

Registered & Exempted Dogs

Information & Advice For Exempted Pet Dogs

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Dangerous Dogs Act - the law

The following information is to help the owners and keepers of dogs registered and exempted under the Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) 1991 (as amended) legislation.

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 became law in 1991, it was amended in 1997 and remains in force to this day (2009).

The law prohibits four specific breeds or 'types' of dog, these specially controlled dogs, in practice mainly pit bull terrier types, can only be legally owned if they are registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs (IED) and a 'certificate of exemption' has been issued to the dog's owner.

Owners and keepers must then abide fully with the conditions laid down by the law in order for their certificate of exemption to remain valid and their dog to stay within the law.

Dog owners can not take their own steps to register their dog with the IED. Following an amendment to the law in 1997 a court of law can order a dog to be registered onto the IED as an alternative to destruction.

Index of Exempted Dogs:

The IED is managed by the Animal Welfare section of DEFRA & can be contacted by telephone: 07000 783651 or 07721 036354

If you own a dog, e.g., a pit bull terrier type, which has been ordered by a court to be registered onto the IED, specific conditions will have to be met first (within a designated time) in order to obtain a certification of exemption, these include:

- Neutering
- Micro chipping
- Tattoo of registration number inside rear leg
- Appropriate insurance cover (provided by Pet Plan Ltd)
- Payment of registration fee

During the registration process, dog owners should receive full details from the IED and should contact them directly regarding any questions.

Once the IED is satisfied that these requirements have been met, a certificate of exemption will be issued to you and your dog will be returned home to you, if it has been seized, which is usually the case.

In reply to a freedom of information request, DEFRA confirmed to us that 185 dogs were added to the IED in 2007 and 331 dogs were added in 2008.

Legal Requirements for Exempted Dogs:

The Certificate of Exemption remains valid for the life of the dog, provided that the requirements attached to it are observed. These requirements include:

- 1) that the dog is kept in secure conditions at home so that it cannot escape;

- 2) that the dog is kept in secure conditions when in a public place, i.e. it must be muzzled and held on a lead by someone who is at least 16;
- 3) if asked to do so by a police officer or local authority (dog warden), the keeper of the dog must show the Certificate of Exemption, (or present it to such an officer within 5 days) and immediately display the dog's tattoo and allow the transponder to be read;
- 4) that the third party insurance is kept in force;
- 5) that the Index of Exempted Dogs must be notified of any change of address at which the dog is kept for longer than 30 days.
- 6) that the Index of Exempted Dogs must be notified of the death or export of the dog.

Any breach of any of the above requirements will invalidate the Certificate of Exemption.

As the owner of an exempted dog, it is your responsibility to understand and follow the specific rules applicable to your dog now, for the remainder of your dog's life.

Muzzling and Leash Requirements:

Your dog must be muzzled and held on a lead by someone over the age of 16yrs **at all times when in a public place** (which includes inside your vehicle when it is itself in a public place e.g., on the road).

If you need help with choosing a suitable type of muzzle to fit your dog safely and properly, please contact us. You will need to train your dog to accept wearing a muzzle if it hasn't previously worn one and be comfortable in doing so, please read our guide to muzzling your dog for advice and if you have any questions or concerns don't worry about asking us for help.

A registered dog's muzzle cannot be removed at any time when in a public place, if it is - a criminal offence will have been committed.

Owners cannot remove the muzzle to allow their dog to drink or eat if in a public place. Even if a registered dog is being sick and chocking – there is no legal defence for removing its muzzle.

For this reason, owners of registered dogs have to take special care to safeguard their dogs welfare; especially where dogs may be ill, have a medical condition e.g., epilepsy, or in the case of older dogs and particularly during hot weather.

It is recommended that when your dog is muzzled, the muzzle is of a type that does not inhibit the panting, breathing or drinking of your dog – contact us if you need advice.

Inside the owner's vehicle:

Registered dogs also have to be muzzled and leashed inside your car/vehicle, e.g. on your way home if you collect your dog from the police station, on your way to the vets, to the park etc – AT ALL TIMES.

The High Court has ruled (in 1993) that for the purposes of the Dangerous Dogs Act, the inside of your vehicle is a public place – this means that registered dogs need to be muzzled and held on a leash, by someone over the age of 16yrs, whilst inside your vehicle on the public highway. Even if you use a dog crate – your dog still needs to be muzzled and leashed.

Third party Insurance:

The compulsory Insurance is mandatory and must be renewed on time each year and must be kept up to date in order to comply with the law. It currently costs £42 pa and cover is provided by Pet Plan via the Index of Exempted Dogs.

You should be notified when your yearly insurance renewal is due. If you have difficulty paying the cost of your insurance cover- please contact us.

Specially Controlled Dogs - Offences:

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (DDA), the following provisions and requirements apply to the types of dog that are specially controlled under section 1 of the law.

Any person who contravenes any of the following provisions is guilty of an offence;

- 1) You shall not sell or exchange your dog or give it to anyone or advertise it for sale or as a gift.
- 2) You shall not allow your dog to be in any street, road or place to which the public have access without it being muzzled, kept on a lead and in the control of a person 16 years or older. The dog must be securely fitted with a muzzle sufficient to prevent it biting.
- 3) You shall not abandon your dog or allow it to stray.

The Exemption Certificate and Insurance Certificate should be kept safe in case you need to produce them.

Collar, Leash & Owner ID:

Make sure that your dog leash is in good condition (not excessively worn) and attaches safely to your dog's collar. It should be strong enough not to snap if your dog pulls forward suddenly- e.g., seen a squirrel and wants to give chase.

Make sure your dog's collar fits properly; that it cannot be pulled off over the top of your dog's head if your dog tries to back out of it but is also not too tight, check that the collar is in good condition, smooth inside so it's not rubbing your dog's neck and fit for its job.

It is also a legal requirement (for all dogs with a few exemptions) on the public highway or in a public place to wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on an ID tag attached to the collar.

This rule also applies to registered dogs - you must still have your name & address on the collar or a name tag even though your dog has a tattoo.

 **Health Insurance:**

Health cover is difficult, if not impossible to find, EDDR has contacted several insurance companies recently and none have provided health cover for registered dogs - if you know of an insurance company which does offer cover for registered dogs, please let us know.

As it is unlikely you will have health cover for your dog, it is advisable to think ahead and work out how you will afford to pay veterinary costs in the event of your dog becoming ill or being injured.

 **Advice, Help & Support for Exempted Dogs:**

EDDR volunteers have worked with registered dogs helping them and their owners since the introduction of the legislation.

We have also ourselves cared for registered dogs, of all ages, which could not be rehomed, dogs which had nowhere to turn as they were subjected to the legislation and labelled 'dangerous'. Due to this practical 'hands on' experience with exempted dogs we understand the issues that some owners can encounter, we also understand from experience problems which may sometimes be encountered by the dogs themselves.

Free help and advice is offered for dogs which have been seized and later returned to their responsible owners via court order - e.g. as registered dogs.

Owners sometimes need help when a pet dog is returned from a kennel environment and support is provided by a dedicated and experienced team. Ask for a copy of our 'Seized and Returned Dog' and 'Introduction to Muzzling Your Dog' information guides for pet owners or visit our website for further details.

A dog is registered for life & advice has always been and still is available not only when your dog is ordered registered by the court and exempted by the IED but for the rest of your dog's life.

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For further advice - please contact us:

Email: Info@endangereddogs.com

Helplines: 0844 856 3303 / 07020 934072 / 0844 844 2900