



INFORMATION ON BILL 132

CHANGES TO DOG OWNERS' LIABILITY ACT

The Act covers all breeds of dogs but has specific regulations for pit bull owners.

These changes come into effect on August 29, 2005, with a transition period of sixty days (until October 28/05) for pit bull owners to leash, muzzle and have the dog sterilized.

The definition of a "pit bull" includes:

A pit bull terrier

A Staffordshire bull terrier

An American Staffordshire terrier

An American pit bull terrier, and

A dog that has the appearance and physical characteristics that are substantially similar to those of dogs referred to above.

The following information is provided to help understand the legislation and does not constitute legal advice.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Now that the amendments are law, do I have to send my pit bull out of Ontario or have it euthanised?

Owners of pit bulls (owned in Ontario before the legislation becomes effective (August 29, 2005) or those born in Ontario within 90 days of the day that the legislation becomes effective) may keep their pit bulls, provided they comply with the new regulations.

2. Does my pit bull have to be muzzled and leashed?

Yes, after October 28, 2005, when a pit bull is off the owner's property, it must be muzzled and leashed (leash to be a maximum length of 1.8 metres).



3. Does my pit bull have to be sterilized?

Yes, a pit bull has to be sterilized by October 28, 2005 or before it is 36 weeks old. If a pit bull meets the requirements of a show dog, then it does not have to be sterilized.

4. What happens if a dog attacks or bites a domestic animal or person?

A proceeding under Part IX of the Provincial Offences Act may be commenced in the Ontario Court of Justice against the dog's owner.

A proceeding may be commenced if:

- a) the dog has bitten or attacked a person or domestic animal;
- b) the dog has behaved in a manner that poses a menace to the safety of persons or domestic animals; or the owner did not exercise reasonable precautions to prevent the dog from:
 - (i) biting or attacking a person or domestic animal, or
 - (ii) behaving in a manner that poses a menace to the safety of persons or domestic animals.

If the court finds the dog has bitten or attacked a person or domestic animal, the court may order:

- a) that the dog be destroyed in the manner specified in the order; or
- b) that the owner of the dog take measures specified in the order for the more effective control of the dog.

Examples of measures for more effective control:

- a) Confining the dog on the owner's property.
- b) Restraining the dog by means of a leash.
- c) Restraining the dog by means of a muzzle.
- d) Posting warning signs.

However, if the court finds that a pit bull has bitten or attacked a person or domestic animal, or behaved in a manner that poses a menace to the safety of persons or domestic animals, or the owner contravened a provision of the Act, the court shall order the destruction of the pit bull.

The maximum fine has been increased to \$10,000.00 and/or six months in prison. A corporation can receive a maximum fine of \$60,000.00.

In addition to a fine, the court may order the person convicted to make compensation or restitution in relation to the offence.

5. Do I have to register my pit bull?

Yes, all dogs within the municipality have to be licenced.

6. I am being harassed when walking in public with my pit bull. What should I do?

The fact that the Provincial government has chosen to ban pit bulls is no justification for harassment of pit bull owners. A pit bull owner, who is subject to harassment that may constitute criminal activity and/or fear for their safety, should contact the police.

7. What if I want to complain about a dog? Who do I call?

Animal Control at 1-800-898-8606

**For further information contact the
By-Law Enforcement Department:
(905) 640-1910 or
(905) 895-5299 ext. 254/258**



For complete details on the Dog Owners Liability Act:
www.e-laws.gov.on.ca