

The ten commandments of responsible pet ownership

1 Feed an adequate balanced diet
(your vet can provide you with further advice about this).

2 Supply clean cool water at all times



3 Provide a cosy dry sleeping area

4 Provide dogs with regular exercise, and let pets spend plenty of time with the family

5 Protect the health of dogs and cats

This includes undertaking:

- Vaccinations
- Regular worm control including Heartworm for dogs
- Control of fleas and ticks

6 Register dogs and cats 3 months of age and over with the local council

This is required by law. Make sure your pets are identified whenever they are off the property, so they can be returned to you if they become lost. Pets being registered for the first time must also be microchipped prior to registration.

7 Confine pets to the property

Dogs should be confined to the property at all times. For your cat's safety, you should keep it indoors or in an enclosure at night. Some councils legally require the confinement of cats at night or 24 hours a day; check to see if this applies in your municipality.

8 Train your dog to keep it mentally stimulated

Training will also help prevent (or treat) behavioural problems such as barking or aggression. If you need help with dog training, ask your vet, local council or animal shelter for advice. Or look under "Dog Training" in the yellow pages.

9 Dogs and cats that are not used for breeding should be desexed

(Some councils may require this by law.)

This can be done from three months of age to prevent unwanted breeding, and development of behavioural problems such as spraying. You should also check to see if your council has any desexing requirements. Female dogs that are not desexed require a full enclosed pen, including a roof. Female dogs can come in season one to four times per year, for around three weeks at a time. Female cats that are not desexed should be kept inside when in season. Cats can come in season at any time of the year, but most commonly become pregnant between Spring and Autumn.

10 Ensure your cat or dog is adequately cared for during holidays, preferably at a council registered boarding kennel or cattery.

Notes

You should only own a dog or cat if you practise the 10 Commandments. You should only keep a pet if you have the time and money to care for it properly. Before purchasing a dog or cat, an informed family decision should be made regarding your ability to provide the pet with the necessary care in the future. Further information on how to care for your pet is available from:

- Your local council
- Your veterinary surgeon
- Animal welfare organisations
- Dog or cat ownership associations

A complete list of relevant organisations with their contact details can be viewed at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/pets or call 136 186 for the cost of a local call.



If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, TTY 1800 122 969, or email customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au.

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