

The Effect of Classification of your dog under the Dog Control Act 1996

Dogs can be classified as dangerous or menacing if they act in an aggressive manner, bite or attack, or behave aggressively towards a person or another animal.

The Manawatu District Council may classify a dog as 'menacing' if it considers that a dog poses a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife because of:

- Any observed or reported behaviour of the dog, or;
- Any characteristics typically associated with the dogs breed or type.

The owner of any dog that has been classified as dangerous or menacing pays 150 per cent of the usual registration fee.

Effect of Classification as a Menacing Dog

Under Schedule 4 (clause 3) of the Dog Control Act 1996 the following breeds/cross breeds are classified as menacing by breed and cannot be imported into New Zealand:

- Brazilian Fila
- American Pitbull terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Argentino
- Presa Canario

A dog will be automatically classified as menacing if it is one of the breeds listed above. A dog will also be classified as menacing if there is a clear factual evidence of aggressive behaviour on the part of the dog and/or verifiable witnessed behaviour of its action. The behaviour need not be an actual attack on a person or another animal; frequent and intense displays of aggressions and/or uncontrolled generally aggressive behaviour is sufficient to result in a dog being considered for this classification.

Menacing dogs are required to be microchipped, neutered and muzzled as well as kept on a leash in public places.

Effect of Classification as a Dangerous Dog

A dog will be classified as 'dangerous' by the Council if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The dog owner has been convicted under Section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996 (dog attacking a person or animal).
- There is sworn evidence that the dog has been aggressive.
- The owner admits the dog is dangerous.

Dangerous dogs are required to be microchipped, neutered and muzzled as well as kept on a leash in public places – they are also required to be kept within a fully fenced area.

Right of Objection to Classification

Section 33D of the Dog Control Act 1996 allows an owner to object to the classification of their dog. The objection must be made in writing to the Manawatu District Council within 14 days of being in receipt of the classification notice issued. The objection must set out the grounds on which you object.

You have the right to be heard in support of your objection and will be notified of the time and place at which your objection will be heard.

What to do if you receive a classification notice

- 1 Ensure you keep your dog muzzled at all times when at large or in a public place unless you have it confined within a vehicle or cage.
- 2 Arrange to have your dog neutered. You need to get your dog neutered within one month of receiving this notice.
 - Please bring the neutering certificate from your veterinary surgeon into the Council.
 - If your veterinary surgeon considers that your dog is not in a fit condition to be neutered, please bring in a certificate that states this. You then have one month from that certificate date to get your dog neutered and give the certificate to the Council.
- 3 Arrange to have your dog microchipped. Advise the Council when this is done so that an animal control officer can check the dog.
- 4 ***If someone else is looking after your dog for a period of less than 72 hours, please make sure they know that the dog must be muzzled at all times when at large or in a public place unless it is confined within a vehicle or cage.***

If you do not comply with the above requirements, you are liable on conviction to be fined under the Dog Control Act 1996.

- 5 You can object to this classification if you wish.