



FAQ's

Frequently asked questions

Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw

Te Kaupapa Here Whakahaere Kurī me te Ture ā-rohe Whakahaere Kurī

General dog control questions

Ngā urupounamu e hāngai ana ki te whakahaere kurī

What is a difference between the Dog Control Policy and the Dog Control Bylaw?

He aha te rerekētanga i waenga i te Kaupapa Here Whakahaere Kurī me te Ture ā-rohe Whakahaere Kurī?

A Dog Control Policy sets out the council's overall approach to managing dogs — things like where dogs should be allowed, the goals for public safety, and how the council expects owners to behave. It's a guiding document required under the Dog Control Act 1996 and explains what the council wants to achieve. A Dog Control Bylaw, on the other hand, contains the legal rules that people must follow — such as leash requirements, prohibited areas, and welfare standards — and it provides the council with the power to enforce those rules. In simple terms: the policy sets the direction, and the bylaw makes it enforceable.

Why are the dog control policy and the dog control bylaw being reviewed?

He aha te take ka arotakengia te kaupapa here whakahaere kurī me te ture ā-rohe whakahaere kurī?

The Dog Control Act 1996 requires councils to have clear and enforceable rules about how dogs are managed in public places, and these rules must be kept up to date. Councils must review their policies and bylaws regularly so they remain effective and reflect community expectations.

How does the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control bylaw relate to my responsibilities as a dog owner?

He aha te hononga a te Kaupapa Here Whakahaere Kurī me te Ture ā-rohe Whakahaere Kurī ki aku takohanga kaitiaki kurī?

The Dog Control Act 1996, the policy and the bylaw outline all the required responsibilities of dog owners within the Whakatāne District. The purpose of the bylaw is to regulate the control of dogs, so they do not cause danger, distress or nuisance to the community.

Is Central Government reviewing the Dog Control Act 1996?

E arotake ana te Kāwanatanga i te Ture Whakahaere Kurī 1996?

Central Government recognises that councils are working hard to enforce the Dog Control Act 1996, but also acknowledges that the Act is now outdated and no longer fit for purpose. Because of this, the Government has indicated that it will undertake a comprehensive review of the Act, which will include consultation with stakeholders. In the meantime, councils must continue to meet all existing legislative requirements and use the powers available under the current Act.

Should I register my dog?

Me rēhita taku kurī?

Once a dog is three (3) months old, it is required to be registered with Council (under section 42 of the Dog Control Act 1996). This includes working dogs. Failure to register your dog(s) means that an Animal Control Officer has the powers to fine owners up to \$3,000 and/or remove and impound a dog(s).

Why is registration so important?

He aha te take he mea nui te rēhita?

Registration is beneficial for Council and the community. Associated registration costs fund activities that increase community safety such as handling aggressive/dangerous dogs, dog attacks, roaming dogs, reports of noise/nuisance, inadequate accommodation and public safety. It also helps Animal Control Officers to manage essential services such as pound facilities and responding to public complaints.

Registration also promotes responsible dog ownership by allowing Animal Control Officers to identify any roaming, lost, or stolen dog and quickly link it to its owner. This helps ensure dogs are returned home safely and provides an opportunity for staff to engage with owners to educate them about responsible dog care.

How is the Dog Control Bylaw enforced?

Me pēhea te whakaū i te Ture ā-rohe Whakahaere Kurī?

The Dog Control Bylaw is enforced by Council Animal Control Officers, who are given powers under both the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Council's Dog Control Bylaw. Animal Control Officers have a wide range of statutory powers under the Dog Control Act 1996, including powers of entry, investigation, issuing infringements, impounding dogs, and requiring information from dog owners.

Bylaws provide additional, local specific controls—such as leash only areas, dog prohibited zones, standards of care, and behavioural requirements. These local rules help Council manage issues unique to our district while supporting the Act's purpose: to prevent danger, distress, or nuisance caused by dogs, and promote responsible dog ownership.

Dogs are prohibited from some areas

Ka aukati ētahi wāhi i ngā kurī

How do I know where I can take my dog?

Me pēhea e mōhio ai ahau ngā wāhi e āhei ana te heri i taku kurī?

We are proposing to update the maps so they are clearer and more user-friendly. These maps provide information about where you can exercise your dog, areas where dogs are prohibited, and areas where dogs must be on leash.

A list of dog exercise areas is also included in Schedule 2 of the Dog Control Policy and maps are included in Schedule 3 of the Dog Control Policy.

Why are dogs prohibited from some areas?

He aha te take ka aukati ētahi wāhi i ngā kurī?

Dogs are often prohibited from certain areas to protect people, animals and the environment. Dogs can unintentionally disturb nesting birds, native wildlife, or sensitive habitats. Prohibiting dogs from these areas helps protect vulnerable species and ecosystems. Prohibited areas include many of our scenic reserves that are home to special wildlife such as the kiwi.

Some spaces—like playgrounds, sports fields, and busy pedestrian areas—are designed primarily for children or high activity use. Keeping dogs out reduces the risk of accidental bites, injuries, or conflicts between dogs and people. It is important that owners are aware of these prohibited areas and that they do not enter them with their dog(s).

Are dogs currently prohibited in the CBD?

E aukatingia ana ngā kurī i te pito o te tāone?

The Whakatāne Central Business District (CBD) is currently a prohibited area for dogs during the hours of 9am-5pm. Outside of these hours, dogs must be on leash. We would like to hear community views to assess whether this current rule is still reflecting community aspirations in this high-activity area.

Dogs on beaches

Ngā Kurī ki Tātahi

Why is Council requesting feedback about dogs on Ōhope beach?

He aha te take e tonono ana te Kaunihera i ngā whakaaro mō ngā kurī kei te tātahi o Ōhope?

Our beaches are an important community space where everyone should feel safe and comfortable. In the summer months parts of Ōhope Beach are also busy areas with swimming, surfing, surf lifesaving, fishing and local and holidaymakers enjoying all the beach offers.

Beaches are generally dog exercise areas (not required on leash) and currently there are no dog restrictions on Ōhope Beach. With the review, it is a good time to check-in with the community about if the current policy meets community needs. Council would like to hear from you on whether, or not, you would like to see any dog restrictions on Ōhope Beach, particular in our peak summer months (20 December –28 February) and in our high activity areas - from Westend to the Whakatane Surf Club and outside the Ōhope Beach Holiday park. You can have your say about dogs on beaches on Kōrero Mai.