

Dog Control Bylaw 2025

The Christchurch City Council makes this bylaw under section 20 of the Dog Control Act 1996

1. SHORT TITLE AND COMMENCEMENT

- (1) This bylaw is the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Bylaw 2025. This bylaw comes into force on 3 November 2025.

2. PURPOSE

- (1) The purpose of this bylaw is:
- (a) to balance the recreational needs of dogs and their owners with appropriate controls to minimise the potential for harm, distress or nuisance that may be caused by dogs
 - (b) to regulate dog-related matters to enable the enforcement of the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025.

3. OBJECTIVES

- (1) The objectives of this bylaw are:
- (a) to promote the responsible management of dogs in public places
 - (b) to provide for the recreational needs of dogs and their owners
 - (c) to minimise the potential for dogs to cause harm, distress or nuisance to the community, animals and wildlife.

4. INTERPRETATION

- (1) This bylaw should be read in conjunction with the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025.
- (2) In this bylaw, unless the context otherwise requires:

COUNCIL means the Christchurch City Council

DISABILITY ASSIST DOG has the same meaning as section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996 *and generally means any dog certified to assist a person with a visual, hearing, mobility or other disability*

DOG EXERCISE AREA	means an area that is recommended and known to be a good place to exercise dogs off-leash. Such areas are generally not fenced and do not have the same equipment or facilities as a Dog Park
DOG PARK	means Council land set aside and designed to allow dogs a space to exercise with other dogs and their owners, in a dog-friendly environment. Such areas are generally fenced, have dog-related equipment or facilities, and display signage indicating they are a Dog Park
FORMED TRACK	means a purpose-built or constructed track or path surfaced with materials such as aggregate, shingle, hoggin or compacted clay, or identified as a track through signage. Excludes tracks worn through informal use.
GREENSPACE	means any park or reserve, any stormwater asset with recreational access, or any similar area.
HANDLER	means any person who is in control of a working dog, and is not the owner of the working dog
LEASH	means an adequate restraint, and may include a lead attached to a collar or harness, that allows for the control of a dog when in a public place
LEASHED AREA	means any public place specified in clause 9 of this bylaw or in the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025 where dogs must be on a leash
NUISANCE	means anything which interferes with or threatens the health, safety or enjoyment of any person, or the health and safety of any animal, and includes things such as barking at, chasing, rushing at, or otherwise causing annoyance or distress
OWNER	has the same meaning as in section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996, <i>and generally means the person who owns a dog, the parent or guardian of someone who is under the age of 16 who owns a dog, or a person who is looking after a dog and is responsible for it</i>
PATH	means any footpath, shared path or formed track
PROHIBITED AREA	means any public place specified in clause 8 of this bylaw or in the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025 where dogs are prohibited
PUBLIC PLACE	has the same meaning as in section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996, <i>and generally means a place that is open to the public whether or not it is private property</i>

ROAD	<p>means any land that is designed to facilitate the movement of motor vehicles from one place to another (whether sealed or not), and includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • associated pedestrian areas (such as footpaths); • the margins alongside roads, whether sealed or not (such as berms and verges); • private ways; • state highways; and • car parks (whether or not located on land controlled by the Council). <p>This definition excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unformed legal roads; • beaches; and • any driveway located on private land.
SHARED PATH	<p>means a footpath, a cycle path, a cycle track, or some other kind of path that may be used by some or all or of the following persons at the same time -</p> <p>(a) cyclists;</p> <p>(b) pedestrians;</p> <p>(c) riders of mobility devices;</p> <p>(d) riders of wheeled recreational devices.</p>
SHORT LEASH	<p>means a leash that is no longer than 1.5 metres, and if extendable, is locked at a length of no longer than 1.5 metres.</p> <p><i>Explanatory note: This only applies in an area that specifies the use of a short leash, and not in all Leashed Areas.</i></p>
SUMMER BEACH PROHIBITION AREA	<p>means beaches or sections of coastline specified in the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025 where dogs are prohibited between 1 November and 31 March, and between 9am and 7pm, to protect swimming and recreation activities from dog-related nuisances</p>
WORKING DOG	<p>has the same meaning as section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996, <i>and generally means any dog carrying out functions and duties:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>relating to farming, such as the herding of stock</i> • <i>under the direction of a government department or state employee undertaking responsibilities such as those relating to policing, defence, corrections, customs, security, biosecurity, pest management, emergency management or conservation</i> • <i>under the direction of a private security guard in the execution of their duties</i>

- (3) This bylaw contains explanatory notes, which are not part of the bylaw. The Council may add, amend or delete explanatory notes at any time without amending the bylaw.

Explanatory note: Explanatory notes are used for a number of reasons, including to explain the intent of a clause in less formal language, to include additional helpful information, or because the information may be subject to change and need to be updated before the bylaw itself has to be updated.

5. CONTROL OF DOGS IN ALL PUBLIC PLACES AND AT ALL TIMES

- (1) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog must keep their dog under effective control in all public places and at all times.

Explanatory note: If an area is not a leashed area or prohibited area in the Council's Dog Control Policy 2025, dogs may be exercised off-leash, provided they are under effective control. The Dog Control Act also requires the owner or person in charge of a dog to carry a leash when taking their dog into public places, whether or not it is a Leashed Area. This requirement does not apply to working dogs in public places.

- (2) In order to comply with clause 5(1), the owner or person in charge of the dog must:
 - (a) actively pay attention to the dog and what it is doing;
 - (b) be close enough to the dog to quickly respond to any issues;
 - (c) ensure the dog remains responsive to commands, with prompt recall; and
 - (d) ensure the dog does not create a nuisance to any other person, or to any stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.
- (3) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog in a public place must keep their dog leashed if they cannot meet the requirements for under effective control, even if the area does not require dogs to be leashed.
- (4) No person may take more than the maximum number of dogs into any public place, unless they have an exemption from the Council enabling them to be responsible for more dogs via a Dog Limit Exemption (see clause 13):
 - (a) the maximum number of dogs is four dogs at any one time; and
 - (b) the maximum number of dogs that may be off-leash at any one time is two dogs.

Explanatory note: For clarity, any prohibited and leashed rules continue to apply, and off-leash dogs must be under effective control. A person can have up to two dogs off-leash and a maximum of four dogs in total at any one time (ie two leashed and two off-leash). The limit also applies at dog parks and in dog exercise areas.

- (5) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog must carry plastic, recycled or compostable bags or other effective means to remove and dispose of any fouling (dog faeces) when in public places with their dog.
- (6) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog must remove and appropriately dispose of any fouling (dog faeces) produced by their dog in public places or on land that is not their own land.

Explanatory note: Dog faeces can harbour diseases and parasites that make other dogs or people unwell. If left on the ground, dog faeces will contaminate waterways. Christchurch has a high number of dogs, and it is important that dog owners take responsibility for their own dogs so that dogs can continue to enjoy access to a wide range of public places. Bags are an ideal way of picking up and removing dog faeces. Despite using a compostable or biodegradable bag, dog faeces should always be disposed of in a rubbish bin or Council red wheelie bin (it cannot be composted through the green waste wheelie bin system).

6. LEASHED AND PROHIBITED DOG CONTROL AREAS

- (1) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog must ensure that their dog is kept on a leash in a public place designated as a Leashed Area.
- (2) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog must ensure that their dog does not enter or remain in any public place designated as a Prohibited Area.

7. SPECIFIC LEASHED AND PROHIBITED DOG CONTROL AREAS

- (1) The Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025 contains tables listing the specific public places where leashed and prohibited dog controls apply.
- (2) Dogs are prohibited from specific beaches (Summer Beach Prohibition Areas) during summer (from 1 November to 31 March and between the hours of 9am and 7pm). These beaches are listed in the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025.

***Explanatory note:** You must have your dog under effective control in public places that are not listed as Leashed Areas or Prohibited Areas.*

8. GENERAL PROHIBITED DOG CONTROL AREAS

(A) ALL COUNCIL CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

- (i) Dogs are prohibited from being:
 - a. within any fenced playground area;
 - b. on any specially surfaced playground area;
 - c. within one metre of any fenced or surfaced playground area; or
 - d. within one metre of any playground equipment where there is no fence or special surface.

(B) ALL COUNCIL SKATEPARKS AND PUMP TRACKS

- (i) Dogs are prohibited on skatepark and pump track surfaces, and from being within one metre of the perimeter of any skatepark or pump track.

(C) ALL COUNCIL SWIMMING POOLS AND PADDLING POOLS

- (i) Dogs are prohibited from being inside any fenced Council paddling pool area, and from being within one metre of any unfenced Council paddling pool.
- (ii) Dogs are prohibited from entering any Council swimming pool facilities.

***Explanatory note:** The prohibition does not apply to organised Council events designed for dogs at Council swimming or paddling pools.*

9. GENERAL LEASHED DOG CONTROL AREAS

(A) ALL ROADS, SHARED PATHS, FOOTPATHS, PEDESTRIAN AREAS AND CAR PARKING AREAS

- (i) Dogs must be on a short leash on all roads, and on all shared paths, footpaths, and pedestrian areas on or near roads, and in car parking areas.

***Explanatory note:** For the sake of clarity, 'road' includes the margins alongside roads, whether sealed or not (such as berms and verges), as well as state highways and private ways, but excludes beaches.*

(B) ALL PATHS IN GREENSPACE AREAS

- (i) Dogs must be leashed on all paths in greenspace areas where dogs are allowed.

- (ii) This does not apply to Bottle Lake Forest Park (which is a dog exercise area), or to any paths within fenced dog parks or exercise areas.

Explanatory note: The following comments apply to greenspace areas **where there are no other leashing requirements or prohibited rules**. In these areas:

- Dogs must be leashed when being walked along paths
- Dogs do not have to be leashed to briefly cross a path if the way is clear
- A short leash is recommended when paths are busy
- A dog can be walked near a path off-leash if it is under effective control.

(C) ALL COUNCIL CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS

- (i) Dogs must be on a leash in the grounds of Council-managed cemeteries and in memorial areas.

(D) ALL COUNCIL BOAT RAMPS AND SLIPWAYS

- (i) Dogs must be on a leash on and in the vicinity of all Council boat ramps and slipways.

Explanatory note: For the sake of clarity (and as set out above), dogs must be on a leash on all 'roads', which includes those around boat ramps, slipways and other waterfront and marina-related areas where vehicles manoeuvre, including car park areas.

(E) ALL WHARVES, JETTIES AND BOARDWALKS

- (i) Dogs must be on a leash on all wharves, jetties and boardwalks.

Explanatory note: Unless dogs are otherwise prohibited, such as on New Brighton Pier. Dogs are required to be on a leash to protect health and safety. Any hooks or fishing line left behind on wharves or jetties may present a danger to dogs, so dogs should be leashed for their own safety. Wharves, jetties and boardwalks are narrow spaces and dogs should be under good control. Boardwalks are often part of paths or tracks, so dogs are required to be leashed for consistency.

(F) ALL SPORTS FIELDS DURING GAMES AND PRACTICE SESSIONS

- (i) Dogs must be leashed on all sports fields during games and practice sessions. This applies to the playing area (marked by line-marking, cones, flags, or other means), and within five metres of the playing area. Dogs may be exercised under effective control outside of this area, and at other times in the area, unless other rules apply.

Explanatory note: Dogs are required to be leashed to protect health and safety and to prevent interference with games. It is especially important that people pick-up after their dogs on sports fields.

(G) ALL COMMUNITY GARDEN AREAS

- (i) Dogs must be leashed in and around all community garden areas.

Explanatory note: Dogs must be leashed in and around all community gardens to protect health and safety and prevent damage to gardens and food crops.

10. EXCEPTIONS TO LEASHED AND PROHIBITED DOG CONTROL AREAS

- (1) Nothing in this bylaw restricting access to any public place applies to disability assist dogs.
- (2) Nothing in this bylaw restricting access to any public place applies to a working dog that is under the effective control of its owner or handler while that dog is being worked or while it is being taken to and from its work.
- (3) Nothing in this bylaw restricting access to any public place applies to any dog that is being worked as a hunting dog by a person undertaking legal hunting activities.
- (4) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog may enter a beach area designated as a Summer Beach Prohibition Area during summer hours with their dog on a short leash and only for the purpose of passing through, and must ensure that their dog does not remain in the area.

11. SPECIAL DOG CONTROL AREAS

(A) DOG PARKS

- (i) No dog owner or person in charge of a dog may leave a dog unattended at a Dog Park.
- (ii) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog at a Dog Park must comply with the obligations set out in clause 5 of this bylaw.
- (iii) Dog Parks are listed in the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025.

***Explanatory note:** Having your dog under effective control is as much about the safety of your dog as it is about the safety of other dogs and other people at Dog Parks and in Dog Exercise Areas.*

(B) DOG EXERCISE AREAS

- (i) No dog owner or person in charge of a dog may leave a dog unattended at a Dog Exercise Area.
- (ii) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog at a Dog Exercise Area must comply with the obligations set out in clause 5 of this bylaw.
- (iii) Dog Exercise Areas are listed in the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Policy 2025.

12. LICENCE FOR MORE THAN TWO DOGS

- (1) Where more than two dogs over the age of three months are kept at the same property, and the property is smaller than one hectare (10,000m²), the owner or owners of those dogs must obtain a licence.

***Explanatory note:** This requirement is about reducing the potential for nuisance arising from having too many dogs on small properties, and where neighbours are in close proximity. Only one licence needs to be obtained for a property, but the application must contain the names of all registered dog owners of dogs kept at the property.*

- (2) The owner(s) of more than two dogs kept at the same property must:
 - (a) apply to the Council for the relevant licence on the appropriate form; and
 - (b) pay the relevant licence inspection or re-inspection fee; and
 - (c) allow an inspection or re-inspection of their property as to the suitability of the number and type of dogs applied for being kept there.

- (3) A licence may be granted, have conditions imposed, or be refused, at the discretion of the attending Dog Control Officer. In considering whether consent should be granted, the attending Dog Control Officer shall have regard to:
 - (a) whether the property size is suitable for the breed and number of dogs;
 - (b) whether there is adequate fencing;
 - (c) whether there is dog-free access to the property;
 - (d) whether the location of kennels is appropriate, and that the kennels are suitable and provide adequate shelter for the breed and number of dogs;
 - (e) the previous history of the dog owner(s) in relation to complaints or nuisance; and
 - (f) whether the dog owner(s) are complying with and familiar with their obligations under the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Bylaw.
- (4) Where a licence is issued, it will be issued to a registered dog owner at the property, and will specify the property address, the dog owners, the registered dogs, and any other conditions. The following apply:
 - (a) a licence is not transferrable to a different property;
 - (b) a licence may be transferred to a different dog owner, where the property and dogs remain the same, at the discretion of an authorised officer;
 - (c) any change to the dogs at a property may require a re-inspection; and
 - (d) a licence will not expire (but any relevant changes may require a re-inspection).
- (5) The licence fee and re-inspection fee will be set annually through the Annual Plan process.
- (6) Any licence issued under a previous Christchurch City Council Dog Control Bylaw is deemed to be a licence issued under this bylaw.
- (7) Any breach of a licence or of any conditions imposed in a licence is considered a breach of this bylaw. The Council may revoke the licence as a result of a breach, whether or not it prosecutes the breach.

13. DOG LIMIT EXEMPTION

- (1) No person may be in control of more than the maximum number of dogs set out in clause 5(4), unless that person has a Dog Limit Exemption.
- (2) Clause 13(1) does not come into force until six months after this bylaw comes into force.
- (3) A Dog Limit Exemption may be granted, have conditions imposed, or be refused, at the discretion of the Manager Animal Services.
- (4) An application from the person seeking the exemption should include the following:
 - (a) information about the dog control knowledge and experience of the applicant, including any relevant qualifications or accreditations;
 - (b) business planning documents that demonstrate good dog management and a public safety focus, including things such as, but not limited to: dog vetting processes, pro forma client agreements, risk management documents, health and safety planning, and public liability insurance; and
 - (c) the maximum number of dogs the applicant intends to control in public places and an indication of likely places they may take the dogs.
- (5) If the person is the registered owner of the dogs, clause 13(4)(b) will not apply.

- (6) The application must be accompanied by the relevant fee (as set out in the Council's Annual Plan, Fees and Charges). The application fee is non-refundable.
- (7) The application process will include a combination of supplying written material and a meeting to discuss the application. The applicant will be expected to demonstrate a good understanding of the obligations set out in the Dog Control Act 1996, in the Dog Control Policy and in this bylaw (including knowledge of where dogs can and cannot go, or where they must be leashed).
- (8) The Manager may consider the application and any other relevant information (such as any dog-related complaints or nuisance related to the applicant).
- (9) A dog limit exemption is not transferrable to another person.
- (10) The Manager Animal Services may remove an exemption or alter the conditions of an exemption due to any non-compliance with the exemption, the conditions, any regulatory requirements or due to any incidents.

14. FEMALE DOGS IN SEASON

- (1) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog, where that dog is a female dog in season, must keep the dog:
 - (a) confined to private property while it is in season; and
 - (b) confined in such a way so as to minimise the impact on other dogs.
- (2) Transport of a female dog in season should be minimised, and any transport should be undertaken securely and in such a way so as to minimise the impact on other dogs.
- (3) Subclauses (1) and (2) do not apply to a working dog while it is being worked.

***Explanatory note:** The hormones released by a female dog in season can be detected over long distances. Female dogs in season must be securely confined on private property (ideally away from boundary fences) and cannot be exercised as normal in public places, or transported unnecessarily. Transport should be limited to veterinary or breeding-related travel. This only applies to female dogs that have not been de-sexed.*

15. DOGS ON VEHICLES

- (1) Every dog owner or person in charge of a dog that is on the open tray of a vehicle (such as a ute or truck), in a public place, must ensure the dog is secured by a leash that is sufficiently short in length to prevent the dog from reaching beyond the tray.
- (2) Subclause (1) does not apply to a working dog that is being worked whilst on the open tray of a vehicle.

16. OFFENCE AND PENALTY

- (1) Every person who fails to comply with this bylaw commits an infringement offence under Schedule 1 of the Dog Control Act 1996 and may be served with an infringement notice and be liable to pay an infringement fee.
- (2) Every person who fails to comply with this bylaw commits an offence under section 20(5) of the Dog Control Act 1996 and is liable on conviction to the penalty prescribed by section 242(4) of the Local Government Act 2002.

Explanatory note: For the purpose of clarity, many matters not covered by this bylaw are already covered by the Dog Control Act 1996, and breaches of those matters can result in the issuing of infringement notices (otherwise known as fines). The amounts for these infringements range from \$100 to \$750 and are set out in the Act.

17. CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL GENERAL BYLAW

- (1) The provisions of the Christchurch City Council General Bylaw 2008 and any bylaw passed in amendment or substitution are implied into and form part of this bylaw.

18. REVOCATIONS

- (1) This bylaw revokes and replaces the Christchurch City Council Dog Control Bylaw 2016.

The initial resolution to make this bylaw was passed by the Christchurch City Council on 10 December 2015 and was confirmed, following consideration of submissions received during the special consultative procedure, by a resolution of the Council on 23 June 2016.

The bylaw was then reviewed and replaced by the Dog Control Bylaw 2025. The initial resolution to make this bylaw was passed by the Council on 14 October 2024 and was confirmed, following consideration of submissions received during the special consultative procedure, by the Council on 3 September 2025.