

# Lost, Stray Or Wandering Dogs



## Community Ranger Services

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## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE YOUR DOG**

- Don't just wait for it to come back. It may be at the Pound, it may be injured or it may be in someone else's property.
- Check around your neighbourhood. Go to places that the dog regularly visits, such as a park or friend's home. Check the local shops and schools.
- Contact the Shire of Capel, and if you live near the shire boundary, contact neighbouring Councils as soon as possible to see if the dog has been impounded. You can also register your dog as lost.
- Check with the local veterinarians. The dog may have been injured and a passer-by may have taken the dog to one.
- Sunrise and sunset are good times to look for your dog, as this is when it is more likely to be on the move.
- Dogs can, and do, wander a long way. Notify neighbouring Councils and veterinarians. If you have recently moved house it is possible that your dog may try to return to your old house.
- Keep looking for several weeks. Sometimes people find dogs and don't report the fact to their local government straight away, as they are worried that it may be destroyed. You may wish to put an advertisement in the local papers or on local radio.

## **IF YOUR DOG IS IMPOUNDED**

Council is required to keep and maintain an impounded dog for seventy-two hours before it is disposed of.

If your dog is adequately identified, you will be notified in writing that it is in the pound.

If your dog is impounded, you must collect it and pay poundage fees. If the dog is unregistered, you must register it before it can be released from the pound.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A STRAY DOG

You should notify the Shire of Capel as soon as possible. Usually a dog owner will notify Council that their dog is missing.

Community Rangers will attend your property and impound the dog. The dog is safe and secure in the pound and will be properly looked after.



## WANDERING DOGS

As a dog owner you must be able to make sure that your dog is not able to wander off your property. This means that you must use one of the methods described in this brochure to keep your dog at home.

If you allow your dog to wander it may be impounded, meaning that you will have to pay a fee to collect your dog. Worse still your dog may be poisoned, injured or even killed on the road.

Your dog may also become involved in an attack on another person or animal. You as the dog owner will be liable for any damage caused by the dog, even though you were not there.

There are penalties of up to \$10,000 that can be imposed on the person responsible for the dog if it attacks another person or animal.



# WAYS TO CONFINE YOUR DOG

## **FENCING**

The type of fence that you need will vary depending on the size and activity level of your dog. The dog must not be able to jump or climb over, dig under or push through the fence.

If your dog is climbing or jumping over the fence, you can add an inward sloping extension to the top of the fence. This works better than just trying to make the fence higher.

Alternatively, you can put up a low internal fence, about one meter from your boundary fence to stop the dog from getting a run-up to the fence, or getting into position to jump the fence.

If the dog is digging out, you may need to dig a trench around the bottom of the fence and fill it with concrete or rubble. It is also effective to attach a strip of chicken wire to the bottom of the fence and then bury it. Then, when the dog digs under the fence it encounters a barrier.

## **SELF LATCHING GATES**

It is a requirement that all gates on the property are self closing, self latching gates. This prevents the gates from being left open accidentally.

## **PEN OR COMPOUND**

Where fencing the whole yard is difficult, dogs may be kept in a pen or compound. A pen or compound needs to be of sufficient size for your dog and should be built in a quiet, sheltered area. Provision should be made in the pen and compound for feed and water, and shelter from the elements.

Do not build the pen or compound close to a neighbour's fence or a busy road or footpath. A concrete floor is better than dirt as it is easier to keep clean and prevents the dog from digging out.

# TETHERING

Tethering the dog is not recommended and is not a legal method of confining your dog. Many a dog has died or been seriously injured because it was tethered.

## PROBLEMS WITH CONFINEMENT

Dogs which are not used to being confined, or have been confined for too long, or are confined inappropriately, may cause problems.

They may begin to bark too much, damage property, injure themselves or try to escape.

To avoid these problems:

- Gradually get the dog used to confinement by keeping it in for short periods to begin with, first with the owner at home and later when the owner goes out. Slowly increase the length of time in which the dog is confined.
- Play with the dog and feed it in it's enclosure so that it doesn't think that the enclosure is punishment.
- Make sure that the enclosure is safe and secure.
- Place the enclosure in a quiet area of your property.
- Ensure that the dog has food, water, shelter, toys and is comfortable.

If the dog tries to escape or barks, give a firm command such as 'NO'. Praise the dog when it is quiet. Only ever let the dog out when it is quiet and well behaved.

If your dog does not respond to your commands, it requires formal obedience training.



## IDENTIFICATION

Many lost dogs never find their way home simply because they have no identification.

Your dog must have a current registration tag and also must have a tag with your name and address on it's collar. On the spot fines of \$50 apply for this not being followed.

Also, in the event of your dog being injured and taken to the veterinarian, the vet can make contact with you immediately if the dog is wearing the appropriate identification tags.

Many veterinarians will not treat a dog if they do not know who the owner is.



## MICROCHIPPING

Microchips are implanted under the dog's skin, between the shoulder blades. Microchips are a permanent means of identifying your dog.

However, it must be remembered that microchipping is not a legally recognized method of identification of a dog. Local Governments are not obliged to scan for microchips. Most local governments, including the Shire of Capel, do scan for microchips.

Even if you have your dog microchipped, you will still need to ensure that it is registered.

Community Rangers are available to discuss this matter further. Our contact details are on the front of this brochure.

