

Being a Good Pet Neighbor

Frequently Asked Questions

Responsible guardianship of any pet means that the pet guardian makes sure the BC SPCA 5 freedoms are allowed for, and ensure that the animal does not contribute to the pet overpopulation and is a well-adjusted member of the community.

The 5 freedoms are;

- ~ Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- ~ Freedom from discomfort
- ~ Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- ~ Freedom from distress (physical and emotional i.e. deprived of mental stimulation)
- ~ Freedom to express behavior that promotes well being

As with most municipalities in BC, the District of Chetwynd has enacted a Dog control, Licensing and Ticketing Bylaw. The complete Dog control, Licensing and Ticketing Bylaw # 908, 2008 can be found on the District of Chetwynd website under the heading “municipal office” and follow the link entitled “bylaws”.

My dog is an inside dog and never leaves my sight; do I still need to have a license for her?

- ❖ *Yes, the bylaw requires that all dogs have license tags. Things happen and from time to time even the best behaved and cared for dogs have been known to wander and the tag provides a quick way for The District to be able to return the dog home.*

My dog is trained to walk beside me and respond to my commands; do I need to keep him leashed?

- ❖ *Yes, the bylaw requires that all dogs are on a leash and in the control of a competent person at all times when off private property. This is for the safety and protection of the dog and the owner. Should the leashed dog be distracted or another dog come up to him, it is important that the owner can maintain control and keep him out of harm's way.*

I have just adopted a dog/puppy; what are my responsibilities with the District?

- ❖ *All dogs are required to be licensed from the age of 8 weeks old. This will aid the animal control officer to find you as soon as possible should your dog go missing for any reason.*
- ❖ *All dogs are required to be on a leash and in the care of a competent person while of private property*
- ❖ *You are required to remove your dog's excrement from any public property*
- ❖ *A maximum of 2 dogs per household is in place to prevent packing of dogs*
- ❖ *Training for your dog is needed to prevent barking disturbance; biting or threatening behaviour, and it will make him easier for you to live with. The animal control officer has information sheets available for specific training issues you may have.*

- ❖ *The SPCA 5 freedoms are in effect in the District's bylaw which includes providing food, water (fresh and potable), regular exercise, veterinary care, a safe environment, the opportunity to express behaviour that promotes well-being.*

Where do I get a dog license?

- ❖ *The District of Chetwynd office is located at 5400 North Access road, just behind the TD Bank (across from A&W)*

At what age does my puppy require a license?

- ❖ *8 weeks*

I am concerned about the welfare of a dog, how do I report this?

- ❖ *Do not attempt to intervene on the behalf of the dog, often those who abuse animals will also abuse humans, it could be dangerous.*
- ❖ *The District of Chetwynd's bylaw does have sections for the welfare of dogs and have defined methods for enforcement. Call the animal control officer at (250)401-4119 to report such issues. The investigation and enforcement of these types of issues can take time to resolve so please be patient. You may be required to provide a written statement as to what you witnessed; however, under the PCA (prevention of cruelty to animals) Act of BC you may remain anonymous and if you choose to give us your information we will not reveal your information to anyone. The other party has a right to see the statements but not to know who made them.*
- ❖ *Issues with animal cruelty or abandonment that involve animals other than dogs, or are more involved than our bylaw provides for will be referred to the SPCA Special Constable out of Dawson Creek as they have more tools at their disposal, they can press criminal charges.*

There is a dog in my neighborhood that is constantly barking or whining; what can I do?

- ❖ *First and foremost, don't wait until you are completely fed up and frustrated with the situation before you report a noisy dog. The investigation and enforcement takes time and if you are already upset it can seem much longer.*
- ❖ *Noisy dogs must be reported in writing, there are forms available at the District office, or you can simply write out a statement on your own. The statement must include as much information as you can, such as time of day that the noise is at its worst, the location and description of the dog in question (preferably a street address), and your name, address and phone number. Anonymous reports are not investigated; this is so that we can follow up with you to ensure the problem is solved. Your personal information is not released to the owner of the problem dog; however, if the issue needs to go to court you will be required to testify in open court. It is very rare that the issue goes to that extreme; but, it does happen.*
- ❖ *The animal control officer will deliver noise logs to surrounding neighbors to verify the situation and at the same time will deliver a notice to the residence where the dog resides. The dog owner receives information regarding training for a noisy dog with many helpful hints. He is then given about 10 days to implement the training before further action is taken. If the problem remains it is required that written complaints, again, be received by the District and fines can be imposed,*

this is the case for each step in the process. Our office must be able to provide the court with documented evidence that the noise does indeed happen and is disturbing the neighbourhood.

My dog is constantly barking, what can I do about it before my neighbours complain?

- ❖ *There are many training options available for several different behaviour issue involving dogs. The animal control officer has training sheets available to the public, just call and ask.*
- ❖ *Keeping the dog busy when left alone can be accomplished with a Kong toy filled with soft dog food and frozen or a milk jug with small holes and the dog's favorite treat inside.*
- ❖ *Clicker training works very well for most training issues, you don't have to use a commercial clicker you can use a snap of the fingers or a sound that you make with your tongue. The focus of this type of training is to reward the good behaviour and ignore the bad. If you want the dog to sit, for example, you stand and wait until the dog sits (even for a millisecond) and "click" then treat. The click is faster and the dog will relate reward with sitting. Further information on this type of training can be found at www.clickertraining.com or www.clickandtreat.com*
- ❖ *Many people opt to use bark collars, the important thing to remember here is to ensure you purchase a humane collar. It has been found that the shock type collars are the least effective and are inhumane. There are two other options one being the citronella spray collar and sonic collars. There are many arguments both pro and con for the collars; but, most trainers agree that they are less effective than other training methods.*

There is a dog that seems to be aggressive and I am concerned for the safety of others; what should I do?

- ❖ *Aggressive or dangerous dogs must be reported to the animal control officer. This type of complaint must be in writing with a full description of the dog and where it lives (if known). You are required to provide your name, address, phone number, and birthdate in the statement. Bring your statement into the District Office or call the animal control officer for pick up. There may be further forms and/or statements required depending on the severity of the incident you are reporting.*
- ❖ *NEVER attempt to get between a dog that is attacking and the focus of his attack as he will likely turn his attack on you and you will be of no use to the victim. Use a stern voice and firmly talk to the dog using common commands like "down", or "sit". If you are the focus of the attack using the same stern voice use words like "go home" or "get" do not yell just use a stern voice. Do not turn your back to him and do not run. Keep a non-dominant posture like tilting your head to one side and avoid making eye contact, while still standing with your shoulders straight and back. Making eye contact or bending over the dog will make him feel threatened and increase the likelihood of injury.*

My dog behaves aggressively in certain situations, is there something I can do to prevent future problems?

- ❖ *Yes, there are many training options available for many different training issues. Call the animal control officer at (250)401-4119 and we can make up a package of information specific to your needs.*
- ❖ *If you believe your dog may be dangerous to others, it is your responsibility to keep the dog in a well contained area on your property so he may not escape. Muzzling during walks is a good idea for dogs that are prone to attacking other animals; and the person walking the dog must be able to keep him under control at all times.*

There are cats everywhere in my neighborhood; is there anything that can be done about them?

- ❖ *Though there have been many complaints about cats in the past several years; we do not handle cat issues in the bylaw. Cats are nature's vermin control and therefore have a right to roam. We do understand that they can multiply quickly and create a nuisance; however, our bylaw only addresses the control of dogs.*
- ❖ *If you have found a cat that is injured or very sick; call we may be able to help.*
- ❖ *Concerns regarding the welfare of owned cats or the possible hoarding of cats or other animals should be reported to the SPCA at (250)782-2444.*

Are there any regulations regarding dogs in the back of pickups?

- ❖ *Yes, it is addressed in the Motor Vehicle Act as well as in our Bylaw. All dogs must be secured within a kennel that is strapped or bolted down, or be harnessed to the center of the pickup box when riding in an open box pickup. This is to prevent the dog from jumping or falling out of the vehicle and being injured.*
- ❖ *Though not often enforced, the Motor Vehicle Act also requires that dogs riding inside a vehicle be seat belted in with a special harness to prevent the dog from distracting the driver.*