

You spoke,  
we listened

Volunteers  
making a difference



N. Ireland

## Volunteer Boarder Development

# Essential Dog Knowledge Handbook



Section B Northern Ireland



## Essential Dog Knowledge

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## Essential Dog Knowledge

### Legal responsibilities as a boarder

There are legal responsibilities which as a boarder you are obliged to comply with. It is important that you are aware of the laws which affect you as the legal carer of the dog. The following list covers the most important regulations which immediately affect you and the dog you are caring for. However please ensure that you also check local or district by-laws as these can vary.

### Identification

#### **The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983**

This regulation prescribes and regulates that dogs must wear a collar with the name and address of the keeper of the dog inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to the collar.

Guide Dogs use a separate identity system, which protects the details of our clients. It is therefore essential the I.D. disk provided by us is worn by our dogs at all times when on any public highway.

### Clearing up after your dog

#### **The Dog Control Orders Regulations 2012**

This regulation makes it an offence for a dog to defecate at any time on land to which this Order applies and a person who is in charge of the dog at that time fails to remove the faeces from the land forthwith.

The penalty for committing an offence contained in a dog control order is a maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000). Alternatively, the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty may be offered in lieu of prosecution.



## Essential Dog Knowledge

### Keeping dogs under control

#### The Dogs (NI) Order 1983

It is a criminal offence for the owner or person in charge of a dog to allow a dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place.

'Out of control' can be defined as causing injury to someone or the perception that it may cause injury. This would apply to behaviours such as barking, jumping up and chasing etc. It can also refer to dogs when in a free running environment. Guide Dogs NI will provide the required training and guidance to ensure that you know how to apply the correct control techniques consistently for times when the dog you are caring for chooses to misbehave (and it will!).

#### The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014)

An attack by a dog on an assistance dog is classed as an aggravated offence which carries the possibility of a prison sentence for the owner of the dog who has caused the attack. An average of 10 guide dogs are attacked every month, causing significant stress and anxiety to the visually impaired owner and the guide dog and potentially may result in the need to retire the dog as a guide. An attack on a training dog does not constitute an attack on an assistance dog. However, all incidents must be reported immediately.

### Protection of livestock

#### The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983

It is extremely important to be careful with the dog you are boarding when close to livestock. The dog should always be kept on a lead. Legislation provides that if a dog 'worries livestock the keeper of the dog and, if it is in the charge of a person other than its keeper, that person also shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £200.'

#### A land owner may shoot a dog if:

- a. that the dog was worrying or was about to worry livestock
- b. that the dog had been worrying livestock, had not left the vicinity and was not in the charge of any person



## Essential Dog Knowledge

### Noise nuisance

**The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** can now be used by local authorities to serve noise abatement notices to the owners of noisy dogs. This can result in the payment of costly fines and, in some cases, the removal of the offending animal.

All Guide Dogs stock need to learn to be quiet when left, to ensure this does not occur.

### Protection of animals

**Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** introduced a duty of care on people to ensure they meet the needs of any animal for which they are responsible.

By following Guide Dogs training and advice we can ensure that all our adult dogs enjoy a happy life which is free from suffering and that all our boarders comply with this law.

We will ensure you always understand your responsibilities on how to comply with the relevant current legislation at each stage of your training. However, if at any time you are concerned that you may be at risk of failing to comply with the law as a result of incorrect equipment, the behaviour of the dog you are caring for, or for any other reason, then please raise this immediately with the dog's handler.

### Next steps

You have now successfully completed the Essential Dog Knowledge section of our boarder development training package. We hope you have enjoyed your training and have learned a little more about dogs and your responsibilities as a volunteer boarder for Guide Dogs.

We will only place a dog with you when we have completed the essential dog care and essential dog handling training with you and we are happy that you feel confident to begin to board for us. Once we have placed a dog with you we will continue to work with you to ensure you are clear about how to handle any issues which occur (and they will!)

As an organisation, Guide Dogs encourages strong communication channels between boarders and ourselves so please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

**Thank you.**

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**N. Ireland**



**T: 0118 9835555**

**E: [guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk)**

**W: [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)**

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