

A light-colored dog, possibly a Labrador, is sitting on a grassy field. The dog is looking directly at the camera. Behind the dog, the lower legs and feet of a person wearing blue jeans and white sneakers are visible. The person is holding a red and yellow ring in their right hand. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a blurred fence and trees.

Dog Owner's Handbook

Important information for dog owners



Ashburton
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Ashburton District Council

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*The Council provides
a 24 hour, seven-day-
a-week Animal Control
service. To contact
Animal Control, phone
(03) 307 7700*

Introduction

Welcome to our Dog Owner Manual

**Your guide for information and advice
on looking after your dog and what your
responsibilities are as an owner.**

Dogs are a wonderful source of companionship and friendship. It's important that they are properly cared for, not only for their safety and wellbeing, but also for that of the community.

To help you understand your responsibilities, this manual includes extracts from the Ashburton District Council's Dog Control Policy and Bylaw, as well as the Dog Control Act 1996. You can view these documents at any time on the Ashburton District Council website **ashburtondc.govt.nz**

The joys of owning a dog

Once your dog has settled into its new home, it will quickly become an important member of the family.

Dogs are often a wonderful addition to our homes. They also bring with them certain responsibilities that you must follow. One of the first issues to identify is, am I the owner?

*Ashburton District
Council wishes you
many years of fun and
companionship with
your new pet.*



Being a responsible owner



Your obligations

A dog owner is every person who:

1. Owns the dog; or
2. Has the dog in their possession for longer than 72 hours (whether the dog is confined or at large); or
3. If the dog's owner is under 16-years-of-age, then their parent or guardian is responsible for the dog's registration and actions.

As the owner, it is your responsibility to:

- Ensure any dog that you own aged over three months is registered with your local council. Registration is required by law, in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996. Dogs must be registered, and then re-registered each year. You will also need to promptly let the Council know of any change of address or ownership details.
- Keep your dog under control at all times.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the dog does not cause a nuisance to any other person, whether through persistent and loud barking/howling, or by any other means.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the dog does not injure, endanger or cause distress to a person, stock, poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure your dog does not damage or endanger any property that belongs to someone else.
- Comply with the requirements set out in the Dog Control Act 1996 and of all regulations and bylaws made under this Act.
- Ensure the dog is provided proper care and attention, and is supplied with sufficient food, water and shelter.
- Adequately exercise your dog.



Dog registration & microchipping

Councils have registration fees for dogs to help pay for the dog control services and facilities that they provide for the community.

Each year, the Council sets dog registration fees for 1 July until 30 June. These fees are payable in full by 31 July. If the registration fees are not paid, a late penalty is added to the fee. Late registrations create additional administrative costs in reminders and postage, as well as staff time.

Registration fees vary depending on a variety of factors, such as if you live rurally or in an urban setting, how many dogs you own, and whether they are de-sexed. Fees for the current registration year can be found at ashburtondc.govt.nz.

Dog registration

What your dog registration fee covers

Registration fees pay for a variety of services and activities that the Council provides.

These include:

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS REGARDING:

- Barking/dangerous dogs
- Wandering/rushing dogs
- Dogs fouling on public or private land
- Dog welfare problems
- Attacks on people, domestic pets, stock or wildlife
- Regular monitoring of problem areas
- Dogs restrained by the public or caught in traps

PROMOTING BETTER CARE AND CONTROL OF DOGS:

- Providing dog parks and exercise areas
- Visiting schools and community groups
- Advertising and promoting dog control information programmes
- Educating owners with problem dogs
- Providing advice to dog owners and the public

PROVIDING AND MAINTAINING DOG POUND FACILITIES:

- Notifying known owners if their dog is impounded
- Impounding wandering dogs and/or problem dogs
- Rehoming suitable dogs to suitable owners
- Euthanising unclaimed dogs that are not suitable for rehoming
- Managing dogs with unknown owners

LEGAL ACTION FOR:

- Dogs attacking people and animals
- Bylaw offences
- Failing to register dogs
- Failing to control dogs
- Barking dogs

Microchipping your dog

The Dog Control (Microchip Transponder) Regulations 2005. Legislation which came into force in 2016.

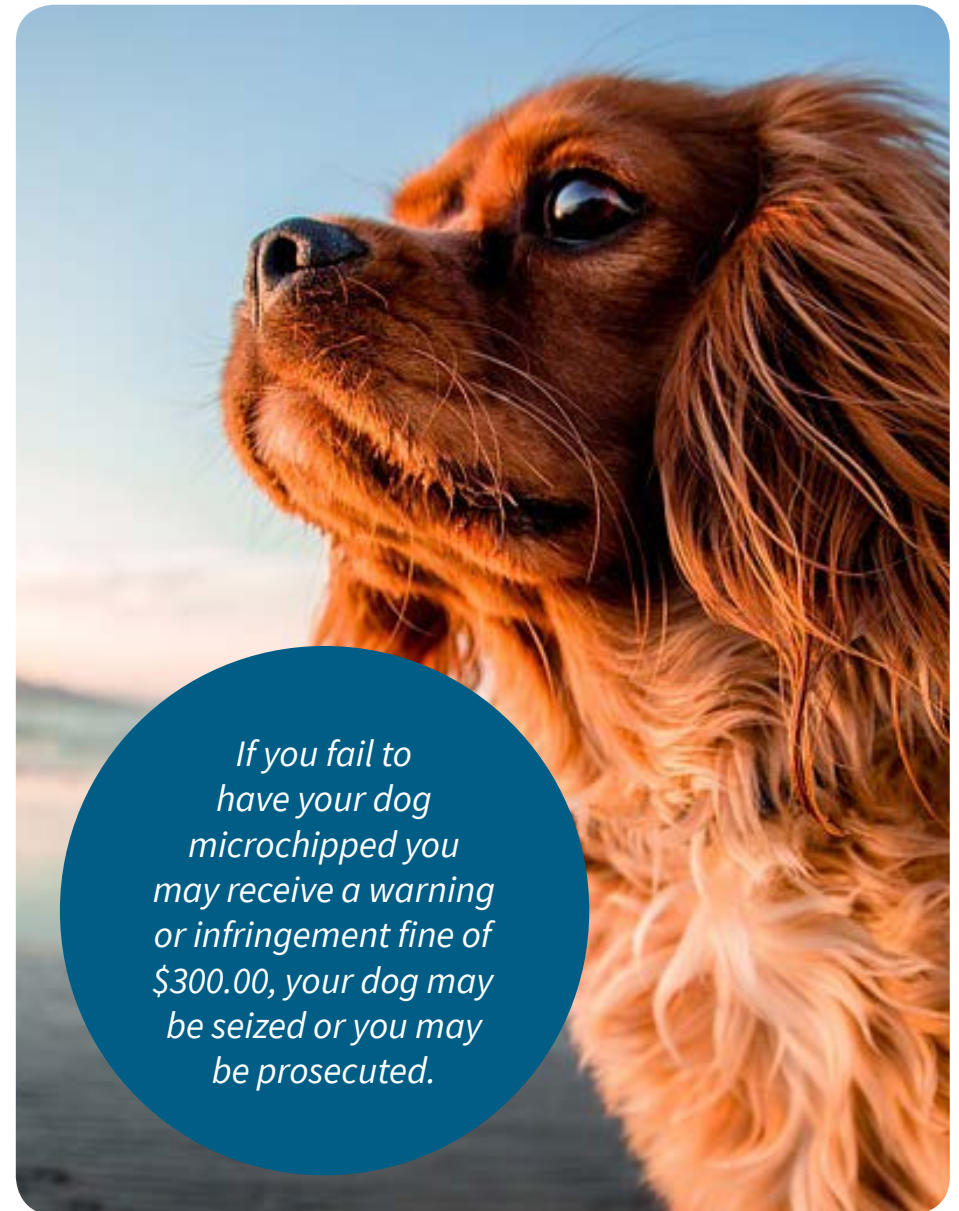
Legislation which must be microchipped by law.

They are:

- All dogs first registered from 1st July, 2006 (except working farm dogs and dogs deemed unfit by a veterinarian).
- All dogs classified as dangerous or menacing since 1 December 2003.
- Unregistered dogs that are impounded then released.
- Registered dogs that are impounded for a second time and released.

THE NATIONAL DOG DATABASE (NDD)

Owners have a legal requirement to ensure that their dog's microchip number is registered with their local council. Once a dog's microchip number is registered with the Council it will automatically be transferred onto the National Dog Database (NDD).



If you fail to have your dog microchipped you may receive a warning or infringement fine of \$300.00, your dog may be seized or you may be prosecuted.



People & Dogs

Dogs are loved by many for their affection and loyalty, but occasionally, dogs can also be a nuisance for the people around them and in some cases, are even dangerous.

That's why it's important to understand how we should behave around dogs, and what owners should do to keep themselves, their dog and their community happy.

Avoid being bitten

All dogs are capable of biting or attacking, no matter how friendly or passive they may seem, how well you know them or what size they are.

Dog bites may seem unprovoked, but in actual fact, they have often been triggered by something that we might have done unknowingly. It is important to know how to react around dogs and to understand the reasons why dogs bite. This will help prevent or minimise the risk of being bitten.

HOW TO AVOID DOG BITES:

- Never approach:
 - an unknown dog
 - a bitch (female dog) with puppies
 - a dog that is eating
 - a dog that is sleeping - wake the dog up from a distance
- Do not pat a dog on the head or the back of the neck
- Do not lean over or pick up a dog
- Never tease a dog
- Always have a relaxed and calm manner when around dogs

Dogs can be territorial and are naturally more prone to aggression on their own property or at home.

Many people own dogs for security purposes because they will defend their owner's property. However, keep in mind that any person with reasonable grounds to be on your property must be able to walk to your door or deliver to your letterbox without being threatened.

HOW TO ENTER A PROPERTY THAT HAS A DOG:

- Rattle the gate or call out to see if a dog comes running
- Look for obvious signs of a dog being there, such as bones, dog poo, chains or holes in the lawn.
- Avoid walking sharply around the corner of a house; you may startle a dog and cause it to bite out of fright
- Always give a wide berth to a dog on a chain
- Walk slowly and not directly at the dog
- If a dog is lying on the doorstep, do not approach the door. Call out or knock on the window instead.
- If a dog is inside a house, stand off to one side of the door. A dog can feel trapped and bite you as it rushes past.



Wandering dogs

Dogs are very social animals and may often wander from their home if given the opportunity.

It's important to remember that a wandering dog is uncontrolled and can cause all sorts of problems, some of which can be very serious. Aside from the risk to their own safety, dogs can be intimidating to the general public and be a hazard to drivers. They are also disruptive to other dogs that are under control and can attack other animals and pets.

As the dog's owner, you are responsible for their safety, and you are also financially liable and responsible for any damage or loss caused by your dog. That's why it's important to ensure your dog isn't able to escape from your property and wander around.



HOW TO KEEP MY DOG FROM WANDERING

Fencing

A fully fenced yard is a must for your dog's safety and your sanity. It is best to fence your property so that visitors have access to your front door without coming into contact with your dog.



For dogs that love to jump, a lean-to section or outrigger facing inwards from the top of your fence will stop most dogs from jumping out. This is also a very cost-effective option.

Many dogs wander because 'someone left the gate open'. To prevent this from happening, have a return spring fitted to the gate so that it swings shut automatically.

If your property is not fenced, you are still required to ensure your dog does not freely leave your property.

Lost dogs

If your dog is lost, phone the Council (03 307 7700) immediately and provide them with an accurate description of your dog and the area from which it was last seen.

Often, the Council can match up your reported lost dog with a reported found dog.

If your dog is found wearing a registration tag, the Council will contact you and inform you of its whereabouts. If it is impounded you will be advised as soon as practical.





Making a complaint about a dog

Sometimes, neighbours' dogs can be a nuisance because they persistently bark or wander from their home.

If you have a problem with a neighbour's dog, it may be reasonable for you to approach the dog owner and explain the problem to them. Sometimes, owners are unaware that there has been a problem, so once they know, they can try to fix the issue. If the problem persists, please phone Council.

The Council needs to know as much of the following details as possible:

- The address the dog comes from
- Exactly what the problem is
- The time, when and where the incident happened
- Anything that might help identify the dog, for example their breed, colour and sex
- Who the owner is or a description of them
- If the dog(s) came from a vehicle, the registration number of that vehicle
- Your name and contact number in case we need to phone you for more information and to tell you of the outcome of the Council's investigations.
- Your details will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the dog's owner.

All complaint details are kept confidential.

It is important that you give the Council your feedback about the problem so that the Council knows whether the issue has been resolved or not.

A photograph of two dogs in a grassy field. On the left, a black and tan dog is lunging towards the right, its mouth wide open in a bite. On the right, a shaggy, grey and white dog is being attacked, also with its mouth open. The background is a blurred green field with some yellow flowers.

Reporting dog attacks

If you or your pet are attacked by a dog, it is important to report the incident as soon as possible.

The Council takes note of all the related information and often seizes dogs after such incidents. As the information they collect needs to be as accurate as possible, the more information you give the Council, the easier the investigation is.

The kind of information the Council needs includes statements from all parties, bite or medical reports any identification of the attacking dog or its owner, or vehicle registration.

If there are any witnesses to the incident it is best to get their details at the time because it can be very difficult later when they have left the scene.

Please don't leave complaints too long before reporting them, as this can make it difficult for you or others to accurately recall details of the incident, such as times and dates.

*The Council's Animal Control service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for serious incidents such as dog attacks.
Phone **(03) 307 7700** as soon as practical.*

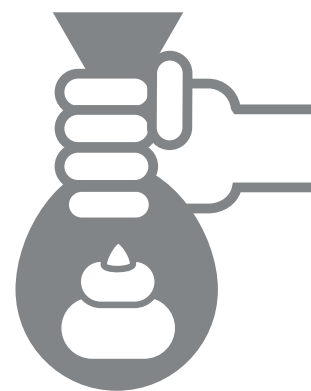


Picking up after your dog

It's not a pleasant experience to accidentally step in dog poo that someone has left behind, so please help keep our streets and park exercise areas clean by picking up and disposing of your dog's poo.

There are rubbish bins located at the entrance and exists of the fenced dog exercise areas for you to use. If there is no rubbish bin where you are, please dispose of it in the closest rubbish bin or at home.

You can wrap dog poo and dispose of it with domestic rubbish or bury it in the garden.



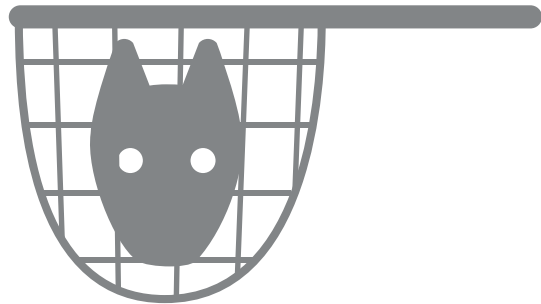
It is not acceptable to leave a bag of dog poo on the ground at an exercise area.

Dog pound

The Ashburton District Council Dog Pound is located at 25 Range Street, Ashburton, and is open to the public by appointment, Monday to Friday (except on statutory holidays).

Approximately 150 dogs are impounded each year in the Council Pound and a large number of these have no means of identification, such as a microchip or tag. Registering your dog is therefore important to make sure that the Council can contact you if your dog is found.

The Pound is very expensive to operate, with large overhead costs, as well as housing and feeding costs.



Exercising your dog

The Ashburton District Council recognises the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and has identified:

- areas where dogs must remain on a leash
- areas where dogs can be exercised at large, but under continuous control
- areas in which dogs are not allowed

Please refer to the following pages and maps for further details.



Areas where Dogs...

Must remain on a leash:



- All public places (includes all roads and footpaths)
- All memorial areas
- All sportsgrounds

Are not allowed:



- ✗ All boat ramps and slipways
- ✗ All cemeteries throughout the District
- ✗ All playing surfaces of public sports grounds
- ✗ Within one metre of any children's playground equipment
- ✗ In any public Council owned building
- ✗ Lake Clearwater Hut area
- ✗ Lake Camp Reserve area.

Can be exercised “Unleashed”:



Map 1 - Ashburton Dog Exercise Areas

- Ashburton District Council Dog Park
- Pioneer Park
- Digby Park
- Patching Street Reserve
- Small Bone Drive Reserve
- Devon Park.

Map 2 - Tinwald Dog Exercise Areas

- The Tinwald Green
- George Glassey Park.

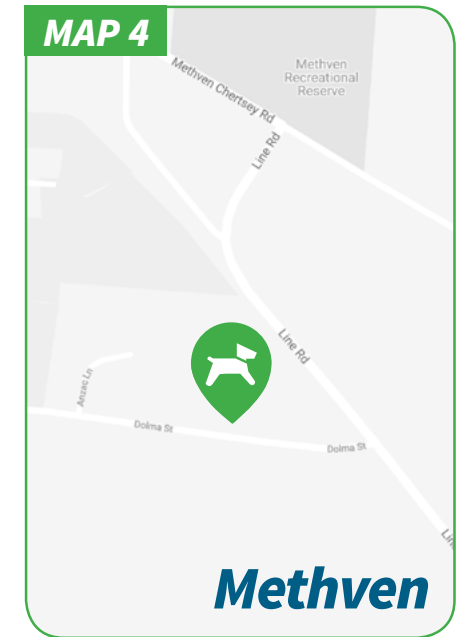
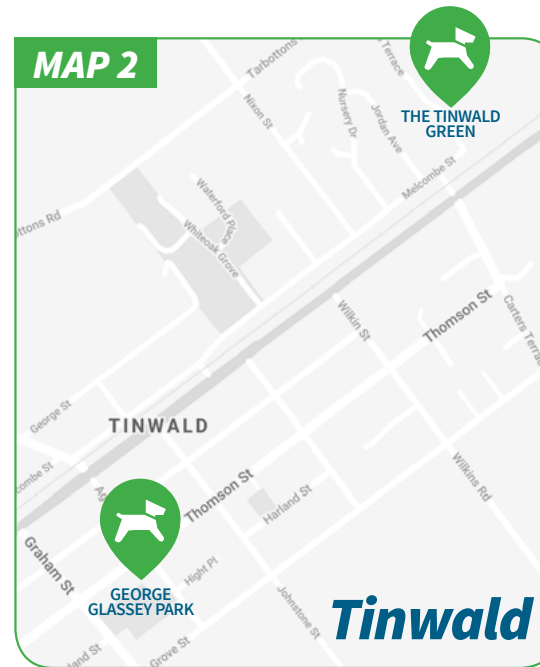
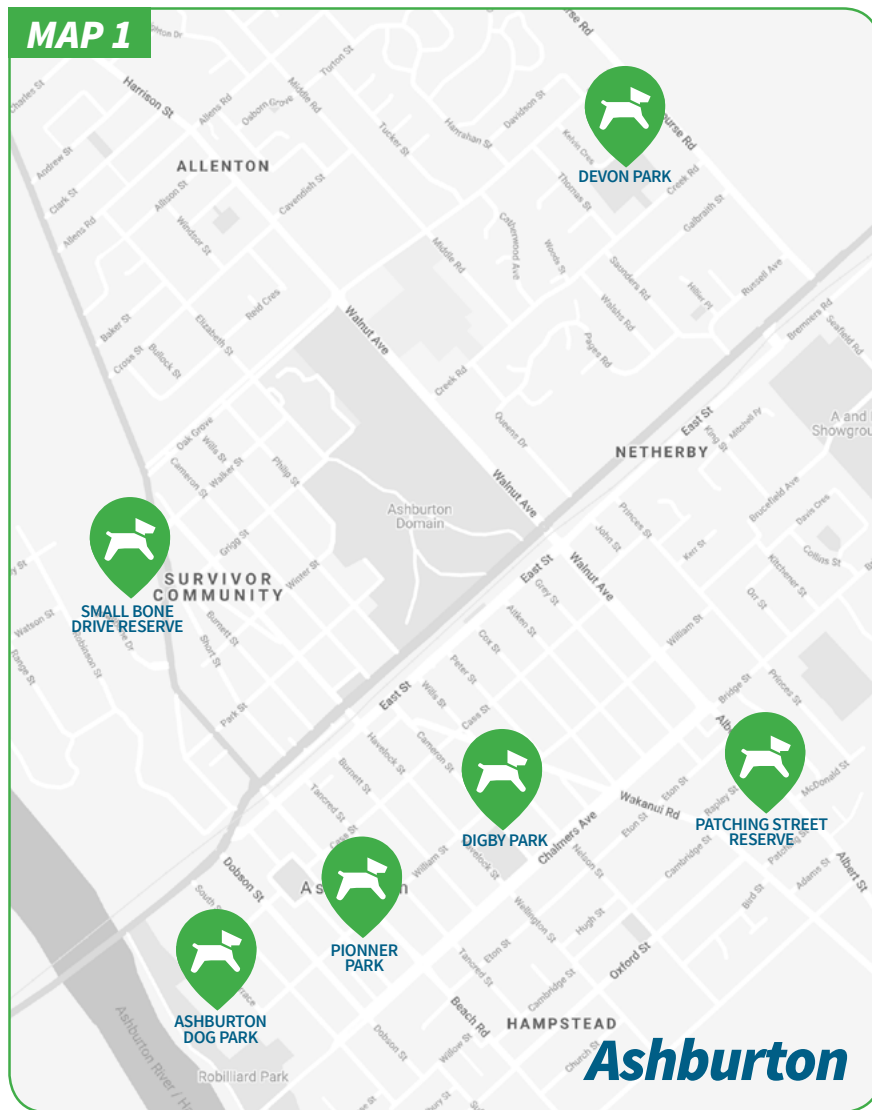
Map 3 - Argyle Park Exercise Areas

- Argyle Park (Dogs can be exercised in the locations highlighted in orange on page 19).

Map 4 - Methven Dog Exercise Area

- Methven Dog Park

District Dog Parks



Dogs can be exercised in the locations highlighted in orange.

Owners must have their dogs under effective control at all times and remain within the dog exercise area while dogs are off leash. Please do not leave your dog unattended.

Dogs are welcome anywhere else in the park on their leash but are prohibited from all playing surface of public sports grounds.



We hope you find this manual useful.
For further information on our Dog Control Bylaw
and Policy please visit our website.

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