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Volunteer Boarder Development

Essential Dog Knowledge Handbook



Section B Wales



Essential Dog Knowledge

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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.

Canine welfare

In April 2007 the law changed to ensure that all pet owners provide a 'duty of care' to the animals they look after. Failure to do this can lead to prosecution. This legislation is known as **The Animal Welfare Act 2006**. It provides clear guidelines around animal care for all of the UK. (These guidelines were previously known as the Five Freedoms.)

In short it identifies that all animals in our care must be provided with the following basic requirements:

- a suitable environment
- a suitable diet
- the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
- to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

(Reference: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69390/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf)

As the boarder of one of our dogs you are responsible for ensuring this duty of care is met at all times when the dog is in your care.

In summary, when at home all our dogs need a place and a soft bed or blanket to settle on. This area must be safe from harm and checked regularly to ensure no damage can be done to the dogs or others. The location needs to be draught free but also not in full sunshine or next to a radiator.

They need food which is specific to that dog's requirements and access to fresh drinking water. They need companionship and activities which will stimulate and meet their physical and mental needs. This includes regular exercise and mental stimulation in the form of toys and/or bones depending on the individual dog's preferences.



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Additionally, our dogs need regular relief opportunities, appropriate care and considerate handling to prevent any suffering, disease or stress.

Note: At Guide Dogs we refer to relief opportunities as 'spending'.

Generally speaking, dogs should be allowed to roam free within the house. This enables the dogs to learn to settle and to understand that the home is an area for rest and relaxation and not a play area. Please note that we do not permit any of our dogs to be tethered in any way at home

Full training around how to meet these responsibilities will be covered in detail during the 'Essential Dog Care and 'Essential Dog Handling' inputs and handbooks.

Identification

The Control of Dogs Order (1992) says that:

'Every dog while in a highway or in a place of public resort shall wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to it'

Please note that this regulation does not apply to registered guide dogs as 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 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005) can now be used to enforce fines of up to £1,000 for those who fail to pick up after their dogs. Guide Dogs' best practice requires that all dogs' faeces are picked up and correctly disposed of at all times.

'Exceptions to offence (1) Section 1 shall not apply to —

(a) a blind person in charge of a dog being used for that person's guidance;'

This exemption is solely for the sight impaired guide dog owners, and does not exempt other handlers, for example boarders, or puppy walkers.



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Keeping dogs under control

The Road Traffic Act (1988) states that:

'It is an offence to allow a dog on a designated road without it being held on a lead.'

To comply with this all Guide Dogs stock should be on the lead at all times.

The act also states that:

"Dogs travelling in vehicles should not be a nuisance or in any way distract the driver during the journey."

We will cover safe transportation and travel with you during level one training and require all our boarders to adhere strictly to the training and advice we provide on this matter. As always please discuss any concerns with the dog's handler if you require any further clarification.

The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) states that:

'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 any place in England or Wales (whether or not 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. We 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.



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Protection of livestock

The Protection of Livestock Act (1953) states that your dog:

'must not worry (chase or attack) livestock on agricultural land'.

It is essential that all Guide Dogs stock is kept on a lead when close to livestock and that free running is carried out in areas far away from any such animals.

Note: The owner of the livestock has the right to stop a dog from worrying livestock. This includes shooting the dog if necessary.

Noise nuisance

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005) 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.

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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