


WHEN IS A DOG “OUT OF CONTROL” IN SCOTLAND?

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Under Section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, a dog is considered dangerously out of control if it injures someone or makes a person reasonably fear injury. This applies in both public and private places, and to all breeds of dogs.

 Read the Act: [Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#)

The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 goes further. It says a dog is out of control if its behaviour causes alarm or fear, even when no one is injured. Local councils can serve a Dog Control Notice (DCN), requiring things like muzzling in public, keeping the dog on lead, or attending training classes.

 Read the Act: [Control of Dogs \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#)

You do not have to wait until a dog bites to take action.

If a dog lunges, growls, chases, or barks aggressively and someone feels afraid, the law already applies.

In Scotland, it is usually your local council that enforces the Control of Dogs Act 2010, while the police can act under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

Both Acts place responsibility firmly on the person in charge of the dog at the time, not only the registered owner.

WHEN IS A DOG “OUT OF CONTROL” IN SCOTLAND?

WHO TO CONTACT AND HOW

If you feel a dog is out of control, here is what you can do:

IF SOMEONE IS INJURED OR YOU FEEL IMMEDIATELY UNSAFE

- Call Police Scotland on 999 in an emergency, or 101 if the situation is less urgent but still concerning.
- Tell them: “I believe an offence has been committed under Section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.”
- Remember: injury is not required for the law to apply – fear of injury is enough.

IF NO ONE IS INJURED BUT THE DOG IS CAUSING FEAR OR ALARM

- Contact your local council's Dog Control Officer (DCO). Every Scottish council must have officers who enforce the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010.
- You can usually report through the council's website or by phone. Search “[Your Council] Dog Control Officer.”
- Ask for a Dog Control Notice (DCN) to be considered. This is a legal document that can set conditions such as muzzling or training.

KEEP A RECORD

- Write down what happened, where, and when.
- Note any witnesses.
- If you report to police or the council, keep a copy of your reference number.

IF YOU FEEL FOBBED OFF

- Politely state: “Under the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, causing fear or alarm is enough for enforcement.”
- Show this handout or the links to the legislation if needed.