Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust

Policy
Docking Of Dogs Tails

DOCKING OF DOGS TAILS POLICY

General Principles
Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust recognises that Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust employees, volunteers and trustees may be asked or need to clarify the exhibiting of docked dogs in the United Kingdom after the introduction of legislation to ban the docking of dogs tails. Below gives you some background to the docking ban, the Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust’s official position and answers some of the questions you may have.

WE MAKE IT VERY CLEAR that whilst the Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust will assists any authorities in their enquiries, it is not the responsibility of the Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust or its show officials to police the docking legislation, and NO TRUST OFFICIAL may become involved in allegations or disputes regarding the docking of a dogs tail, other than to document the facts of any incident.

England & Wales
In England, a ban on docking came into force on 6th April 2007, with exemptions for listed working breeds (Spaniels, Terriers, HPR) AND their crosses.

In Wales, a ban on docking came into force on 28th March 2007, with exemptions for listed working breeds (Spaniels, Terriers, HPR) but NOT crosses.

Any dog - originating either inside or outside of England or Wales – docked for medical reasons after these dates is not permitted to be shown at events where the public pays an entrance fee.

If your dog is considered as a working breed, you will need to consider the following in order to have its tail docked:

- Puppies must be docked within five days of birth by a vet. If the puppies are to be re-homed, they must also be microchipped by the same vet.

- You will need to produce evidence to prove that your dog is likely to become a working dog. This will either be in the form of a shotgun licence or letter from land occupier or gamekeeper.
The vet will need to download a certificate of docking from the DEFRA website. Although exempted breeds can be docked by law, some vets choose not to carry out the procedure.

Scotland
A total ban on docking came into force on 30th April 2007, with NO exemptions. It is illegal to take a puppy outside of Scotland to get its tail docked. However, if a dog’s tail has been amputated for medical reasons, the dog can continue to be shown. This applies to dogs originating both inside and outside of Scotland.

Northern Ireland
The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 introduced a ban on the docking of dogs tails, with an exemption for certified working dogs.

Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust’s Position
The Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust believes that there should be consistency in docking legislation across the UK. Different regulations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland cause confusion and put breeders/owners at risk of unknowingly breaking the law.

The Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust:

- Opposes a total ban on docking.
- Supports exemptions for working breeds and working breed types.
- Opposes the showing ban in England and Wales, as this unfairly penalises responsible working dog breeders and owners who have had their dog’s tail docked for genuine/medical reasons.

Q & A FOR JUDGES

I am a Judge of a traditionally docked breed. What am I supposed to do if I suspect that a dog before me has been docked illegally and should not therefore be shown? You should simply judge the dogs before you and should not become involved in any disputes or otherwise regarding whether or not a dog has been docked either legally or illegally. This is a matter for the relevant authorities to deal with.
Q & A FOR SHOW ORGANISERS

As a show secretary of a show in England or Wales which charges the public for admission, am I required to deal with a complaint that a dog docked after the law changed, is being exhibited?
No. In the event of an allegation of contravention of the law (either illegal docking or the illegal showing of dogs) the complainant should be advised to refer the matter to the relevant authorities. In normal circumstances, the Show Society or the Kennel Club should only take action to correct the situation if a successful prosecution has been brought against the alleged offender. This advice may require to be reviewed if a body of case law is eventually established.

It would in the meantime be sensible for Show Societies to note any such complaints in the Show Incident Book in case they are asked to provide information on the matter to the authorities at a future date.

As a show society which currently holds a show in England (or in Wales) and which charges a fee to members of the public for admission, should we consider removing that entry fee?

Any Society whose show is not held in Scotland or Northern Ireland and has a paying gate, should take into account the fact that it will be illegal for ANY dog docked after the date on which the law changed in England and Wales, to be exhibited at such a show, even if this dog has been docked legally under the Act or has been legally docked elsewhere.

If we decide to CONTINUE TO CHARGE AN ADMISSION FEE TO THE PUBLIC, what do we need to do in order to forewarn exhibitors that they may not be allowed to enter their dogs?

For shows held in England where the public are admitted on payment of a fee:
Such societies should include a statement in the show schedule, entry form and online that “A dog docked on or after the 6th April 2007 may not be entered for exhibition at this show”. By this means it is hoped that any exhibitor of a dog docked either legally or illegally after the 6th April will be aware that they should not enter this show.

For shows held in Wales where the public are admitted on payment of a fee:
Such societies should include a statement in the show schedule, entry form and online that “A dog docked on or after the 28th March 2007 may not be entered for exhibition at this show”. By this means it is hoped that any exhibitor of a dog docked legally or illegally after the 28th March will be aware that they should not enter this show.
Our show does NOT CHARGE the public for admission and is held in England (or Wales). Is there any advice that we should be giving to exhibitors?

For shows held in England
A Society whose show is held in England and does not charge the public for admission should include a statement in the show schedule, entry form and online that “Only undocked dogs and legally docked dogs may be entered for exhibition at this show.”

For shows held in Wales
A Society whose show is held in Wales and does not charge the public for admission should include a statement in the show schedule, entry form and online that “Only undocked dogs and legally docked dogs may be entered for exhibition at this show.”

Our show is held in Scotland (licensed by the Scottish Kennel Club or by the Kennel Club) or in Northern Ireland (licensed by the Kennel Club) – what do we need to put into our schedule?
Irrespective of whether the show has a paying gate, a Society whose show is held in Scotland or Northern Ireland should include a statement in the show schedule, entry form and online that “Only undocked dogs and legally docked dogs may be entered for exhibition at this show.”

What should I do as Secretary of a Show, if someone objects to a dog on the grounds that it has been illegally shown or illegally docked?
You should advise the complainant that such objections are a matter for the authorities not for the Show Society or the Kennel Club. He or she should be advised to contact the relevant authorities and that, if a successful prosecution is brought, the show society and the Kennel Club will take appropriate corrective action.

There is no obligation under the various Acts for the Kennel Club or the Show Society to check whether a dog is lawfully docked or not. Any offence, if it has occurred, would have been committed by the exhibitor – not the show society. You should however note the objection in the Show Incident Book for future reference.

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_Approved by the Board of Trustees on 18th April 2011_