinary clinic or go to an emergency after hours clinic.



Section 5: Training & Exercise

Dog **behaviour** and safety is the responsibility of the pet owner. All dogs should be trained both for their own safety and that of other people and animals. Dogs need to be trained and exercised daily. Training dogs helps prevent many behavioural problems. Both young and old dogs can be trained.

Training methods used with dogs must be humane and not cause pain or suffering. Dogs must not be exercised in any way attached to a motor vehicle due to the risk of serious injury. Dogs exercised from a bicycle must be healthy and fit and have been trained to be led from a bicycle.



Dog owners should find out about the **dog training clubs** which exist in their area and make arrangements to join a class. Even bad canine habits such as barking, aggression and jumping up can be addressed in obedience class or in consultation with your vet. Obedience training helps prevent many behavioural problems, provides mental stimulation for your dog and helps you form a strong bond with your dog.

Boredom is often a cause of bad canine behaviour. The best method of combating boredom in dogs is: going for walks and playing games with your dog, undertaking a minimum of 20 minutes obedience training each day and socialising your dog with other people and dogs. Good toys are great boredom busters too!

Dogs should be walked at least once or twice per day, depending on the breed. Working dog breeds such as border collies, kelpies and blue heelers need more exercise and mental stimulation than other breeds. Even if you have a large backyard, you should walk your dog, play games with it and take it to obedience training. Dogs should be walked on a lead at all times except in designated off-leash areas, at which time they should be under effective control by the owner.

Dogs should not be exercised if the weather is too hot, as they easily suffer from heat stress and heat stroke. Under no circumstances should dogs be left in cars on hot days. Dogs should not be exercised immediately before or after eating as it can cause problems such as bloat, particularly in deep-chested dogs such as Boxers. Short-coated and elderly dogs feel the cold more and may need a coat and access to a warm bed in cold weather.

Section 6: Socialising your dog



Socialisation of dogs is very important, particularly during the formative period between 8 and 16 weeks of age. Dogs should be familiarised with other dogs and people as well as different places and situations. Socialisation should continue throughout your dog's life. You can discuss how to socialise your dog with your veterinarian or dog trainer.

Dogs should have regular and frequent contact with their owner(s), other people and dogs as they are pack animals and **human contact is important**. You should include your dog in your family activities inside or outside your house. Without such contact, dogs are likely to become dull, apathetic or develop destructive or aggressive behaviours.

Teach family, friends and children how to interact with your dog(s). This includes teaching children to leave dogs alone when eating, sleeping or if sick or injured.

Aggression in dogs should be discouraged. Dogs showing aggressive or nuisance tendencies such as excessive barking should be taken to a vet or dog behaviourist who can advise you on how to manage such behavioural problems.

If you feel you can no longer properly care for your dog, you should discuss your options with an animal welfare organisation or find an appropriate new home for it. Most animal welfare organisations offer surrender services for people who cannot give their pet the care and attention it deserves. Abandonment or dumping of dogs is **illegal** and can lead to suffering, injury and starvation of the animal.

Section 7: Keeping a dog part 1

There are several things you need to know before you make the decision to purchase a dog. The average dog lives for **10 to 15 years** and will cost its owner between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Dogs require a substantial investment of time and money. In addition, you need to consider the size of your backyard, who will be responsible for caring for your dog, (training, exercise and feeding) and who will look after it while you are away. You should also consider how a dog will impact other lifestyle decisions such as having a baby and moving overseas.

Dogs need to be fed a **well-balanced diet** to maintain health, vitality and body weight in the correct range for their breed and age. Factors such as size, age and life stage, activity level, medical requirements and climate impact on the diet required by a dog. Your dog should have access to fresh, **clean water** 24 hours per day.

If you purchase a puppy, they should be fed at least twice a day between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 months. Adult dogs (6 months and older) should be fed at least once per day. The quantity you should feed your dog depends on its breed and size. If you are unsure about how much to feed your dog, you should consult your vet as obesity in dogs causes serious health problems.

The following substances are toxic to your puppy/dog:

- Raisins, nuts and grapes
- Chocolate
- Garlic and onions
- Rhubarb

The following substances are **toxic** to your puppy/dog:

- Rat bait
- Snail bait
- Antifreeze
- Compost

Dogs should be fed dry dog foods, raw bones or pet products such as synthetic bones regularly for good **dental health**. Cooked bones should not be fed as they can splinter and lodge in a dog's throat or intestine causing serious health problems.

Section 8: Keeping a dog part 2

Dogs must be provided with a **weatherproof sleeping area** and shelter from sun, wind and rain, preferably inside. Kennels must be large enough for the dog to stand, turn around and lie comfortably. Comfortable bedding free from fleas must be provided for your dog.

Before you own a dog, you need to ensure you have:

- adequate yard space and fencing
- enough time to care for the dog
- the ability to pay for required food and medical expenses

Dog enclosures/runs need to allow dogs to move around freely, to urinate and defecate away from sleeping and eating areas and be cleaned daily so that enclosures are free from droppings. If you live in an apartment with no backyard, you should consider which type of dog is best for you or if you should really keep a dog at all. If you are at work all day and your dog will be at home all day by itself, you



should consider how much time outside of work you can spend with your dog giving it the care it needs. Dogs are social animals with feelings and should be treated as members of your family. If you go on holidays regularly, you should consider the average cost to house your dog at a boarding kennel. This will cost between \$200 and \$250 per week. All dogs admitted to day care or a boarding kennel must have a current C5 vaccination. Ask your vet for more information if you are unsure about your dog's vaccination history.

In addition to the minimum standards outlined in this handbook, there are legal requirements to owning a pet. The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* sets out the offences for failing to properly care and provide for a dog. If you mistreat your dog, you can be prosecuted for **animal cruelty** under this Act. You may also be fined and your dog could be removed from you by authorities. The legislation also includes requirements for the provision of proper and sufficient food, water, shelter and veterinary treatment. Clean water should be available for your dog 24 hours a day.

Section 9: My dog in the community



As a dog owner, you have a responsibility within your local community. This includes cleaning up after your dog, making sure it is not a nuisance to other people or animals and ensuring your dog is not able to escape from its yard.

You are required to clean up your dog's droppings in all public places, at home and where council signs reinforce this regulation.

Some councils only permit the ownership of two dogs. You need to find out from your local shire or council how many pets you are permitted to own. This can sometimes depend on how much land you have. You can contact your local council or visit their website for more information. Cats and dogs can live together in the one household, however, it depends on the temperament of the cat and dog and how they are introduced to each other.

Dogs need to be confined to their yard when not on a leash or being supervised by their owners in a designated off-leash dog park. If dogs become bored or are not exercised enough, they may try to escape. Loud noises like thunder and fireworks may also unsettle your dog and cause it to try and escape from your yard. You can stop your dog from escaping by:

- Keeping your fences in good condition, making them higher if needed and if necessary filling in the space between the fence and ground to stop your dog digging,
- Making sure family members keep the gates closed,
- Making sure your dog has adequate exercise, toys and training to reduce the desire to escape.

When you take your dog to a dog park, you should **supervise** it at all times. It is unacceptable for your dog to: charge at other dogs, bark excessively at other dogs, mount dogs or people and show aggression towards other dogs or people.

Section 10: Grooming my dog

Grooming your dog is an important part of being a responsible pet owner. Long-haired dogs require more grooming than short-haired dogs. You should brush a long-haired dog as often as required to prevent knotting, which may be everyday. Dogs with unkempt, matted coats develop skin diseases. Some long-haired dogs, such as poodles, will need regular clipping.

You should bath your dog when he/she becomes dirty or smelly. Bathing your dog too frequently can cause skin problems.

You must also give your dog regular **flea treatment**. There are a number of spot-on or oral flea treatments you can give to your dog. Follow the product instructions or consult your vet if you are unsure what dosage to give.

Happy Pet Ownership

Thank you for taking the **Pet Licence 101** test. The Lost Dogs' Home wishes you all the very best in sharing life with your new pet.

