Responsible Dog Ownership
Responsible Dog Ownership
Author: Mitja Sedlbauer, MSc, DVM

Translation: Tatjana Sterk
Photos: Konvikt d.o.o. records, http://www.123rf.com
Production: Konvikt d.o.o.
Design: Mojca Papič and Neva Kebe Krhin / Konvikt d.o.o.

Copyright © 2010 Veterinary Administration of the Republic of Slovenia
All rights reserved.

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

636.7(0.034.2)

ŠEDLBAUER, Mitja
Responsible dog ownership [Elektronski vir] / Mitja Sedlbauer;
translation Tatjana Sterk ; photos Konvikt. - El. knjiga. -
Ljubljana : Veterinary Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, 2010

Način dostopa (URL): http://www.vurs.gov.si
Prevod dela: Moj pes je moja odgovornost

ISBN 978-961-6355-07-0

252608768
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning a dog</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking care of a dog</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited handling and cruelty</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs and environment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs and children</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs and travelling</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs in animal shelter</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
»The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.«

Mahatma Gandhi
INTRODUCTION

Man and dog have been sharing the same environment for 15000 years. Any particulars of the beginnings of this partnership are inaccessibly shrouded by the veil of ancient history. It seems plausible that from the very beginning the dog had assisted man in his daily occupations as hunting, for instance. And, above all, the dog had always been sharing the man’s company.

According to statistical data, almost every fourth Slovenian household owns a dog. This information becomes all the more interesting when considering that in urban settlements there live more inhabitants, and consequently, more dogs. If dog owners cannot cope with their dogs, a variety of inconveniences may occur. And these may be rather serious, indeed. A dog may seriously injure a person or cause heavy damage, and such undesirable consequences are within the responsibility of the dog owner.

Dogs may carry diseases which are transmissible from animals to man (zoonoses). Rabies is a most notorious zoonosis. A rabid dog would pose a great threat to human and animal populations and, therefore, the disease is suppressed by the compulsory annual anti-rabies vaccination of dogs so as to avoid the possibility of infection of dogs. Prevention of rabies from spreading is supported by the rules applicable to travelling with pet animals.

As the dog may be a person’s best friend on the one hand, it may pose a serious threat to human health and life on the other hand. Thus, it needs to be assured that dog ownership is a pleasant and safe experience for the dog owner, for other persons involved and for the dog itself.

The purpose of this brochure is to present the obligations and rights of dog owners that are ensuing from relevant legislation. These obligations and rights shall equally apply to those, who have just purchased a dog, as to experienced dog owners. The brochure has been set up in chapters, clarifying the appropriate care of a dog and proper actions in certain situations. If dog owners, having consulted its contents, are well able to avoid certain inconveniences or do find the care of their dogs much easier, the brochure has achieved its purpose.
Owning a dog

Keeper or owner of a dog

Keeper of a dog is a person, who takes care of a dog. In most cases, the owner and keeper of a dog is one and the same person. Under certain circumstances this is not feasible (e.g. owner is a legal person). Keepers of a dog may be all the members of the family, which the dog lives in, with a single family member as the dog owner. It is most important to know, who the dog owner is, when the dog is submitted for regular anti-rabies vaccination. The veterinarian shall be told the data clearly so as to avoid any double entries in the Central Register of Dogs (CRD).

Owner of a dog is the person entered as dog owner in CRD. This means that he or she is responsible for the appropriate care of the dog, and for the dog’s actions. In case that the dog is inappropriately cared for or that it has caused damage, the responsibility is on the dog owner. This may entail significant legal consequences for that particular person.

To qualify as dog owner, a person shall be aged over 16. Persons under 16 shall normally not be given or sold a dog. This shall be permissible with the juvenile adult’s parents’ or guardians’ concession in writing only.

It is recommendable that a dog owner should be a person, who is in most contact with the dog.

How to obtain a dog?

The issue of dog’s origin is most important for trading in pedigree dogs. One should keep it in mind that the trade in dogs may be an extremely profitable business and that trading routes from the new EU Member States are in place, by which young dogs of different pedigrees and of obscure origin are introduced into Slovenia and elsewhere into the EU. Rather frequently, new dog owners need to consult a veterinarian soon after having purchased a dog that turns out to be affected by an infectious disease.

Adopting a dog from animal shelter

In an ideal world, where owners would handle their animals in a responsible manner, no animal shelters for abandoned animals would exist – as there would simply be no need for them. However, as such a world has not been created yet, animal shelters house significant numbers of animals, looking for a new home.

Dogs of all ages and breeds accumulate in animal shelters. Certain dogs are more demanding than others. Those most demanding require an owner with ample experience in handling difficult dogs and capable of mastering such a dog.
Dog adoption procedure may thus not always be straightforward. Many a person deciding on adopting a dog may be rather surprised at facing the adoption procedure. Before handing the dog over, animal shelter staff will first assess whether or not the dog is appropriate for you. They will ask questions about the dog’s future accommodation, whether you have already possessed a dog or if you have any children, and similar.

At animal handover, the new owner is required to sign a handover declaration, taking up the commitment of taking the appropriate care of the animal. The declaration shall include the personal name and date of birth of owner, address of permanent residence and phone number, address of the animal’s new home, description of the animal, animal identification number (microchip number), and the new owner’s consent that the animal shelter representatives may check from time to time whether the animal is appropriately taken care of, and the owner’s consent to first contact the holder of animal shelter if intending to sell or give away the animal in question.

Your data will then be entered into the CRD and you will be given the passport of your new family member.

What is wrong with purchasing a dog from a dealer?

Nothing at all if the purchase is made in a proper manner. However, such dealings in young dogs are frequently anything but proper. More often than not such puppies are multiplied by breeders, who do not take good care of their animals. In the English speaking environment, such breeding establishments are called “puppy mills”. Due to inadequate health care, young dogs may become infected with different diseases early in their lives. In such establishments, animal welfare rules are neglected rather too frequently. Young dogs are separated from their mothers and dispatched on long journeys, a most stressful experience for the animals. On arrival to final destination, dogs are sold to new owners where they frequently fall ill.

What shall buyer pay attention to?

The following questions are extremely important:

Where was the dog born?
This question is important not only for the above reasons. A number of other rules and conditions may apply to imports of animals originating from third countries (non-EU countries).

Are you allowed to see the dog’s mother?
A most frequent excuse of dog sale profiteers is that the “dog’s mother is taking a walk at this very moment”. This statement may cover up the fact that the dog had been smuggled into Slovenia without the pertaining documents, had not been microchipped and that its sale is illegal.

Has the dog been microchipped and accompanied by a passport?
(for more details please consult the following chapter)
Are documents attesting the dog’s breed (pedigree) at hand?
Though this question has no relevance to veterinary legislation, it helps trace the dog’s origin. Pedigree documents of a young dog are normally issued at a later date. However, this is no reasonable obstacle for the new dog owner to see and check the dog’s parents’ documents. It is not infrequent that the new dog owners await the pedigree documents in vain. Such cases fall within the competence of market inspection services as they are clearly misleading the buyer. The buyer, however, is in a position to take action only if in possession of tangible evidence (contract, invoice …) of purchase accomplished.

Some advice for dog buyers

- Dog breeds that are less common attain higher prices. This fact shall be kept in mind in deciding on purchasing such a dog. You should not succumb to advertisements promising “young dogs of all breeds” at extremely low prices. This may mean dogs originating from unverified breeding kennels.
- Before purchasing a pedigree dog you should consult a dog breed expert. Contact details of particular breed experts may be obtained from the Kennel Club Association of Slovenia, where you will be readily assisted in finding a proper kennel and the dog of the desired breed.
- Young pedigree dogs should be purchased directly from dog breeders. In this way, you are able to verify in person the kennel breeding conditions. At the same time, you are able to get insight into the breeding documents of the dog’s mother and father.
- **If only possible, you should adopt a dog.** Slovenian animal shelters are most busy. Via VARS website you may consult a list of all registered animal shelters, where you are sure to find a dog waiting for a new owner and friend.

Dog registration (microchip, passport and Central Register of Dogs)

Every dog born in Slovenia shall be registered no later than three months of age. The registration can be carried out in any veterinary organisation with concession. In case of an earlier change in dog ownership, the dog shall be registered already at change in ownership. Change in ownership of an adult dog shall be reported within a period of 7 days. Registration shall be conducted by a veterinarian, who holds a relevant concession; however, the dog owner is obliged to provide for its registration. Dog registration purpose is twofold: it ensures the dog identity and ownership tracing. The dog is registered on having complied with the following three requirements:

1. **Every dog shall be identified.** Three dog identification methods have been authorised:
   a) Electronic identification system (microchip): recently, the most up-to-date and most frequent dog identification method. A chip in the size of some millimetres is inserted subcutaneously on the shoulder. It carries a unique number and may be read by special readers, which are available in every veterinary clinic that holds a concession. Microchips in line with the ISO 11784 and 11785 Standards are used throughout the EU. Readers, used by authorised persons, discern such microchips only. If a dog is fitted with a microchip that is non-compliant with the above standards, the dog owner shall provide for an appropriate reader that recognises the microchip in question.
   Microchip number is a 15-digit figure. In Slovenia, pet animals may only be identified by microchips, whose numbers begin with 705. If an animal has been microchipped abroad, it
is permissible that its microchip number begins with different three digits, provided that the animal’s origin is evident from its passport.

b) Tattoo: by June 2011, a clearly readable tattoo is an equivalent method of identification of dogs. Dogs are normally tattooed on the internal side of the earlap.

c) Dog tag (pendant, tab...): for dogs only, born before 1 January 2003, the dog tag is a permissible identification method. These aluminium pendants cannot be replaced by new ones anymore. If the pendant is lost, it shall be replaced by a microchip.
Dogs identified by tags may be moved within the territory of Slovenia only. In order to cross the border (within the EU or to third countries), dogs shall be identified by a microchip or a clearly readable tattoo.

2. **Every dog shall have a Pet Animal Passport.** The term “passport” may be misleading for owners if understood as a document required for dog movements abroad. In the past, dogs that never travelled abroad with their owners used to be issued “vaccination booklets”, which were intended for home use only, and for travels abroad they were issued passports by veterinarians. Now, the Pet Animal Passport is the ONLY document that a dog owner needs to have **and is compulsory for every dog.**
Passport is a document of prescribed form and is issued at identification and registration of a dog by entry in CRD.
Passport includes 28 pages and 11 sections identified by Roman numerals. Each section is intended to include the specific data on the owner, the dog and its state of health. Data entered in CRD shall match with the data entered in the passport.

At dog identification, the passport number shall be entered into CRD. If the passport is lost, a replacement passport is issued and its number entered into CRD, entering also the number of passport that had been lost.

After a dog has died, its owner shall return the passport to the nearest veterinary clinic with concession.

Based on a passport that has accurately been filled in and regularly updated, the owner may demonstrate the identity and ownership of the dog, substantiate the appropriate anti-rabies vaccination regime and keep record of vaccinations conducted against other communicable diseases.

3. **Data on the dog and its owner shall be entered into CRD.**

Data on the dog and its owner are accumulated in the Register. Entry in CRD defines the ownership of a dog and, consequently, the responsibility for the dog. Data on the dog include the microchip number, tattoo or tag number, passport number, dog description (breed, colour, size), data on anti-rabies vaccinations performed and on any bites perpetrated (see chapter “Dog and Environment”). CRD entry includes also data on the owner: name, family name, permanent address and Unique Master Citizen Number – UMCN.

CRD does not have the status of a public register. Dog owners’ personal data are not readily accessible and may be used for the legally defined purposes only. In addition to keeping record of dogs and dog owners, the purpose of CRD is also to enable the controls of implementation of regular vaccinations and controls in case of dog bites. VARS, CRD administrator, may use data in CRD for statistical purposes, whilst anti-rabies outpatient clinics and veterinary clinics within the scope only as defined in Article 26.a of the Animal Protection Act. In addition to purposes as referred to above, any insight into or use of data shall be inadmissible.

In compliance with valid regulations, the application is accessible for veterinary clinics with concession, anti-rabies outpatient clinics within Public Health Institutes, VARS, and animal shelters for stray animals.

Among other things, the purpose of CRD is to monitor the number of dogs in Slovenia. CRD operates similarly as the Central Register of Inhabitants. Its accuracy depends on the accuracy of information entered. It is therefore most important that dog owners notify their veterinarians within a 7-day period of any changes in dog status, and the veterinarian shall then enter such changes into CRD. It is therefore the dog owner’s responsibility to notify the relevant veterinarian if the dog has escaped, has been lost or missing, given away or sold to another owner, moved to another EU Member State, exported to a third country, or died, etc. In case that a dog dies at home, the owner shall notify the relevant veterinarian in writing thereof so that the dog is withdrawn from CRD.

**Compulsory vaccinations**

Compulsory vaccination against certain diseases is a preventive measure instituted by the State so as to prevent the spread or introduction of certain diseases. In case of diseases transmissible
from animals to man (zoonoses), as rabies, vaccination has been prescribed for animals, which may spread the disease from one species to another (e.g. foxes) and for animals, which may transmit the disease to man (dogs). Slovenia has long been successfully suppressing rabies in wildlife. However, as rabies is still present in the Slovenian territory, anti-rabies vaccination of dogs is compulsory. Thus, the possible transmission of disease from wildlife via dogs to man is prevented.

Dogs are to be vaccinated against rabies for the first time no later than at three months of age. Dogs may be vaccinated against rabies before they are three months old. In such a case, an adequate vaccine shall be used.

Re-vaccination is conducted within time periods specified by vaccine manufacturer, but no later than within 12 months from preceding vaccination.

Prior to vaccination, the dog shall be given an agent against endoparasites (dehelmintisation).

**How many dogs may a person possess?**

According to provisions of the Veterinary Compliance Criteria Act it is allowed to possess up to 5 adult pet animals of the same species per apartment. More than 5 adult animals of the same species may be kept up to including 30 days within a period of 12 months.

Apartment is a set of premises intended for permanent residence and forming a functional unit, normally with a single entrance and located in a residential or another building (summarised according to the Housing Act).

In case that you keep on a permanent basis more than 5 adult dogs, you shall be registered as breeder with VARS. This means that you need to comply with the additional requirements, including the additional premises, certain procedures, records etc. You should address an application to the nearest VARS Regional Office, on which basis you will be inspected by an official veterinarian, who shall assess the conditions under which you intend to breed dogs. The official veterinarian may issue a decision requiring certain amendments (dog run, hut, enclosure etc.) and indicating the maximum number of animals which you may keep and breed.

Compliance of breeding conditions shall be assessed by official veterinarian on the basis of the Rules on the protection of pet animals. More details on such requirements may be found under “Taking care of a dog”. 
Taking care of a dog

This chapter describes the requirements to be complied by the dog owner as to the dog’s dwelling-place and nutrition.

Basic care of the animal

Basic care of a dog includes the essential requirements as to the dog’s dwelling-place, care and nutrition. Every pet animal shall be supervised by its owner or keeper at least once a day.

Basic requirements for a dog’s dwelling-space prescribe that:

- dwelling-place shall protect the dog from precipitation, wind, cold and heat,
- dog shall not be kept in premises without daylight so that it cannot see its immediate surroundings,
- there shall be no substances or objects in the dog’s dwelling, which could harm, injure or pose a health risk to the dog,
- dwelling-place shall be cleaned on a regular basis, providing for the daily removal of faeces,
- outdoor dwelling-place shall be an appropriate dog run with a pertaining hut, or another appropriate shelter,
- at external temperatures below 0 °C dogs shall be accommodated in properly insulated dwelling-places,
- canine mothers with litter and diseased dogs shall be accommodated in dwelling-spaces with temperatures at or above 20 °C.

Dog run with a hut shall at least be of sizes as shown in Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dog weight</th>
<th>Minimum dog run area</th>
<th>Minimum dog run height, when covered by a roof</th>
<th>Minimum dog run width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 24 kg</td>
<td>6,0 m²</td>
<td>1,8 m</td>
<td>2,0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 24 to 28 kg</td>
<td>7,0 m²</td>
<td>1,8 m</td>
<td>2,0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 28 to 32 kg</td>
<td>8,0 m²</td>
<td>1,8 m</td>
<td>2,0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 32 kg</td>
<td>8,5 m²</td>
<td>1,8 m</td>
<td>2,0 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At accommodation of several dogs, the dog run and hut sizes shall be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of dogs in dog run</th>
<th>Minimum dog run area for dogs weighing up to 16 kg</th>
<th>Minimum dog run area for dogs weighing from 17 to 28 kg</th>
<th>Minimum dog run area for dogs weighing over 28 kg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.5 m²</td>
<td>10.0 m²</td>
<td>13.0 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0 m²</td>
<td>13.0 m²</td>
<td>17.0 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.0 m²</td>
<td>15.0 m²</td>
<td>20.0 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.0 m²</td>
<td>18.0 m²</td>
<td>24.0 m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deviations from above sizes are possible where dogs of different sizes are accommodated in a dog run (15% less area).

Dog's hut shall be spacious enough for the dog to lie down, get up and turn around in it without effort. The minimum dimensions of a dog’s hut shall be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dog size – shoulder level</th>
<th>Dog’s hut size (width x depth x height)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 55 cm</td>
<td>100 x 60 x 55 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 56 to 65 cm</td>
<td>150 x 100 x 70 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 65 cm</td>
<td>170 – 180 x 120 x 85 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dog’s hut shall consist of two separate rooms, be properly insulated and raised above the ground.

If the official veterinarian in conducting the official controls professionally assesses that lesser dog run and hut sizes do not cause any additional suffering to the animal(s), certain deviations from requirements may be granted.

**Chaining of dogs**

It needs to be pointed out right at the beginning that the contemporary welfare doctrine decidedly dissuades from any long-term chaining of dogs. Such radical interference may cause a number of hindrances in a dog’s life, which may lead to severe behavioural changes. It has been proven scientifically that a permanently chained dog may become aggressive or show other forms of undesirable behaviour as constant barking, howling and similar. Dog chaining increases aggressiveness and adversely affects a dog’s behaviour.

If a dog is chained, the chain shall be at least three times the dog’s length from snout to base of the tail so as not to hinder the dog’s movements, and under no circumstances, the chain shall be less than 3 metres long (measured on the ground). Chain weight shall not exceed 1/12 of the dog’s weight. The dog shall not be chained in a slip or prong collar. The collar used shall not be too tight.

It is PROHIBITED to chain dogs up to 6 months of age, pregnant female canines, and canine mothers with litter. Such animals need to be provided with an appropriate dwelling-place that protects them against precipitation, wind, cold and heat, prevents the animals from escaping and enables appropriate movement.
Care of dogs
Dogs shall be cared for on a regular basis. Under animal care one should understand carrying out the measures of hygiene as brushing the animal’s coat, regular elimination of internal and external parasites as ticks, fleas, intestinal worms, tapeworms, enabling the regular preventive veterinary measures as vaccinations against infectious diseases etc.

Sterilisation and castration
Legal obligation of every animal keeper or owner is to prevent the birth of undesirable animals, through isolation, contraception, sterilisation or castration of the animal. Your obligation, therefore, is to prevent any uncontrolled mating of your animals.

In addition to prevention of undesirable pregnancy, castration of male animals is a recommendable method of preventing certain behavioural problems as aggressiveness towards other male animals. Thus, castration of male canines is the most recommendable measure, in particular in settlements with highly concentrated dog population.

It should be noted that sterilisation of female canines before the first oestrus may rather decrease the possibility of developing certain diseases, as mammary gland tumours. The myth that at least once in its lifetime a female canine should have a litter may turn out to be rather harmful.

Mating of female canines
Period between two parturitions shall not be shorter than 290 days. Any more frequent mating is overburdening and may be regarded as animal cruelty. In exceptional cases only, the next mating may be approved already in the following oestrus, provided that the preceding litter consisted of one or two puppies, or that the female had not been fecundated at first mating, or in case of an abortion or stillborn litter. A canine mother shall be deemed overburdened if having whelped before reaching 14 months of age.

Dog training
Dog training is by all means a most recommendable activity. As to pedigree characteristics, dogs differ among themselves in their training uptake ability. Certain dog breeds (e.g. Border Collie) participate in training with greatest enthusiasm, learning fast and comprehensively. Other breeds (e.g. Beagle) are less respondent to training on account of their character traits, and need more time and patience.

It is PROHIBITED to use any methods or means detrimental to the dog’s health and welfare, whatever the dog’s training uptake may be, fast or slow, effective or ineffective.

It is further prohibited to administer dogs any agents to increase or diminish their natural capabilities if the use of such agents would compromise the welfare of, or cause avoidable suffering to the animal.

Care of sick animal
Sick, injured or exhausted animal shall immediately receive the appropriate care. As the owner suspects the dog to be sick, his or her legal obligation is to provide the dog with all appropriate veterinary care. The dog owner shall additionally see to it that sick, injured and exhausted
animals are properly segregated so as to avoid the spread of disease or injury of exhausted animals.

**Transporting dogs**

Dog in transport shall be protected against falling out or escaping from the means of transport. This should normally mean that windows in a car should not be open so wide as to enable the dog to jump out during the voyage. The dog shall be protected from heat, scorching sun, cold and precipitation.

Animals shall not be transported in vehicle areas intended for cargo or luggage, unless in such a case they are provided with natural light and sufficient ventilation. This provision prohibits among other things the transporting of animals in car boots / trailers, which are detached from vehicles.

Animals shall not be left alone in or on vehicles, unless season appropriate ventilation is provided for. Dogs may rather quickly overheat in vehicles without ventilation parked in the sun. It is a well-known fact that body temperature control in a dog functions rather differently than in humans. Dog skin (excluding small partitions between the digits) does not perspire, which rather aggravates the release of excess body temperature. Thus, dogs are more sensitive to higher temperatures than humans. If external temperature in sunny weather exceeds 20 °C, the vehicle shall be parked in appropriate shadow so as to avoid heat stroke due to vehicle overheating, characterised by intensive panting, increased salivation, increased respiration, strongly reddened visible mucosa or bluish visible mucosa, and unconsciousness.
Prohibited handling and cruelty

In Article 15, the Animal Protection Act clearly lists types of handling and actions which are prohibited to be conducted on animals. Inter alia, the following prohibitions refer to dogs:

- prick the animal, to squeeze or wrench the parts of body of the animal, to suspend the animal, with the exception of the professional purposes, to strike the animal, to immerse it in water or to asphyxiate it in any other way, to throw the animal, to kick it or deliberately run it over by a vehicle, or to abuse the animal sexually;
- expose the animal to fire, hot, caustic or toxic agents and other physical or chemical effects in contradiction with the provisions of this Act;
- force-feed the animals, unless for the health or scientific and research purposes, to pluck the feathers of live feathered animals, to tear the fish from the fishhooks, or to carry out similar actions in contradiction with the provisions of this Act;
- shoot the animals, irrespective of the type of the weapon or firearms;
- pelt the animals with fire-crackers or other pyrotechnic means, to pelt the animals with stones or other objects, to set baits, with the exception of the baits that kill the animal instantaneously and are intended for the killing of the economically harmful rodents, to set nooses and traps, with the exception of the trapping devices which do not injure the animals;
- organise animal fights, to use animals for fighting, to stimulate and train animals in fights with other animals;
- use live animals for food or baiting; only exceptionally, the use of live animals for food is allowed when the conditions are close to those in the natural environment;
- overwork the animals, to use immature animals (not fully grown or sexually immature animals), to interfere with the necessary rest of the animal, to use the diseased, wounded, injured or intimidated animals or to exploit their physical strength, to exhaust them with the running along a means of transport, or to stimulate them with stimulants (doping);
- rear, bring up and train the animal in the way and with the means that cause pain to the animal or may in any other way be detrimental to its health;
- to pursue the animals that live in the natural or urban environment, to pursue the animals in a battue, by intimidation or unnecessary battue from their shelters or nests; this does not apply to the hunting battue, the hounding or forced driving of animals when conducted in compliance with the hunting regulations or to the carrying out of the veterinary measures;
- deliberately abandon the animal on a permanent or temporary basis;
- feed the animal with a substance which causes suffering, harm or death of the animal;
- rear vertebrate animals that themselves or their offspring show hereditary defects which cause the suffering of the animal; this prohibition shall not apply to the rearing of the genetically modified organisms in a closed system, provided that the rearing is managed in accordance with the regulations governing the handling of the genetically modified organisms;
- carry out experiments on animals in contradiction with the regulations.
According to Animal Protection Act (Article 4), cruelty to animals is considered to be:
- any handling or the absence of handling that is premeditated and causes lasting harm to the animal or the prolonged or repetitive suffering of the animal, or that affects its health,
- the avoidable or inappropriate killing of an animal.

It needs to be pointed out here that not only an action, but also an omission of certain actions as care of the animal that results in animal suffering, shall be deemed as cruelty to the animal.

Penal Code of the Republic of Slovenia defines animal cruelty as criminal offence, laying down that a person handling an animal with cruelty and causing avoidable pain to the animal shall be penalised by a fine or by confinement of up to six months. A person, who by such action inflicts pain and suffering on several animals, or permanently seriously mutilates the abused animal, or by cruel means causes the animal to die, shall be penalised by imprisonment of up to one year.
Dogs and environment

This chapter concerns the very essence of responsible dog ownership. It defines the relationship between the dog and its environment, where it cohabitates with other animals and man. More recently, dog attacks and injuries of man have become more and more frequent and more complicated, as well as the consequences of such attacks and responsibilities of dog owners. This chapter should therefore familiarise dog owners with their obligations at inconveniences as a dog bite, and with the pertaining official procedure.

Green plot or public convenience?

As known, dogs are not particularly selective in securing a spot for secretion. On the other hand, at least with male animals, urination is linked to a regular protocol on designation of his own territory. To this end, exposed points are most convenient, as corners of buildings, lampposts and trees – spots claimed by other males before.

Without wasting words it may easily be asserted that dog faeces on pavements, city greens and paths in parks pose a great nuisance. This is an issue of hygiene, public and animal health and, after all, an aesthetic problem, not to mention the cleaning of shoes after having trodden on a “mine”.

Removal of one's own dog's faeces in settlements shall be the task of every responsible dog owner. Many communities have recorded this requirement in their community rules. In many communities the dog owner shall carry plastic bags and other accessories for faeces removal. And the faeces shall be promptly removed from a community road or public green plot so as to avoid environmental nuisance.

Dog in public place

Public place means every place which is unconditionally or under certain conditions accessible to everyone, excluding areas which are not frequented, or not expected to be frequented, by masses. In other words, this means that a dog in a city park or in a settlement shall be leashed.

Animal owner / keeper shall ensure by appropriate upbringing, training and other measures that the animal does not pose a threat to its environment. Notwithstanding the environment that the dog lives in, it is most recommendable for every dog to pass at least the elementary training, i.e. the obedience course.

Omission of physical control of a dog is an offence that is penalised by a fine.

Consistent execution of these two provisions is going to prevent many an attack or bite occasioned by a dog.
Dog bite and its consequences

Notwithstanding any preventive measures as referred to above and as implemented by the dog owner or keeper, a dog bite may happen, by attacking either a human or animal. A dog bite may for the bite victim as well as for dog owner be an extremely unpleasant experience involving a dog. Such an incident may entail serious health problems for the bite victim. However, all the responsibility for such an incident lies on dog owner.

At a bite incident, two things shall be provided for: firstly, the injured person or animal shall be given first aid, and secondly, establishing the identity and ownership of the dog having perpetrated the injury.

If you are the dog’s owner or the attack happened under your control, you are expected to give the person attacked your personal data and basic data of the dog (microchip number, breed etc.), as in the opposite case you may be fined by the official veterinarian.

Seriousness of a dog’s attack is corroborated by the fact that where a dog poses a threat to the environment or has inflicted major damage, and that cannot be prevented by other means, the dog may be put to death. In extreme cases that may be done by a policeman on the spot.

In cases where at the time of attack the dog’s owner is absent or unwilling to give his personal data, the victim of the attack is recommended to call for help the police to the 112 telephone number. The identity of dog’s owner may be established from the microchip number if the dog has been so identified and in case that a veterinarian or the staff of animal shelter for abandoned animals can decipher it. This is feasible in case that the dog can be put under control and detained or the animal shelter staff can locate and catch it.

When a dog bites a person

A person, bitten by a dog, needs to be examined by a medical doctor, who shall establish the seriousness of injury caused by the bite. Depending on the seriousness of injury, medical examination is followed by one of the two different procedures.

Normal procedure

A medical doctor refers the person injured to anti-rabies outpatient clinic. In Slovenia, these clinics operate within Public Health Institutes.

On examining the injured person at anti-rabies outpatient clinic, the dog bite data are entered into CRD. The dog owner’s obligation is to ensure that, on the very same day, the dog that had bitten a person is subjected to examination at a veterinary clinic with concession. There, the dog that had bitten a person shall be put under 10-day observation. Within this period of time, the dog owner shall provide for three clinical examinations of the animal in the veterinary clinic, namely, on day 1, 5 and 10 after the bite. Examination results shall be entered into CRD at the veterinary clinic, and the result of final clinical examination (on day 10 after the bite) shall be reported to the clinic. If the dog owner waives to comply, he or she shall be fined by the official veterinarian.
Procedure in case of a particularly grievous bodily harm or death of the injured person

Where a particularly grievous bodily harm is suspected with a possible fatal result of the injured person, the police shall be present at the point of incident so as to institute measures of averting the general threat, and notifying the official veterinarian of the incident. The injured person shall be given medical attention.

Official veterinarian shall by oral decision dispossess the owner of the dog, placing it in an isolation facility (veterinary clinic or animal shelter) for 10-day observation to begin.

Medical doctor shall notify in writing the relevant VARS Regional Office of a particularly grievous bodily harm or death, including the name and address of the person injured or deceased. After the official veterinarian has obtained medical findings evidencing a severe bodily injury or death of the injured person, he or she shall require the dog that had caused the particularly grievous bodily harm or death of the injured person to be put to death.

If in the opinion of the medical doctor the injury in question is not a particularly severe bodily injury, the dog may be returned to the owner. Further actions are conducted according to normal procedure.

Owner or keeper of the dog which had caused death or particularly grievous bodily harm to a person, shall be prohibited by VARS to breed, possess and manage dogs if the keeper had previously possessed a dog which had caused death or a particularly serious injury.

Dangerous dog: After it has been established that a particular dog had in fact bitten a person, the official veterinarian shall by issuing a relevant decision declaring the dog as dangerous. The Animal Protection Act defines a dangerous dog as:

Dangerous dog means a dog having bitten a person or an animal. As dangerous dogs shall not be considered:
• the police service dogs or military dogs, whose bite results from carrying out an official duty;
• dogs, whose bite is due to an unauthorised entry of a person into the premises or an enclosed piece of land which is marked at the entrance by a notice of warning.

Possession of a dangerous dog may be authorised under certain conditions. Owners or keepers of dangerous dogs shall provide for the physical control of their dogs. In addition to leashing the dog, which is required for all dogs in public places, a dangerous dog shall also be muzzled. When not in public, such a dog shall be kept in a dog run or in the premises, and when the dog is unleashed, it shall be kept in an enclosed area with the fence at least 1.8 m high and marked by a note of warning at the entrance.

Dangerous dogs shall not be entrusted for walking to persons younger than 16.

If a dangerous dog repeatedly bites a person, without causing a particularly grievous bodily harm or death, the official veterinarian shall require specific training for such a dog, and the owner or keeper shall be fined a higher fine. Training of dangerous dogs may be carried out in accordance with a programme that is first approved by VARS. Contact details of persons and/or organisations implementing the training are available at VARS website.
If the owner cannot trust the dog anymore

It happens rather frequently that the relationship between the dog and its owner changes to a degree, where the owner and his or her family do not feel safe in the company of their dog as, in their opinion, it had altered and could by its behaviour endanger other family members. Frequent consequence of such circumstances is that the owner wants to get rid of the dog. How to do that?

Such behavioural changes would be possible due to health reasons, but it needs to be pointed out that such situations are mainly due to the fact that people are unprepared to possess a dog or choose a dog which they are unable to control. Another important reason may be that the dog has not been appropriately socialised and trained.

How to take care of a dog, how to train it, and how to handle it in situations, where tensions arise between the dog and other family members, these all are questions which need to be answered before a dog comes into a family. Many inconveniences as consequence of irresponsible handling of a dog may thus be avoided.

 Owners of such dogs often begin to consider putting the dog “to sleep”. However, Article 26 of the Animal Protection Act allows the killing on account of aggressiveness for two reasons only, where:

1. animal is endangering its environment or causing considerable damage, which cannot be prevented otherwise;
2. so required by official veterinarian in order to protect persons or animals;

In the first instance this means that the dog has bitten before and that on this basis the official veterinarian is issuing a decision declaring the dog dangerous.

If the dog poses a potential threat to its environment, its transfer to animal shelter may be an inadequate solution, as the dog, suspect of behaving aggressively towards persons, would come into a new family, and might bite again. This possibility does exist, and the new keeper needs to be fully familiarised with the dog’s behavioural traits and experienced in handling difficult dogs so as to control such a dog.

And in the second instance it may be assumed that the dog has not bitten yet; however, its owner suspects it might. In a situation like this, the dog owner shall file an application with relevant VARS Regional Office, and the official veterinarian will establish within the administrative procedure as to whether this is an animal that poses a threat to persons or animals. His/her decision will be based on declarations of witnesses, experts or dog training schools. And, based on decision issued by the official veterinarian, the dog may be put to death using a prescribed method.

It needs to be pointed out again that, on account of behavioural problems, it is PROHIBITED to kill a dog in any different manner. Such an act is regarded as cruelty to animals and may be penalised by imprisonment.
Dogs and children

Dog owner’s role in relationship between the dog and a passing-by child is no different than in the relationship between the dog and any other person. The owner’s duty is to see to it that his or her dog does not pose a general threat to persons in its vicinity. Purpose of this chapter is to describe concisely, how a dog and child perceive each other, and where problems may arise, which may entail very serious consequences.

How does a two-year-old see a dog?

In a child’s eyes, a dog is something soft like a plush bear that is warm in addition and moves by itself. It may be chased, used as support in learning to walk, pulled by the tail, skin, ears and lips; it drinks from interesting shiny pots that are easily accessible, eats interesting crunchy beans etc. It scratches with the hind foot, and poops and pees completely differently from us. In a child’s eyes, a dog is an ideal toy.

How does a dog see a child?

In a dog’s eyes, a child is a being that is not to be seen much at first as it lies down in its bed, but is much heard and smelt; then it crawls on all four and later on two only, as master. It makes noises all the time, gesticulates wildly and in a most unpredictable manner. It meddles with everything that the dog does, is interested in his food, water, his personal hygiene. It constantly touches him and even so that it hurts, presses its digits into his eyes and pushes him here and there.

A most significant and potentially extremely perilous issue may arise due to the dog’s erroneous perception of the child’s behaviour. Infants with staggering gait and squeaking sounds may awaken in some dogs their hunting instinct that might entail tragic consequences.

Some advice

The first and most important advice in managing the dog-child relationship is, NEVER leave a child uncontrolled in the dog’s vicinity, be it that you ever so trust your dog and that it is ever so friendly and tolerant!

As already noted, a dog’s natural social pattern is a pack with strict hierarchy. Dogs tending to subordinate by nature do not find it difficult to establish their position within the family. Rather frequently, though, a dog will verify, who he can be superior to within the family. Most appropriate for such verification would be someone weaker, smaller and, in the dog’s eyes, subordinated to the adults in the family. The child is an ideal candidate.

In a family, the dog competes for affection of his master. The master, namely, provides food, walk, care and attention to the dog on a daily basis. In a situation, where the master’s affection is divided between the dog and child, what may happen at a new birth in the family, and the dog may respond in a way reminiscent of jealousy that may even lead to aggression.
The dog needs to be prepared for the arrival of a new family member. Different experts in canine behaviour advise different initiation methods, including the familiarization with the smell of soiled diapers and the sounds and noises of a child.

If before new birth all our attention had been focused on the dog, and then, all of a sudden, to the child only, it is no wonder that the dog will feel abandoned. Care needs to be taken so as to make this decline from the “most popular family member” pedestal as painless as possible (similar to the first-born and second-born situation).

Whether or not there is a dog in a family, it is important in bringing up children to take into account the fact that a dog is a sentient living being. A child needs to understand that it is not right to cause pain to the dog. A dog has its interests which need not always comply with our wishes. A dog does not always feel like cuddling, and before trying to do that, we should better check, in what state of mind the dog is at the moment.

Most importantly, a child should become aware of a certain “protocol” in familiarising with unknown dogs. Before trying to stroke an unknown dog, we should always first ask its owner if the dog would tolerate that. First contact between man and dog should be attempted by the dog. We should first offer our hand for the dog to sniff at, waiting for its response to see if it is safe to continue.
Dogs and travelling

This chapter is about setting out on a journey with a dog. It describes procedures and requirements to be met so as to avoid any hindrances in crossing national borders, be it within the EU or with third countries. It is important to stress that requirements set out in this chapter apply also to dogs obtained abroad (by way of purchase, gift or adoption) and intended by the new owner to be introduced into Slovenia.

Travelling with a dog may prove to be rather a complicated act. In addition to animal welfare requirements, animal health conditions and pertaining administrative requirements need to be strictly observed on many journeys. Conditions for travelling with a dog into certain countries are linked to prescribed periods within which certain vaccinations or laboratory testing need to be conducted. In order to travel to certain countries, such procedures need to commence as early as six months before the intended journey. You should therefore be advised to begin preparations for the journey well in advance.

Pet animal passport

As pointed out earlier, in chapter “Owning a Dog”, a pet animal passport is the document, whereby every dog owner demonstrates the dog’s identity and ownership. This document includes all the vaccinations and tests conducted and demonstrating the dog’s state of health.

Customs officers at every Slovenian international border crossing are equipped with microchip readers so as to verify dogs’ chip numbers. This number shall be indicated in the passport that accompanies the dog. Thus, customs officers are able to verify the identity and ownership of every dog that crosses the national border.

European passport for pet animals is a valid document for crossing the borders of all the EU Member States and certain third countries, as Croatia. For dogs to travel to other third countries you shall need the so-called veterinary certificate. For any details concerning the issue of certificate and pertaining procedures you should contact VARS Main Office (phone number ++386 (0)1 300 13 00) or obtain this information on VARS website (http://www.vurs.gov.si).

Travelling within the EU

In most EU Member States there apply similar requirements for dogs accompanying their owners on travels, as for dogs resident in Slovenia, which means that a dog shall be identified by a microchip (a clearly readable tattoo shall be valid as well by June 2011). A dog that has completed 3 months of age shall in movements have valid anti-rabies vaccination. Valid vaccination means that at least 21 days have elapsed since its first vaccination until movement. A third condition is that the dog should be accompanied by an European passport for pet animals attesting that the dog with a particular microchip number is owned by a particular person, and that it has been vaccinated as set out above.

From 15 March 2008, Slovenia has been allowing the introduction of younger and unvaccinated dogs accompanied by their owners originating from the other EU Member
States; however, introduction from third countries, excluding certain exceptions as Croatia, is not allowed anymore.

In case of a **commercial movement** of an animal (animal sale), introduction into Slovenia shall be allowed of animals only, which are more than 3 months of age and vaccinated against rabies. This provision applies for animal movements from the EU Member States as well as from third countries.

At introduction of unvaccinated young dogs from the EU, the European passport for pet animals shall in its section XI include an attestation by a veterinarian, based on a declaration made by animal owner, to the effect that the animal in question had in the place of birth not been in contact with wildlife which could transmit rabies.

General conditions as listed above apply in all the EU Member States, including most countries of Continental and Mediterranean Europe and our neighbouring countries (Austria, Italy and Hungary).
In addition to these conditions, certain rabies-free countries carry out measures to prevent the introduction of the disease and require compliance with the additional conditions, as determining the reliability of vaccination by measuring the rabies virus antibody titre. Such countries are mainly insular ones as the United Kingdom, Ireland and Malta, including in addition also Sweden and certain other EU Member States.

In addition to health conditions you should pay attention to certain “dangerous breeds” which have been banned in certain EU Member States. Countries as the United Kingdom and Germany have in place a ban on certain dog breeds, which applies also to temporary introduction and transit of such dogs.

You are advised to call VARS Main Office (phone number ++386 (0) 1 300 13 00) concerning any details of the intended journey or to access such information at VARS website (http://www.vurs.gov.si).

**Travelling to third countries**

Veterinary conditions for entry of pet animals into any third country are laid down by the competent authority of that country. Our clients are therefore advised to contact concerning these conditions the competent authority (veterinary administration) of that country. Basic purpose of these restrictions is to prevent the introduction of certain diseases posing an animal and public health threat into the territories of these countries. Introduction approval procedures for a dog are rather different from country to country. Some are simple and enable a dog owner to travel for a holiday only, and others so complicated that it is worth commencing them in exceptional cases only, where a dog owner is moving to another country for a longer period of time.

Let us take an example of Australia. The country is free of rabies and certain other diseases and has in place measures ensuring that such a status is maintained. In addition to identification of the dog by microchip and valid anti-rabies vaccination, you need to be granted a specific authorisation for importation of the dog into Australia, and for this purpose you need to have the vaccination efficacy verified by rabies virus antibody level identification test, which needs to be conducted in a laboratory that is specifically approved for such purposes. In addition to a favourable test result, the dog’s owner needs to demonstrate that the dog has no brucellosis, leptospirosis, ehrlichiosis, leishmaniosis, exoparasites, and if the dog had ever lived in Africa, no babesiosis. All these tests need to be accomplished at least 30 days before setting out on the journey. On arriving to Australia, the dog is, in addition to all the above tests, subjected to quarantine that may extend from 30 to 115 days, depending on the date of taking the blood sample for the rabies virus antibody titre identification test.

Requirements for the return journey of animals from third countries to Slovenia include the European passport for pet animals, appropriate identification and valid anti-rabies vaccination. In certain cases (depending on the country, the animal is returning from), the neutralising rabies virus antibody titration test may be required, which is advisable to be conducted still BEFORE leaving Slovenia. To obtain any additional information concerning the return voyage conditions, you are advised to contact VARS Main Office (phone number ++386 (0) 1 300 13 00) or to consult VARS website (http://www.vurs.gov.si).
Travelling with a dog to the Republic of Croatia
Croatia authorises introduction into the country of dogs under the identical conditions as those apply within the EU. For introduction into Croatia the dog shall therefore be accompanied by a passport attesting the valid anti-rabies vaccination conducted within an appropriate time period prior to introduction. The dog shall be microchipped and the microchip number shall be entered in the dog’s passport.

ATTENTION! Croatia as well has in place a ban on certain dog breeds, including temporary introduction or transit of such dogs.

Hotels for dogs

If you are setting out on a journey that excludes your dog, you may leave it in a pet animal hotel. There are more and more such hotels in Slovenia. Every such establishment needs to be registered with VARS, where you can obtain information on those nearest to your place of residence. Specific regulations lay down the minimum requirements for such hotels.

In summer vacation season, the interest in hotels for dogs is much higher than at other times. You need to “book” hotel accommodation for the high season, and therefore, you are advised to agree your plans with the hotel management well in advance.

In addition to general requirements, hotels have in place their internal conditions applicable to accepting animals into care. Most prominent conditions include anti-rabies vaccination and accomplished registration of the dog (pet passport, entry into CRD). Certain hotels may refuse to accept canine females in heat, or may prefer dogs that are not very old etc.

Dogs respond in different ways to spending time in hotels. Some master it well, whilst others are simply horrified by hotels. Irrespective of differences between dogs, any change of residence and separation from its owner means a stressful circumstance for the dog. It is advisable for the dogs to be vaccinated against other infectious diseases as well.
O odgovornem lastništvu psa
Dogs in animal shelter

Under circumstances that make it impossible to keep a dog, surrendering the dog to an animal shelter may be an option. Decision on such an act is by no means simple as it resembles separating from a family member. Such a solution is mostly arrived at in case of movement to faraway places, death in the family, divorce, diseases as allergies etc.

In Slovenia, provision of shelter for abandoned animals is set out as *local matter of public significance*, which means among other things that every community shall provide for one place in animal shelter per every 800 dogs registered within the community. If a community does not dispose of its own animal shelter, it shall have in place an agreement with an animal shelter situated in another community.

Animal shelter accepts information on abandoned animals, provides for the necessary veterinary aid to abandoned animals, catches, transports, accommodates and cares for abandoned animals in the shelter, searching for new owners, and sells or hands animals over to new owners.

If you find a lost dog, you are obliged to notify animal shelter within 24 hours, or return the dog to owner if known.

Relinquishing a dog to animal shelter

By relinquishing a dog to animal shelter, it is given a chance of being adopted in a relatively short period of time, and of becoming a member of a new family. However, the possibility of handing a dog over to a new family environment is rather limited and conditioned by many factors. Young animals are normally adopted more quickly than adult or old dogs. Adoption is impacted by the dog’s size and its behavioural patterns. It is appropriate then that you are personally involved in the adoption procedure, and certain animal shelters may require you to advertise the giving away of the dog for a certain period of time.

You will need to sign a declaration at animal shelter, whereby you as owner are handing your dog over to animal shelter. Based on this declaration, the animal shelter will then enter changes in CRD. Attention! Ownership change may be carried out by the owner or a person duly authorised by owner only. All accompanying documents (passport, possible pedigree etc.) need to be handed over to animal shelter. You will need to pay average costs for the care of your dog to animal shelter.

If you find a new owner by yourself, the *ownership needs to be changed* in CRD, anyway, and this may be carried out at a veterinary clinic or at animal shelter.

What to do if your dog has been lost?

Should you have lost your dog, you are likely to find it in animal shelter of the community it has been lost in, or in the neighbouring communities or animal shelters that these communities are in agreement with as to providing vacancies in animal shelters.
Within 72 hours, a lost dog shall be reported to the nearest shelter for abandoned animals. Should you fail to do so in this period of time, it shall be deemed that you have wilfully abandoned the animal, and that may be construed as cruelty to animals.

It is of key importance that on the day of the dog’s acceptance in animal shelter, the 8-day and the 30-day periods commence, and on expiry of these periods, important changes concerning the dog’s ownership and the animal shelter’s right to euthanise the dog enter into force.

8-day period

Animal shelter operator shall be deemed the keeper of abandoned animals as long as these are accommodated in the animal shelter. Owner or keeper of the animal found is entitled to requiring the animal’s restitution. Failing to do so within an 8-day period from the day of accommodation of the animal in animal shelter, the animal shelter operator becomes the animal’s owner.

Animal shelter operator may hand the dog over to another interested keeper, who shall take up the commitment of taking proper care of the animal. Thus, the dog has got a new owner.

Legal provision that the new keeper should take up the commitment of taking proper care of the animal is implemented in practice by animal shelters in the form of a declaration to be signed by the new owner on acceptance of the animal. The declaration includes:

- personal name and date of birth of new keeper;
- permanent residence address and phone number;
- address of new residence of the animal;
- animal description;
- animal identification number (microchip);
- agreement of the new keeper that animal shelter staff may periodically check if the animal is properly cared for;
- agreement of the new keeper that animal shelter operator will be notified in case of intended sale or giving away of the animal.

Canine females are normally sterilised before they are given away. Any exceptions are decided on by animal shelter operator. There need to be reasoned grounds in place for not sterilising a canine female. Sterilisation is not an option mainly for pedigree bitches or for young animals.

30-day period

In Article 31, the Animal Protection Act lays down that in case a dog cannot be given away to a new keeper within a 30-day period, the animal shelter may put the dog to death.

This provision is not conditioned by the need for vacancies in animal shelters only. Adverse impacts on animal welfare of lasting accommodation in animal shelter with resulting disorders in animal behaviour and state of health have been demonstrated.

Though the Act allows putting to death, Slovenian animal shelters only seldom resort to this instrument. Thus, the possibility of a dog being put to death after a 30-day accommodation in animal shelter is a last resort.
Farewell

People are often surprised at the sadness over a loss of a dog. However, the sadness may be as profound as over a loss of a dear person. The reason for this may lie in the fact that many people find the only company in a dog. Life without the loved animal may feel rather lonely. It is man’s nature to become attached to somebody or something that is close to him. This includes any other living being.

A dog’s life may end due to a series of reasons. Natural death of an animal is caused by disease, old age or injury. Putting to death or euthanasing an animal is death caused by man for a particular reason and by a prescribed method.

In Article 26, the Animal Protection Act clearly lists the conditions, where under an animal may be put to death. Some thereof apply to pet animals:

*Killing of animals shall be allowed, where:*
- such a measure has been ordered on account of diagnostic testing and for the prevention and eradication of certain contagious diseases;
- in the opinion of the veterinarian, the animal is in agony, incurably sick or seriously injured, and where the disease or injury is causing suffering to the animal;
- animal is endangering its environment or causing considerable damage, which cannot be prevented otherwise;
- so required by official veterinarian in order to protect persons or animals;
- animal has reached an age where its vital functions are declining;
- 30-day period since acceptance in animal shelter has expired and the animal has not been found a new keeper by animal shelter operator;
- urgently required for health reasons or veterinary measures in case of incurably sick abandoned animals.

Only professional methods and procedures of killing animals shall be allowed, killing the animal instantaneously. Sedation prior to euthanasia may be required. Standard veterinary procedure of euthanasia as set out by the Veterinary Chamber of Slovenia requires the intravenous injection of the euthanising agent that brings about the state of painless unconsciousness that is followed by cessation of respiration, heart arrest, and death.

It is important to point out that any premeditated killing of an animal is in contradiction with these provisions and shall be deemed cruelty to animals (see chapter “Prohibited handling and cruelty”).

Irrespective of how the death took place, the event shall be reported to a veterinarian, and the record of death shall be entered into CRD, whereby the dog is cancelled from the register. Cancellation of a dog from CRD is possible on the basis of a declaration on the dog’s death in writing by the owner or based on another relevant document (e.g. attestation on cremation or removal by Veterinary Hygiene Service (VHS)), which is submitted by the owner to the competent veterinary clinic within seven days of the dog’s death.
Handling animal carcasses

Carcass removal: every veterinary dispensary or clinic has in place an agreement with the VHS, which provides for the removal of animal carcasses. If a dog has died or been put to death in a veterinary clinic, its owner needs to leave the body there, unless the conditions for burial or cremation of the body have been complied with. If a dog has died at home, its owner shall report the death as soon as possible to the Veterinary Hygiene Service of the National Veterinary Institute, which shall remove the body. Body removal is not payable as a fee to this end is included in every dog’s anti-rabies vaccination payment. Death of the dog needs to be reported to the veterinary clinic with concession, and data on death entered into CRD.

Burying of carcasses: according to provisions of the Decree laying down the implementation of the Regulation (EC) about health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption, and of the Community implementing regulations issued on its basis and laying down penalties for violations of its provisions (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 100/2006), individual burial of dead pet animals shall be possible in case of absence of suspicion of animal disease. The Decree further provides that dead animals shall be buried deep enough as not to be excavated by carnivores. The covering layer of soil shall be at least 50 cm high. Burial shall be performed so as to avoid groundwater pollution and environmental nuisance.

Dog carcass burial shall therefore be allowed in the case only that the dog in question has not died of disease, and the carcass shall be buried in an appropriate method.

Carcass cremation: in Slovenia, there are no crematoria for pet animals as yet. Some dog owners decide to cremate their dogs in Austrian crematoria. Three such crematoria have been registered:

• Wiener Tierkrematorium GesmbH, Simmeringer Lände 208, Wien;
• Doris Jarolin vertr. durch Herrn Helmut Jarolin, Geschäftsführung, G. Grinningerstrasse 21, Traun;
• Tierkrematorium Renate und Eduard Reininger, Landscha 8, Ehrenhausen.

Procedure applicable to transporting dead pet animals for cremation into the other EU Member States is as follows:

a) pet owner shall submit an application in writing to VARS Main Office;

b) VARS shall ask the competent authority of relevant Member State to grant authorisation for transport of that dead animal carcass;

c) on granting the authorisation by the competent authority of the relevant Member State, the pet owner shall report to relevant VARS Regional Office, where the official veterinarian shall prepare and submit to the other Member State a TRACES message, giving the pet owner the advice as to the method of transportation and required identification of such a consignment (transport may be carried out by personal means of transport, and the packaging shall be such as to prevent any leakage, and packaging identification shall be provided in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002,…);

d) Authorisation granting procedure by competent authorities normally takes some days, and
for this reason, it is advisable to keep the pet’s body in a refrigeration facility of the relevant veterinary clinic until all the necessary documents are obtained.

An application in writing for authorisation of transport and granting of authorisation by the Austrian authorities (under a and b) shall not be required for cremation of animal carcasses in the Tierkrematorium Renate und Eduard Reininger. Austrian authorities have granted a general authorisation for this crematorium to carry out the activity of cremating also pet animals of Slovenian owners. Nevertheless, pet owners are obliged to report to VARS Regional Office first, where the official veterinarian shall notify the movement of animal carcass to Austria and give the pet owner precise instructions on procedures that follow.

This crematorium is most easily accessible for the Slovenian clients as it is located in the Austrian Styria (Leibnitz), close to border.

Should you wish to entrust all the procedures concerning the cremation and burial of your dog to somebody else, you may contact the Cremona Company (David Žargi s.p., Vače 74, 1252 Vače; http://www.cremona.si) which, as the only one in Slovenia, conducts pet animal undertaking activity.

Other methods of handling carcasses: more recently, it has been possible to have taxidermy preparations of dogs and other pets made in Slovenia as well. Decision on how to keep one’s dog in memory is fully up to every dog owner, provided that all the applicable legislation has duly been observed.
Conclusion

If the contents of this brochure should be condensed into a single sentence, it would read: “Dog ownership is a responsibility.” This responsibility applies to the owner’s attitude towards the dog. The owner shall take care of the dog’s health and welfare. It applies also to the environment in which the dog and owner reside, meaning that the owner shall be held responsible for the actions of his or her dog and for the possible damage which the dog may incur.

A dog is perceived in most different ways by the different persons. Some see it as a life-threatening menace, others as a hygiene hazard, and others again as annoying by barking in residential houses… As regards the relationship of your dog towards its environment it needs to be pointed out that a responsible owner can easily attain that his or her dog does not pose a threat to the environment in which it lives. We will be most happy if this brochure can improve the perception of dogs by their environment.

Along with all the prohibitions and obligations on the side of dog owner, as stated in this brochure, we should never forget that dog ownership should be a pleasant experience. A dog is our friend, and we should endeavour to keep it so.

Therefore, you should love your dog for what it is – a dog, with all its characteristics: vigilance, playfulness, naughtiness, devotion and mischief. You should get to know him well, and you will find that you are dealing with a living being which responds to emotional and physical pain most similarly as yourself. And for this reason, it is your moral obligation to provide the dog with an environment that contains as little such pain as possible.
O odgovornem lastništvu psa