

Many people are frightened or annoyed by dogs that are not leashed in public areas. At no time should your dog become a nuisance or impede other people's enjoyment.

Dogs must be under your control at all times, whether or not it is on a lead.

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 your dog is declared dangerous, or if it is a restricted breed, you will have to put a muzzle on it at all times in a public place. It will also need to wear a special red and yellow striped collar, which will identify it as a dangerous dog.



Roaming dogs

Dogs that roam are potentially a public safety risk to motorists, pedestrians and other animals. Irresponsible owners will be liable for any injuries or damage caused by their dog.

Dog attacks on adults are caused mostly by dogs roaming outside their owners' properties. Children who come into contact with roaming dogs at parks and other public places are more vulnerable to dog attacks.

Keep your dog adequately confined on your property and follow the rules of responsible pet ownership to help prevent your dog attacking someone.

Roaming dogs often approach and sometimes attack other dogs.

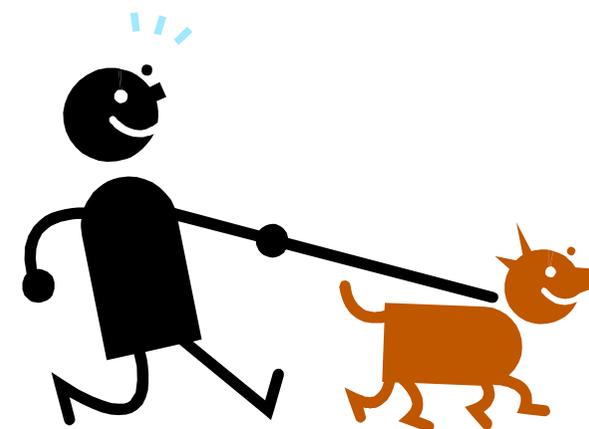
Everyone is entitled to walk in their neighbourhood without being harassed or attacked by uncontrolled and often quite frightening dogs.

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.



Dogs in Public Places



\$20,000 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.

Serious dog attacks

Recent amendments to the Act have introduced separate penalties for a serious dog attack where physical injury occurs, and a minor dog attack where no physical injury occurs.

This means that a dog attack can include a dog aggressively rushing at or attempting to attack a person or animal, as well as tearing clothing, biting or causing physical injury.

Court imposed penalties

Court imposed penalties for dog attacks range from \$3,000 to \$20,000 depending on the seriousness of the attack and whether the dog is known to be dangerous. A local government may also choose to issue an infringement notice.

If you urge your dog to attack, you may receive a penalty of up to \$10,000 and 12 months imprisonment, or \$20,000 and 2 years imprisonment for dangerous dogs.

You may have a defence if your dog is provoked, attacked or abused, or if someone unlawfully enters your premises, including a private residence or vehicle.

Local governments may seek a court order for a dog to be destroyed if it has attacked and caused injury or damage.

Liability for 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.

Preventing dog attacks

To reduce the potential for dog attacks, dog owners should:

- Limit the risky genetics (select an appropriate breed).
- Understand the animal.
- Train the animal.
- Limit the risky circumstances (restrain the animal in potential attack situations).



When dogs need to be on a leash

In urban areas, your dog must always be on a leash in public, except at designated dog exercise areas.

Fines

As the owner, you can be given an on-the-spot fine of \$200 for not having your dog on a leash or for allowing it to roam.

Dog exercise areas

Check with your local government for the location of dog exercise areas in your local area. Even in dog exercise areas, dog owners should still carry a leash at all times, and ensure the dog remains in reasonable proximity.

Dangerous dogs

If a local government declares your dog a "dangerous dog" or it is a restricted breed, then it must be kept on a leash in public places at all times even if it is in a dog exercise area.

Dog excreta

When exercising your dog in a public place, you should always clean up after it.

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 dispose of it.