



BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT



Dog Owners Handbook

All the information you need regarding dog ownership in the Buller District

**To make a complaint
about a dog, contact
Buller District Council's
Animal Management
Office**

Animal Management Office

6-8 Brougham Street,
PO Box 21, Westport 7866
New Zealand

Freephone 0800 807 239

Phone 03 788 9111

Email info@bdc.govt.nz

Our phone numbers
are available 24/7

Reefton Service Centre

66 Broadway
Reefton 7851

Westport Office

6-8 Brougham Street
Westport 7825



Version date: August 2025

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Rules and regulations

Registration

If you keep a dog, it is a legal requirement to register it. You, the owner, must be 16 years of age to register a dog.

Dogs must be registered before they reach 3 months of age. Registration needs to be renewed annually and must be paid by the 31st July each year.

Dogs can be registered at Council offices in Westport and Reefton during normal office hours of 8.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday. Payments can be made online using your owner number as a reference.

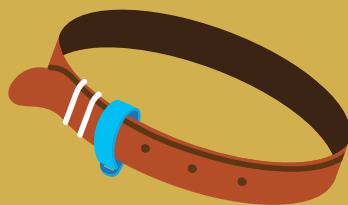
Registered dogs moving into the district receive free registration for the remainder of the registration year, provided the owner produces proof of a current registration and swaps their current tag for a Buller District Council one.

Remember

All dogs need to be registered at or before 12 weeks of age. This is a legal requirement.

Payment of registration is due in full by the 31st of July each year.

Use your owner number as reference when making payments online.



Registration fees

\$89.50 Entire dog or

\$69.50 De-sexed dog

\$67.50 Entire working dog or

\$52.50 De-sexed working dog

Late penalty fees of an extra 50% will be applied from 2 August.

Making payments

Payments can be made online to Buller District Council Westpac **03-0897-0084770-00**

Particulars: Surname & initials

Code: Dog

Reference: Owner number

Or, come into one of our offices:

Westport Office

6-8 Brougham St, Westport 7825
0800 807 239 or 03 788 9111

Reefton Service Centre

66 Broadway, Reefton 7830
0800 808 821 or 03 732 8821

All of our information on dog and animal control can be found on our website:

<https://bullerdc.govt.nz/dogs-and-animal-control/>





Ownership

If the ownership of a dog is changed, the registration of the dog continues in force but, the previous owner and the new owner must advise Council of the change within 14 days.

Please contact either of our offices and they will help facilitate the Notification of Change for you.

As a dog owner you must contact the Buller District Council if you:

- Move house or district
- If any of your details have changed (such as postal address, phone number, email address)
- Give your dog to someone else
- Get a new dog
- Get your dog de-sexed and/or microchipped
- If your dog has passed away

It is the dog owner's responsibility to inform council of any of these changes.

Every owner has a unique number. This can be found on your registration form or you can enquire at council offices.

Animal Management Officers can microchip your dog for only \$20

Contact us on 03 788 9111 to make an appointment.

Microchipping

Tags can easily be lost or swapped between dog owners. Microchipping is a permanent means of identification that links dogs to their owners. Whilst dogs have to be registered every year microchipping is a once only requirement.

The chip is placed between the shoulder blades of the dog and is a painless procedure.

- Dogs newly registered will be required to be microchipped two months after first registration.
- Dogs classed as dangerous, or menacing will need to be microchipped.
- Dogs that are impounded for a second time will not be released from the pound until they are microchipped.
- Only working dogs solely used for the purpose of heading or droving stock are exempt from being microchipped.
- Failure to adhere to the microchipping law will result in a \$300 infringement fine being issued.

What your registration pays for

Enforcement activities

- Property inspections
- Issuing permits
- Court costs
- House to house registration checks
- Classifications of dangerous dogs and follow ups
- Issue and processing of infringement fines

Response to complaints

- Barking
- Wandering/Roaming
- Dog Attacks on people
- Dog attacks on stock

Impounding services

- Maintenance of pound facilities in Westport
- Catching equipment and safety equipment
- Extensive re-homing of dogs
- Destruction of unwanted dogs

Associated costs

- Maintenance of dog register
- Maintenance of signs
- Animal Management Officer education
- Public information and school education
- Administration work
- Office space and computer systems
- Phones and on call numbers

Annual costs

- Registration tags/forms/postage
- Pamphlets and forms of advertising
- Vehicle maintenance, replacement, mileage
- Maintenance of National Dog Database
- 3 full time officers covering Westport, Karamaea, Reefton, Springs Junction and Punakaiki

Dog socialisation

Socialisation is a vital part of ensuring your dog grows into a well-rounded adult.

It is important to socialise your dog with all kinds of animals and people, so your dog learns how to behave in different environments. Preferably this begins when they are puppies. Your puppy/ dog should be socialised or exposed to experiences that, as an adult you will expect it to accept as normal, i.e. meeting other dogs, animals, and people in a friendly, non-aggressive manner.

Our children can also benefit a great deal by having dogs as pets. It teaches them responsibility, respect, and kindness. Parents also need to be good role models as your children will copy the way you treat your family pets. Your pets should then repay this respect and kindness with good manners, loyalty, and love. However, even the best trained and socialised dog could bite if hurt or pushed enough, so children need to know how to behave around dogs safely.



Your dog's wellbeing

Worming and vaccinations

Pregnant bitches:

Should be wormed to reduce the number of worms the pups are born with.

Puppies - worming:

Puppies need to be wormed every 2 weeks from birth to 12 weeks, then every month from 3 – 6 months old, then every 3 months from 6 months or older.

Puppies - vaccinations:

Did you know your puppy needs vaccinations to protect them against Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvo and Kennel Cough?

Puppies need to be vaccinated at 8, 12 & 16 weeks of age, then a booster after a year, and then ongoing regular vaccinations to help keep your dog happy and healthy.

Neutering and spaying

De-sexing your dog benefits dogs, their owners, and the wider community.

Neutering and spaying dogs significantly reduces roaming, lessens diseases within the animal, and reduces aggression and unwanted puppies.



If you are not planning to breed your dog, then de-sexing deserves consideration from around 6 months of age.

The Buller District Council encourages de-sexing by offering a discount on the yearly registration for your neutered or spayed pets.

For more information on the benefits of neutering and spaying contact your local Vet clinic or talk to one of our Animal Management Team.



For more information on the benefits of neutering and spaying contact your local Vet clinic or talk to our Animal Management Team.

Dealing with barking dogs

Nuisance barking can occur for several reasons, including when your dog is cold, hungry, separation anxiety, boredom, attention seeking, guarding, or just excited.

Some solutions to stop nuisance barking and help maintain your neighbour's sanity are:

- Give your dog regular exercise
- Use anti-barking devices, such as a spray collar
- Involve your neighbours...have the conversation
- Take your dog to obedience training
- Provide toys for your dog's amusement
- Screen your dog from visual distractions
- Change your dog from a chain to a run
- Take your dog with you when you leave the property
- Leave your dog inside (laundry or porch)
- Change feeding times, or food type
- Use electronic devices that are available to purchase
- Move the kennel/shelter ("a change is as good as a rest")
- Leave a radio or television set on
- Leave them with a bone or chew toy



Menacing, dangerous and roaming dogs

A dog's behaviour reflects how it is treated and what the owner wants it to be. Any breed or size of dog can be dangerous.

A dog is not allowed to bite, scare, or even intimidate you, another person, or any other animal.

Owners often ask victims not complain or report their dog, telling them that the dog has never done this before but, if the dog attacked you, there is a strong likelihood it will attack someone else.

To make a complaint about a dog, contact the Buller District Council Animal Management office:

03 788 9111 or
0800 807 239
Email info@bdc.govt.nz

Frequently asked questions

Q. What commonly happens to a dog that has attacked?

- A.** Any one of four things:
1. It may be classified as dangerous or menacing and remain with the owner, who will have to meet new safety standards. The dog must be de-sexed to lessen its aggressive tendencies. The council keeps a special track of the dog for the rest of its life
 2. It may be seized and held in custody until safety concerns are met by the owner
 3. The owner could be prosecuted
 4. The dog may be destroyed by an Animal Management Officer or Veterinarian

Q. Does the neighbour need to know if I complain about their dog?

- A.** No. Your name remains confidential, but to legitimise your complaint, you need to tell the Animal Management Officer who you are and provide a contact number



Q. If my dog is aggressive, am I required to put up “Beware of Dog” signs?

A. A sign is a courtesy warning. It does not protect owner liability should the dog bite a legitimate visitor to the property

Q. How do I approach a dog I am unsure of?

A. Present the back of your hand for the dog to sniff (with your fingers in a closed fist)

- Once the dog accepts, stroke the dog under the chin then chest. Don't touch the dog on the back of the neck
- Don't stand or lean over the dog – crouch down if you feel comfortable
- Keep your expression neutral as smiling is baring teeth
- Speak in light and friendly tones

Q. What can I do about dogs that wander onto my property?

A. Please contact either of our Council Offices. Animal Management will be dispatched to secure the dog and locate the owner

Dog Control Bylaw 2002

1202: Control of Dogs

The owner or any person in charge of or having control of any dog, shall keep such dog securely tied up or otherwise effectively confined or under his/her direct control.

1204: Prohibited Areas

Dogs are not allowed in any of the following places:

- The central business and commercial shopping areas of Westport during the hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday; or 10.00 am to 12.00 noon on Saturdays
- Children's playing parks, public paddling pools, hospitals, cemeteries, playing surfaces or sports grounds
- In Westport – the public park of Victoria Square
- In Reefton – the King George VI Jubilee Park
- Any other area where local authority signs are erected prohibiting dogs
- Any recreational or community buildings owned or controlled by the Buller District Council

1204: Leash Control Area

Dogs must be on a leash and under effective control in urban areas and in parks not identified as prohibited areas or exercise areas, or any area that the dog if not on a leash, may injure, intimidate, or cause distress to any person, domestic animal, stock, poultry, or protected wildlife.

1204: Exercise Areas

You can let your dog off the lead at the river edge or the beach front including dune areas. You can also let your dog off the lead in the Westport Domain and the Southern end of Carters Beach Domain. In Reefton the leash free area is The Strand, the area adjacent to the racecourse on Crampton Road reserve and the old cemetery on Buller Road.

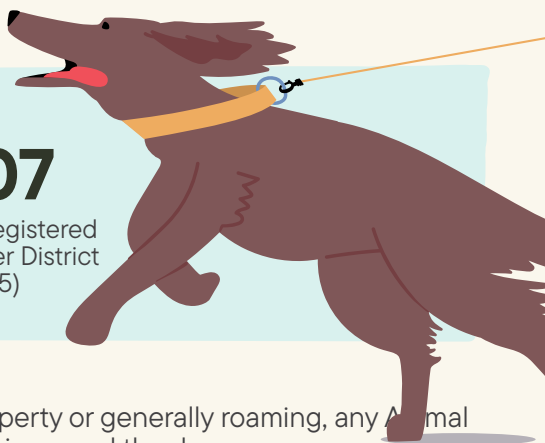
Did you know...?

90%

of all Buller Districts
roaming and impounded
dogs were entire
(not de-sexed)

2,307

dogs are registered
in the Buller District
(2024/2025)



1205: Dog May Be Impounded

If any dog is found outside your property or generally roaming, any Animal Management Officer may seize and impound the dog.

Where a dog is impounded and the owner has good record, the Animal Management Officer may opt to return the dog immediately as long as, the owner can be readily located and is able to receive the dog, is able to pay a recovery fee if applicable, and the dog is over three (3) months of age, is registered, microchipped, and the conditions under which the dog is kept are satisfactory.

As soon as practicable, after any dog wearing a tag or disk has been impounded, the owner will be notified that the dog has been impounded.

Unless:

- The dog is claimed and any fee owing **within seven (7) days of receiving the notice**, the dog may be sold, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of in such a manner as the Animal Management Officer thinks fit.
- Where the owner of any dog is not known or cannot be identified, the council may, after the expiry of seven (7) days from the date of seizure, destroy or dispose of the dog in such a manner as thought fit.

Unlawful removal from pound

It is an offence to remove any dog from the pound and or return it to an owner without the approval of an authorised officer of the council and then only after all the fees owing have been paid and if the dog is over three (3) months of age and is registered.

Impounding fees

\$90	First time within 12 months
\$180	Second time
\$250	Third time

There is also a daily sustenance fee of \$22.50 added for feed and time.

General info

(From the Dog Control Act 1996)

Section 42: Offence of failing to register dog

Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 who is the owner of a dog of a greater age than 3 months unless the dog is registered under this Act for the current registration year. If a territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has failed to comply, a dog control officer may seize and impound the dog; and enter, at any reasonable time, any land or premises (except a dwellinghouse) occupied by the owner of the dog.

Section 48: Change of ownership of dog

1. Where the ownership of any dog is changed, any registration of the dog shall continue in force, but the previous owner and the new owner shall each within 14 days give written notice to the territorial authority or territorial authorities concerned of the change of ownership and of the residential address of the new owner and the address at which the dog will ordinarily be kept.
2. Where the dog is registered, the territorial authority or territorial authorities concerned shall, without fee, record the changes in their registers and the territorial authority in whose district the dog is ordinarily to be kept shall, without fee, issue a new label or disc for the dog.
3. Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$500 who fails to comply with the requirements of subsection (1).
4. It shall be a defence to a charge of failing to comply with the requirements of subsection (1) if the defendant satisfies the court that the previous owner or the new owner, as the case may be, complied with the requirements of that subsection.

Section 54: Obligations of dog owner

1. The owner of any dog shall—
 - (a) ensure that the dog receives proper care and attention and is supplied with proper and sufficient food, water, and shelter; and
 - (b) ensure that the dog receives adequate exercise.
2. Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 who, being the owner of any dog, fails to comply with subsection (1).

Section 55: Barking dogs

1. Where a dog control officer or dog ranger has received a complaint and has reasonable grounds for believing that a nuisance is being created by the persistent and loud barking or howling of any dog, the dog control officer may—
 - (a) enter at any reasonable time upon the land or premises, other than a dwellinghouse, on which the dog is kept, to inspect the conditions under which the dog is kept; and
 - (b) whether or not the dog control officer or dog ranger makes such entry, give the owner of the dog a written notice requiring that person to make such reasonable provision on the property to abate the nuisance as shall be specified in the notice or, if considered necessary, to remove the dog from the land or premises.

Section 57: Dogs attacking persons or animals

1. A person may, for the purpose of stopping an attack, seize or destroy a dog if—
 - (a) the person is attacked by the dog; or
 - (b) the person witnesses the dog attacking any other person, or any stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.
2. The owner of a dog that makes an attack described in subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 in addition to any liability that he or she may incur for any damage caused by the attack.
3. If, in any proceedings under subsection (2), the court is satisfied that the dog has committed an attack described in subsection (1) and that the dog has not been destroyed, the court must make an order for the destruction of the dog unless it is satisfied that the circumstances of the offence were exceptional and do not warrant destruction of the dog.
4. If a person seizes a dog under subsection (1), he or she must, as soon as practicable, deliver the dog into the custody of a dog control officer.



Full copies of the Dog Control Act 1996 – New Zealand legislation can be found online:

www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1996/0013/latest/DLM374410.html



Related Bylaws including Livestock Movements, Keeping of Animals and Control of Dogs can be found at:

bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/bylaws/

Obligations of a dog owner

(From the Dog Control Act 1996)

Control of dogs, generally

1. The owner of any dog shall keep that dog under control at all times.
2. Without limiting the generality of subsection 1 of this section, a dog shall, for the purpose of this Act, be deemed to be not under control –
 - (a.) If found at large on any land or premises other than a public place or private way without the consent (expressed or implied) of the occupier or person in charge of that land or those premises; or
 - (b.) It is found at large in any public place or in any private way in contravention of any regulation or Bylaw.



3. Where a dog is not under control in terms of subsection 2 of this section, the dog control officer/dog ranger may seize the dog and cause it to be returned to its owner or impounded.

- (a.) A dog control officer/dog ranger in fresh pursuit of a dog that is not under control in terms of subsection 2 may, at any reasonable time, enter on any land or premise (except a dwelling house) to seize and impound a dog if –
- (b.) The dog is identified by the dog control officer/dog ranger; and
- (c.) The dog is not under the control of any person or otherwise constrained; and
- (d.) No person, other than the person under the age of 16 years, is present.

4. Where, in the opinion of –

- (a.) The occupier of any land or premises, or of any other person acting with authority of such occupier (whether expressed or implied); or
- (b.) Any person in a public place or in any private way, a dog is likely to cause annoyance or distress to any person or animal or damage any property on the land or premises or in any public place or private way, the occupier or person may seize the dog and cause the dog to be returned to its owner, or to be delivered into the custody of a dog control officer/dog ranger.

5. Nothing in subsection 4 of this section authorises any person to seize any dog that is under direct control of any other person.

6. Where a dog is, under subsection 4 of this section, delivered into the custody of a dog control officer/dog ranger, the dog control officer/dog ranger may cause the dog to be returned to its owner or impounded.

7. (Except as provided in subsection 3A) nothing in this section shall authorise a dog control officer/dog ranger to enter upon any land or premises other than a public place or private way for the purposes of this section without the consent (express or implied) of the occupier or person for the time being in apparent charge of that land or those premises.

Protecting our coastal wildlife

If you walk your dog along the beach

People walking their dogs on the beach do not usually pose too much of a problem, as long as:

- Dogs are **under direct control at all times** (i.e. on a leash, or under voice control)
- Dogs are not allowed to roam in the dunes, scrub and coastal forests above the high tide mark.
- Dogs are kept extra close if walking along the beach after dusk, which is when penguins travel between the sea and their burrows.

If you take your dog white baiting or fishing

You cannot expect a dog to sit quietly as you whitebait or fish for hours! It will wander off into the dunes or up the river, where it may encounter penguin colonies or other coastal wildlife and do damage that could land you in trouble.

Solving this is difficult. You could take a long length of rope to make a dog run while you fish, but frankly dogs and white baiting or fishing generally do not mix, and the best thing is to leave your dog at home.

If you own a dog and live within 200m of the beach

Penguins and other coastal wildlife often nest 200m or more inland and/or close to or even under houses. So, if you live close to the sea and have a dog this can be a problem.

- It is important that you comply with the local Bylaws which state that a dog must be contained and unable to roam away from your section.
- Also make your visitors with dogs aware that, because penguins and other coastal wildlife may be nesting in the area, their dog **must be under control at all times**.



What can happen if your dog kills protected wildlife on the West Coast beaches?

Under the Conservation Act 1987, if your dog attacks and kills any protected wildlife, YOU, as the dog owner could, on conviction, face up to 12 months imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 maximum fine, and the court could also order your dog to be destroyed.

Under the Dog Control Act 1996, if your dog attacks any protected wildlife, YOU, as the dog owner could, on conviction, face a maximum fine of \$3,000. AND if your dog kills any wildlife or causes injury that is necessary to destroy the wildlife to terminate its suffering, then You, on conviction could, face up to 3 (three) years imprisonment, and/or a maximum fine of \$20,000. The court can also order that your dog be destroyed.



ALL DOGS POSE A THREAT TO COASTAL WILDLIFE!

Even small and mild-mannered dogs can harass, maim, or kill penguins and other coastal wildlife.

Dogs are not allowed in national parks, nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries except with express written approval.



[www.doc.govt.nz/
parks-and-recreation/
known-before-you-go/
dog-access/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/known-before-you-go/dog-access/)



Definitions of key terms

(From the Buller District Dog Control Bylaw 1997)

The Bylaw was authorized by the Dog Control Act 1997 and came into effect on the 27th of June 2002.

Owner

Any person over 16 years of age who owns a dog or has a dog in their possession for longer than 72 hours.

Public place

Any place that is open to, or being used by the public and includes aircraft, ship, ferry, or vehicle carrying or available to carry passengers.

Domestic animal

Any animal kept as a domestic pet for the owners' employment.

Effective control

A dog that is securely held by a person on a leash or a chain that is attached to the collar or choker chain around the neck of the dog and is being held by a person who is over the age of seven years and is physically capable of controlling the dog.

Dog Control Officer

An Animal Control Officer or Dog Ranger that has been warranted to carry out the requirements of the Act and these Bylaws.

Impound

To place a dog in a public pound or any vehicle employed in the transporting of dogs to a public place.



Copies of the full Bylaw are available from Council Offices, or located on our website bullerdc.govt.nz

Westport Office
6-8 Brougham St,
Westport 7825
0800 807 239
or 03 788 911

Reefton Service Centre
66 Broadway,
Reefton 7830
0800 808 821
or 03 732 8821

Owner and dog details

Owner details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Owner number: _____

Dog details

Dog name: _____

Breed: _____

Registration tag number 2025: _____

2026: _____	2027: _____	2028: _____
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Dog name: _____

Breed: _____

Registration tag number 2025: _____

2026: _____	2027: _____	2028: _____
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Dog name: _____

Breed: _____

Registration tag number 2025: _____

2026: _____	2027: _____	2028: _____
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Contact details

If you have any further enquiries, please contact one of our Animal Management Officers.

Animal Management Office

Westport Office

6-8 Brougham St, Westport 7825
0800 807 239 or 03 788 911
info@bdc.govt.nz

Reefton Service Centre

66 Broadway, Reefton 7830
0800 808 821 or 03 732 8821
info@bdc.govt.nz

Our phone numbers are available 24/7.

Veterinary services

There are multiple Veterinary Services available throughout the Buller District.

Buller Vets Limited

71 Palmerston Street, Westport 7825
03 789 7934
info@bullervets.co.nz

Keelah Farm Veterinary Services

985 State Highway 69, Cronadun 7895
03 732 8566
julian@keelah.co.nz

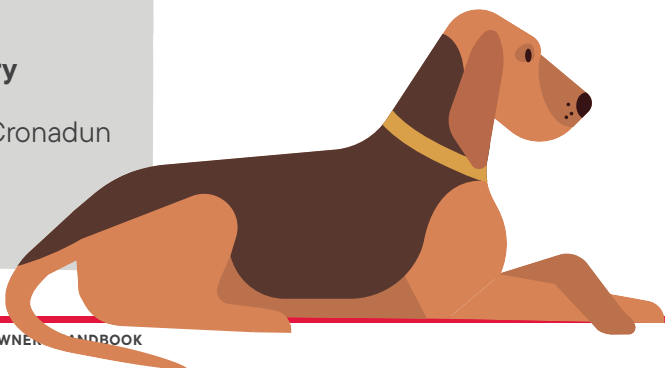


For all animal welfare issues, please contact the **SPCA**
0800 326 6865
Please listen to the options carefully

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



For stock welfare issues, please contact the **Ministry for Primary Industries**
0800 008 333
or info@mpi.govt.nz







BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL

**ANIMAL
MANAGEMENT**



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