

## **Part 4 - Dog management**

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## Executive summary

The key, critical points for staff to note are:

- An appropriate level of care and management of Police dogs must be provided to maintain public confidence in the health and welfare of Police dogs and any other dog that has been in Police care.
- All Police dogs are owned by the New Zealand Police and are managed on the Commissioner's behalf by the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.
- Police have responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996 and should note that under that Act 'owner' includes any person who has a dog under their control
- Police dogs must only be used for approved Police purposes associated with Police dog training, deployment and day to day management and care.
- Police dogs must be transported in a manner that is safe for the dog and the public.

## Overview

### Introduction

This part of the 'Police dogs' chapter provides direction for the ownership and management of the Police dog population.

### Types of dogs

This table defines the types of dogs used by Police.

| Term                          | Definition  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Police dog</b>             | <p>'Police dog' means a dog that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- undergoing or has successfully completed a course of instruction at the Police Dog Training Centre; and</li> <li>- being used for Police duties.</li> </ul> <p>Section <a href="#">4</a> of the Policing Act 2008 refers.</p> <p>In terms of Police policy relating to Police dogs it also includes a dog that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- owned by Police; or</li> <li>- in the possession or under the control of a Police employee for the purpose of being used by, or trained for Police for any authorised purpose.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Operational Police dog</b> | A Police dog certified as operational.  |

### Rationale

Police dogs are a valuable resource and have a high profile within Police and the wider community. Community interest includes the people who have gifted or sold dogs to Police and those who agree or disagree with the use of dogs for policing work.

It is important to provide an appropriate level of care and management of Police dogs and to maintain public confidence in the health and welfare of Police dogs and any other dog that has been in Police care.

### Police dog population

The Police dog population comprises working, training, breeding and puppy development stock. It can also include retired stock.

### Ownership

All Police dogs are owned by the New Zealand Police and are managed on the Commissioner's behalf by the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.

The transfer of ownership of dogs to Police must be completed before a dog starts any Police training (excluding any assessment prior to acceptance for training). This includes dogs:

- gifted to or purchased by Police
- owned or in the possession of any Police employee for the purpose of training or use as a Police dog.

The instructions in this and other Police dog related chapters do not absolve any Police employee from their responsibilities under the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), and employees should note that under that Act 'owner' includes any person who has a dog under their control.

# Police dogs

## Approved breeds

The breed of dog used for general purpose or patrol policing work in New Zealand is the 'German Shepherd Dog'.

The 'Labrador Retriever', 'Springer Spaniel', and other common retriever breeds and cross-breeds are used for detector roles.

Breeds of dog prohibited under the [Dog Control Amendment Act 2003](#) must not be used as Police dogs.

If another breed of dog is to be considered for Police work and that breed is not commonly accepted as a suitable breed for Police work in New Zealand (including any other breed for general purpose or patrol police work), the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs must seek the Commissioner's authority before allowing that breed to be used for policing work.

## Dog stocks

Police dog stocks are maintained by breeding, purchasing dogs and by receiving dogs as gifts from the public or other services.

## Use of Police dogs

Police dogs must only be used for approved Police purposes associated with Police dog training, deployment and day to day management and care.

Police dogs must not be used for any private or off-duty employment or activity that suggests or represents that the dog is being used for security work or any secondary employment.

Police dogs must not be used in shows, field trials, exhibitions or other demonstrations, unless the OC Dog Section has authorised this and has informed the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs before the activity has taken place.

# Gift and purchase dogs

## Gift dogs

Individual districts and dog sections can accept dogs from the public.

A 'deed of surrender' form (refer Police forms) must be completed whenever a dog that is suitable is gifted to Police. The original form must be forwarded to the Breeding Services Manager, Dog Training Centre in Trentham. See '[Conditions of surrender or purchase](#)'.

## Assessment of dogs offered to Police

Dogs offered to Police range from puppies to adult dogs. The success rate of gift dogs from unproven and unknown working lines becoming Police dogs is very low - therefore the selection practice must be thorough.

When a puppy or dog is accepted from the public a significant administrative, financial and emotional (particularly foster homes) investment commences. It is important that time and resources are not wasted on unsuitable dogs because of hasty decisions and poor assessment practice.

The decision to accept a gift dog for training as a Police dog can be made by the:

- National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs
- OC Dog Section
- Practice Leader: Dog Training
- Breeding Services Manager.

The decision to accept a dog as breeding stock can be made by the:

- National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs
- Breeding Services Manager.

Decisions to accept dogs are based on the actual need for the dog as puppy development, training, working, or breeding stock.

## Age groups of puppies and dogs

- Baby puppy - birth to 3 months
- Puppy - 3 months to 9 months
- Young dog - 9 months to 12 months
- Adolescent dog - 12 to 18 months
- Adult dog - 18 months onwards.

Dogs older than three years should not be accepted.

The decision to accept puppies up to nine months of age must be made by the Breeding Services Manager at the Dog Training Centre. Staff should consult with the breeding manager when offered dogs aged from 9



to 12 months or any dogs that have pedigree papers.

The ideal age for a gift dog is 12 to 24 months. The reason is that the assessment of their character and behaviour is more accurate and training can commence immediately.

## Assessment of gift dogs

This table details the stages of assessment.

| Stage                             | Description  |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| <b>1 - Screening</b>              | Offers of dogs are screened by a telephone interview to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- accept (subject to assessment and conditional acceptance) or decline the offer</li> <li>- refer to another district or breeding services manager</li> <li>- arrange assessment.</li> </ul>   |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
| <b>2 - Assess</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess the dog in the home environment.</li> <li>- Assess the dog away from the home environment (this is vital as home assessment masks many behaviour weaknesses in dogs).</li> </ul>   |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
| <b>3 - Conditional acceptance</b> | If the dog passes the initial assessment arrange to have the dog for a two week trial period to complete assessment.   |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
| <b>4 - Health check</b>           | Once the dog has been identified as suitable have the dog examined by a veterinarian (do not incur any veterinary cost until the dog has passed the behavioural assessments - <a href="#">temperament</a> and <a href="#">drive</a> ).   |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
| <b>5 - Decision</b>               | Final decision to accept or decline. <table border="1" data-bbox="256 1406 1513 1653"> <thead> <tr> <th>If the dog is . . .</th> <th>then you must . . .</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>declined</td> <td>return the dog to the owner.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>accepted</td> <td>complete surrender papers.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | If the dog is . . . | then you must . . . | declined | return the dog to the owner. | accepted | complete surrender papers. |
| If the dog is . . .               | then you must . . .  |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
| declined                          | return the dog to the owner.   |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |
| accepted                          | complete surrender papers.   |                     |                     |          |                              |          |                            |

## Selection criteria

The main selection criteria for assessing dogs include these areas:

- Physical condition
- Health
- Temperament
- Drive.

**Note:** Other factors are taken into account when considering dogs for breeding stock. These are managed by the Breeding Services Manager at the Dog Training Centre.

## Physical condition

The physical assessment includes:

- the breed of the dog and pedigree records
- the size and structure of the dog (relation to breed standards and suitability for Police work)
- the look of the dog (ask yourself - would I feel confident walking down the street with this dog?).

## Health

An assessment of the dog's health is carried out by a veterinarian. This includes checking:

- medical records such as:
  - medical history and vaccination records
  - existing x-rays of hips, elbows and spine
- general body condition, including size and weight
- gait for limps, irregular leg position and instability
- skin and coat
- eyes and ears
- reproductive organs
- mouth and teeth.

## Temperament

One of the most essential traits in a Police dog is sound nerves. This means that the dog must have an even temperament and not display any fear in normal day-to-day situations.

To assess a dog's temperament, its reactions to these situations and environments are observed:

- indoors and outdoors
- confined spaces
- stairs-open and closed environments
- various floor surfaces; e.g. carpet, wood, shiny floors, lino
- various light values, e.g. bright light and completely dark
- around, under and over obstacles
- various heights
- loud noises, raised voices
- familiar and unfamiliar people.

## Drive

Drive refers to the intensity that the dog displays when engaging in an activity or situation, as well as the duration of the intensity; e.g. how intensely and how long the dog will hunt for and retrieve an article.

These areas are assessed:

- How much intensity is shown by the dog when playing with a toy or having a tug-of war?
- Does the dog get bored or tired quickly during the game?
- Does the intensity shown fluctuate depending on the location of the game?
- How possessive is the dog when it has the toy?
- What distracts the dog from the game?

For accuracy, assessment of a dog's temperament and drive must take place outside its normal home environment.

For guidance and advice on assessment contact the Breeding Services Manager at the Dog Training Centre.

## Purchasing dogs

The National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs manages the purchasing of dogs from breeders or the public.

If a district is offered a dog for purchase, the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs will consider the offer including the cost and may authorise the purchase and or any other conditions of the purchase.

## Conditions of surrender or purchase

Police employees must not enter into contractual obligations on behalf of Police on the surrender or purchase of dogs from the public, except as approved by the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs. The only standard condition of surrender that employees may make is the "return to owner", being the return of the dog to the donor if the dog fails initial assessment or is failed during the training process.

## Returning dogs

When a dog is returned to its previous owner (the donor) a 'deed of return' form (refer Police forms) must be completed if the donor had signed a surrender form.

If it becomes apparent the dog is a [dangerous dog](#) in terms of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), the donor's permission should be sought to destroy the dog. If permission is not given, staff must take action to have the dog identified to the local city council as a 'dangerous dog' in terms of the Act.

If it becomes apparent the dog's owner is not a fit and proper person to own a dog (in terms of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#)), or the dog's future welfare may be breached under the Act if it is returned, employees must seek permission from the owner to re-home or destroy the dog. If permission is not given, the local city council should be advised on the dog's return to its owner.

# Breeding

## Breeding programme

The breeding of dogs is controlled by the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs and managed by the Breeding Services Manager at the Dog Training Centre in Trentham.

## Private breeding

Police dogs must not be used or offered for breeding except as part of the New Zealand Police Dog Section breeding programme or on the authority of the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.

Any requests for Police dogs to be used for private breeding must be referred to the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.

# Naming and identification of Police dogs

This section contains the following topics:

- Naming
- Dog record number
- Microchip ID
- Registration

## Naming

The Breeding Services Manager is responsible for the naming of Police dogs. Police employees must not change the name of dogs allocated to them except as authorised by the Breeding Services Manager.

Police dogs should not have the same name as another serving Police dog, including names that are spelt differently but pronounced the same.

Names of Police dogs must portray a professional Police image. When naming a dog, the use of the name operationally, in court and in the media must be considered.

## Dog record number

The Breeding Services Manager is responsible for the allocation of a dog record number for all Police dogs.

## Microchip ID

All Police dogs must have microchip transponder identification. The Breeding Services Manager is responsible for implanting microchip transponders in all stock bred at the Dog Training Centre and in all other Police dogs as they attend training courses.

If any other dog needs or is required to be implanted with a microchip transponder and it is not practicable to do that at the Dog Training Centre, then the Breeding Services Manager should be contacted for guidance as to how it should be done and by whom. When completed the Breeding Services Manager must be provided with the transponder record number.

## Registration

All Police dogs must be registered in accordance with the [Dog Control Act 1996](#). The officer in charge of the particular dog section or the breeding services manager in the case of breeding stock and puppy development programme are responsible for ensuring that all dogs are registered annually.

# Transport of Police dogs

## General

Police dogs must be transported in a manner that is safe for the dog and the public. In most cases purpose built dog vans will be used to transport dogs. There are occasions when dogs must be transported in private vehicles. To transport dogs safely they should be transported in a cage or secured inside the back of the vehicle by a harness.

The following transport practices that must **not** happen:

- The dog must not be allowed to travel with its head (either entirely or partly) out of a window.
- The dog must not travel on the back of an open vehicle (e.g. utility) unless contained in a suitable crate and that crate is secured to the vehicle.
- The dog must not be able to escape through an open window.

## Heat stress

Extreme care must be taken to ensure that dogs do not succumb to heat stress or other injury when travelling in a vehicle or being left in a vehicle.

The handler or person in charge of the Police dog must ensure that there is adequate shelter and ventilation for the dog at all times. Particular care must be taken when the vehicle is parked. Unless the dog is in a Police dog van they should not be left in a vehicle for extended periods of time.

## Helicopters and light aircraft

Extreme care must be taken and control exercised when transporting Police dogs in helicopters or light aircraft prior to boarding, when boarding, during flight and when exiting the aircraft. The rules apply:

- Handlers must ensure that their dog does not contact any flight crew or enter the cockpit area of a helicopter or aircraft.
- Dogs must wear a muzzle.
- Handlers must hold their dog on a short lead and have control of the dogs head at all times.
- When boarding a helicopter, a second person should assist the handler when the dog team is boarding and exiting by holding the dog by the lead or harness to ensure that the dog remains under control.

## Winching

Dog handlers should not deploy a dog from a helicopter by the use of a winch without having first received training in safe and correct winching practice.

Winching must only be carried out using an approved dog winching harness. Police dogs must only be winched/ rappelled using the Mako Harness complete with leg straps, in accordance with the fitting and user instructions. Teams must have undergone a prior static winch before being winched operationally.

# Allocation of Police dogs

## Allocation

The District Dog Section Supervisor, National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs, Practice Leader: Dog Training or Breeding Services Manager allocate Police dogs under their control to individual handlers, foster homes or other people.

## Reallocation

The National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs may reallocate a Police dog from one handler to another and/or from one district to another. Such reallocation requires the endorsement of the Assistant Commissioner: Districts.

Reasons for reallocation include:

- the district, dog section or handler no longer requires the dog
- the policing requirements of the district
- it is in the interests of the handlers health, safety or welfare
- it is in the interests of the dogs health, safety or welfare
- the handler is unable or unwilling to exert appropriate or effective control
- over the dog
- the dog team has been withdrawn from operational service for safety, control or efficiency reasons (as detailed in [certification of Police dog teams](#) policy), and the dog is suitable for reallocation
- the dog is suitable for performing a specific role that is required in the district (such as Armed Offenders Squad work) but the handler is unable or unwilling to perform that role.

## Multi handling

District dog section supervisors may temporarily allocate a handler's dog to another handler or allow another handler to work a handler's dog on an ongoing basis to meet the operational policing needs of a section or district.

Any handler working another handler's dog must comply with the operational certification requirements and process.

## Control of district dog resource

District dog sections have first call on dog resources gifted to or fostered in their respective districts. When a district has no use for a dog, the allocation of that dog to another district is done in consultation with the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.

The National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs will identify the district with the greatest need for the dog resource and match the most suitable dog and/or handler for allocation to that district.

## Care of Police dogs

This section contains the following topics:

- Policy
- General
- 24-hour responsibility
- Dog Allocation Course Training
- Feeding
- Vaccinations
- Cost
- Reporting
- Veterinary care

### Policy

Police dog handlers and Police employees that have been allocated a Police dog must care for and manage the dog as directed by dog section practice and dog section supervisors.

### General

The health, care and housing of Police dogs must be managed in accordance with organisation policy and practice. The Breeding Services Manager at the Dog Training Centre is responsible for the development of health and care practice in consultation with the Centre for Working Dog Health at Massey University.

### 24-hour responsibility

Police employees allocated a Police dog are responsible for the 24-hour security, health, welfare and care of the dog. This includes:

- housing and kennel hygiene
- feeding
- grooming
- exercise
- maintaining preventative health care regimes
- transporting
- supervision and control of the dog
- reporting on the dog's health, care and welfare.

### Dog Allocation Course Training

To ensure that those allocated a Police dog can care for a dog in the appropriate manner from when they are first allocated a dog, the OC Dog Section (or a person trained to deliver the training) must provide 'Dog Allocation Course' training and a course manual at the time of allocation.



## Feeding

Police dogs must only be fed performance type diets that have been Association of AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) tested or otherwise approved by the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs. Variations on diet may also be made on the advice of a veterinarian and or the Service Dog Veterinarian at Massey University.

The National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs and the Procurement Section at [PNHQ](#) are responsible for managing national contracts for the supply of dog food.

## Vaccinations

The Breeding Services Manager provides direction and good practice relating to vaccinations and other preventative health care regimes including worming and parasite control.

## Cost

Individual dog sections are responsible for the cost of maintaining Police dogs, other dogs accepted for assessment or training, and puppies over nine months of age under their care.

The Dog Training Centre will meet the cost of maintaining working stock puppies in districts until the age of nine months and will meet the ongoing cost of maintaining brood bitches and cost associated with using district working dogs for breeding.

## Reporting

Police dog handlers and Police employees that have been allocated a Police dog must report any incident relating to the health, care and welfare of the dog under their control to the OC Dog Section, dog section supervisor or instructor as soon as possible. This includes:

- any injury or illness
- any accident (whether or not the dog is visibly injured) or near miss
- any unusual behaviour not normally seen in the dog
- any concern about the health, care or welfare of the dog
- any veterinary consultation including annual vaccinations
- veterinarian reports about the dog (both verbal and written).

## Veterinary care

The Breeding Services Manager is responsible for directing the general health and care of the Police dog population. Roles and responsibilities include:

- maintaining national records on the health and care of all Police dogs
- acting as liaison between Police and Massey University and other specialist veterinarians
- providing advice to district dog sections on the health and care of the dog population
- directing specialist care interventions.

The OC Dog Section, in consultation with the Breeding Services Manager, is responsible for negotiating veterinarian services for the dogs under their control. Roles and responsibilities include:

- negotiating veterinarian services
- consulting with the Breeding Services Manager about veterinarian services and the health and care of dogs under the OC's control
- providing population and health information to the Breeding Services Manager as required
- consulting with the Breeding Services Manager regarding specialist veterinary care in all instances
- reporting any serious injury or illness relating to a Police dog to the Breeding Services Manager and National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs as soon as practicable
- authorising the veterinary care of dogs under their control.

The roles and responsibilities for dog handlers and Police employees allocated a Police dog include:

- consulting with the OC Dog Section or dog section supervisor before presenting a dog to a veterinarian, or incur any cost relating to the health, care or welfare of the dog
- in an emergency, seeking immediate veterinary assistance and informing the OC Dog Section or dog section supervisor as soon as possible
- presenting the dog to a veterinarian as directed by the OC Dog Section or dog section supervisor
- providing to the dog any worming, treatment, cleaning, grooming or other action as directed by a veterinarian and or the OC Dog Section or dog section supervisor
- providing any reports relating to the veterinary, or health and care of the dog as directed by the OC Dog Section or dog section supervisor.

# Home kennelling of Police dogs

This section contains the following topics:

- Role of Police dogs
- Safety
- General
  - Operational Police dogs and dogs in training
  - Puppies, untrained dogs and breeding stock
  - Other dogs because of their nature and/or behaviour
- Kennelling operational Police dogs and dog in training
  - Kennels
  - Approval and design of kennels
  - Supervision of dogs
  - Exercising dogs at home
  - Annual inspection
  - Approved person
  - Restrictions on what an approved person can do
  - Recording and reporting
- Puppies, foster dogs and breeding stock
- Other dogs because of their nature and/or behaviour

## Role of Police dogs

Police dogs are not pets - they are working dogs and must be managed so that they are ready to work or train. A Police dog always poses a risk when it is not under control because it is able to respond to stimuli in the environment. That response could be because of the nature of the dog and/or the training that it has received and could result in an uncontrolled bite.

The influences in the environment are real and could include unexpected visitors to the property, the behaviour of visitors or occupants on the property, neighbouring children climbing the fence; or activity of people, animals and things outside of the property.

## Safety

The safety of people and the safety of Police dogs are key considerations in providing home kennelling. The basic principle of home kennelling is that when a Police dog is not under the direct control of the handler or an approved person, the dog should be secured in the kennel.

## General

Home kennelling of Police dogs includes all dogs from puppies to operational dogs. While the principles of home kennelling apply to all Police dogs there are specific requirements for the different status of dogs. Most notable is the transition of a puppy or untrained dog to training stock, or where the behaviour or

nature of a young dog or untrained dog may warrant kennelling as if it was in training or operational.

The definitions of 'Police dog stock' for this policy include:

## **Operational Police dogs and dogs in training**

- All Police dogs that are or have been operational.
- All dogs that have commenced the formal training process (from eight months of age).

## **Puppies, untrained dogs and breeding stock**

- All puppies and dogs that have not undergone formal training.
- All puppies and untrained dogs in foster homes.
- All brood bitches or stud dogs (excluding working or training stock).

## **Other dogs because of their nature and/or behaviour**

This includes any dog that because of its nature and/or behaviour requires kennelling as though it was an operational dog or a dog in training.

## **Kennelling operational Police dogs and dog in training**

These guidelines apply to all operational Police dogs and dogs that are undergoing training in any role and include any other dog that, because of their nature or behaviour, should be managed in line with this practice.

## **Kennels**

Kennels are designed and provided to ensure that a Police dog can be contained and is safe. These requirements must be adhered to when home kennelling:

- Only approved kennels must be used for housing Police dogs.
- Dog runs may be attached to the kennel, but the design must prevent the dog from getting out, including scaling or jumping out.

## **Approval and design of kennels**

Kennel designs can be approved as a national supply design by the National

Co-ordinator: Police Dogs, or as a customised design approved by the OC Dog Section.

The design must:

- comply with the [Dogs - Animal Welfare \(Dogs\) Code of Welfare 2010](#)
- comply with any other relevant dog section policy and or practice
- provide safety for the dog and any person approaching the kennel
- secure the dog inside the kennel
- provide a secure lock if required.

## **Supervision of dogs**

When dogs are out of their kennels they must be supervised by the handler or an approved person. In all other circumstances the dog should be secured in the kennel. Supervision includes that the dog is under control, i.e. under physical or immediate voice control.

## Exercising dogs at home

Handlers must ensure that their dogs can be toileted and run at least three times a day when home kennelled.

## Annual inspection

The OC Dog Section or Dog Section Supervisor must conduct a physical inspection of home kennels annually and maintain a record of that inspection and any recommendations or directives given to the handler regarding home kennelling. The inspection should include:

- witnessing and questioning the handler on how the dog is managed in the home environment, including exercising and movement of the dog from the kennel to the dog van
- inspection of the condition and cleanliness of the kennel and surrounds
- inspection of dog food storage.

## Approved person

An approved person is a person who is approved by the OC Dog Section or Dog Section Supervisor to assist a handler in the care and exercising of a Police dog in the home environment. In approving a person the OC Dog Section must take into consideration the nature and behaviour of the dog, the role the dog has been trained to do and the environment in which the dog is kennelled. The minimum criteria for an approved person is that they:

- are able to handle the dog
- will comply with the instructions of the handler.

## Restrictions on what an approved person can do

An approved person may let the dog out of the kennel to toilet and then return the dog to the kennel. They may also provide food and water to the dog in the kennel.

An approved person must not:

- walk the dog or take the dog off the property (except for emergency medical care)
- let the dog out of the kennel when other people (except other approved people or family) are present
- attempt to work or train the dog.

## Recording and reporting

OC Dog Sections and Dog Section supervisors responsible for handlers must keep a record of home inspections and approved persons. Dog handlers must report any incidents out of the ordinary in the home kennelling of a Police dog or when the dog was under the control of an approved person.

## **Puppies, foster dogs and breeding stock**

Guidelines for the care and kennelling of puppies and foster dogs are provided in the Foster Dog Manual. In addition to that manual, Police employees must consider when and if to apply the policy relating to dogs under training because of the nature and/or behaviour of the puppy, foster dog or breeding stock; or because of the environment that the dog is living in.

## **Other dogs because of their nature and/or behaviour**

Where any dog section staff member identifies that any dog in the Police dog population requires kennelling and care as though it was an operational dog or a dog in training, they must apply the relevant policy and practice above.

# Disposal of Police dogs

This section contains the following topics:

- Authority
- Reporting
- General
- Methods
- Appropriate method
- Dangerous dogs
- Rejected gift dogs that are dangerous
- Retirement
- Cost of maintaining retired dogs
- Euthanasia
- Re-homing dogs
  - Checking owner suitability before re-homing a dog
- Gift or sale of dogs

The disposal of Police dogs refers to the appropriate management of Police dogs that are no longer required by Police. Police dogs may be disposed of because they have been retired from operational duty or breeding, withdrawn from working or training, or found to be unsuitable for Police use.

## Authority

The authority of the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs must be sought before a Police dog can be disposed of.

## Reporting

A report detailing the reason for disposal must be completed and submitted to the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs before disposal can be approved.

Reporting templates are provided by the Breeding Services Manager and should be coordinated and directed through the Breeding Services Manager to the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.

## General

The disposal of Police dogs must be managed professionally and with due consideration to the welfare of the individual dog. When considering the appropriate method of disposal staff should take into account:

- the service provided by the dog to Police and the community
- the wishes of the dog's handler
- suitability of a new owner to own the dog
- public safety.

## Methods

Police dogs may be disposed of in a number of ways, but each disposal method can have strict conditions.

The methods of disposal include:

- gifting to a Police dog handler, serving Police employee or other person
- returning to the donor or original owner
- sale to any person
- euthanasia.

## Appropriate method

When determining the appropriate disposal method Police must consider three principles:

- the dog's welfare
- public safety
- any significant future risk for Police.

Dog welfare includes the home environment the dog is to be kept in, the new owner's ability to provide appropriate care and control over the dog and the dog's current health.

Public safety includes the dog's suitability to be disposed of as a pet. Whether the dog is or would become a dangerous dog (in terms of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#)) when disposed of by Police, and or the ability of the new owner to control the dog in accordance with the Act.

Significant future risk exists when the dog's known behaviour or temperament indicates a likelihood that it is or would become a dangerous dog (as defined by the Act). Or the manner in which the dog is going to be kept, or the behaviour or temperament of the dog is likely to attract negative public or local authority comment.

The public often regard dogs (whether trained or not) that have been owned by or in Police care as 'Police dogs'. Therefore, a degree of risk will always exist for Police when re-homing dogs, even if those dogs have been in Police possession for only one day.

## Dangerous dogs

If any dog identified for disposal falls into the category of a dangerous dog in terms of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), the dog may only be disposed of by euthanasia or by retiring into a handler's ownership.

## Rejected gift dogs that are dangerous

Any dog offered to Police that is assessed and found to be unsuitable for Police use must be returned to its owner as soon as possible.

If any Police employee believes the dog is a dangerous dog (in terms of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#)), they must inform the owner of this, advise them of their obligations under the Act and advise them on the best course of action for the dog's future management.



Police advice should err on the side of caution and in most cases recommend that any dangerous dog be destroyed.

Where the owner does not, or appears not to accept Police advice about the dog's status as a dangerous dog, the Police employee should inform the relevant local authority dog control officer of the behaviour that makes the dog dangerous and work with the local authority to appropriately manage the situation.

If returning the dog to the owner would cause a serious risk to public safety for any reason, Police should not return the dog to the owner until that risk is mitigated.

## Retirement

Police dogs that reach the end of their working or breeding life (for any reason) are retired. The dog section officer in charge of the section or work group must determine the suitability of the dog to be retired and to whom.

The handler who last handled the dog should have first option for having the dog and in any case should be consulted regarding the retirement of the dog.

Where the handler does not want the dog, the dog may be offered to any other handler. The dog may also be offered to another Police employee or relative of a handler or retired handler if the person is capable of managing the dog appropriately and there are no public safety issues because of the nature of the dog.

If the dog would fall into the category of a dangerous dog in terms of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), the dog may only be retired into the possession of a serving dog handler or be destroyed by euthanasia.

## Cost of maintaining retired dogs

On disposal or retirement Police discharges its ownership of the dog. The cost of feeding and caring for the dog and any other cost is the responsibility of the new owner.

## Euthanasia

Only registered veterinarians must be used to destroy dogs.

Euthanasia must be considered if a dog is unsuitable for re-homing as a pet because it is a danger to the public or any other person, or is a significant liability for Police, or the dog needs to be destroyed for any other reason considered necessary by a veterinarian or the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs.

## Re-homing dogs

If a Police dog is found to be unsuitable for training or continued training, but is suitable for re-homing as a pet, the dog may be gifted or sold to any suitable person.

Before any dog that has been trained or partly trained is sold or re-homed the suitability of the dog to be re-homed must be considered.

| <b>If...</b>   | <b>then...</b>   |
|--|--|
| the training has not included bite-work training and the dog is suitable to be disposed of as a pet,   | the dog may be gifted or sold to a suitable home.                                      |
| the dog has received training in bite-work and the training has not changed the dog's behaviour to predispose it to bite,                                | it may be gifted or sold to a suitable home.   |
| the dog has received training in bite-work and the training has changed the dog's behaviour to predispose it to bite or to make the dog a dangerous dog, | the criteria for disposing of the dog is the same as retirement of an operational dog. |

## Checking owner suitability before re-homing a dog

Before any dog is sold or re-homed, the prospective owner's suitability to be given a Police dog (or dog in Police possession) must be assessed and transfer documents completed. Follow these steps.

| <b>Step</b> | <b>Action</b>  |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | <p>Check the suitability of the person to own a dog. This can be determined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the appropriateness of that person to be supplied by Police with a dog</li> <li>- criminal records check</li> <li>- checking with the local authority to ensure that the person is not prohibited from owning a dog.</li> </ul> |
| 2           | <p>Check the suitability of the person's property to home the dog. This can be determined by assurances that the property complies with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- any local by-law requirements relating to dogs</li> <li>- any Police requirements.</li> </ul>  |
| 3           | Complete the change of registration before the dog is handed over to the new owner.  |
| 4           | Ensure the new owner signs a Police surrender contract.  |

## Gift or sale of dogs

The decision whether to dispose of a dog by gift or sale must be made in consultation with the National Co-ordinator: Police Dogs. Factors taken into account when considering the appropriate method of disposal are:

- the value of the dog
- the investment made in the dog

- the current dog market
  - the welfare of the dog.
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