

Otago Canine Training Club Safe Training Management Policy

Safety is paramount for the Otago Canine Training Club handlers, trainers, dogs as well as the general public. This policy aims to ensure that everyone involved with the club is kept safe from harm at all times to the best of our ability.

All classes and Senior self-training sessions, including CC1 and 2, rally, agility, treibball, flygility and obedience

1. All dogs must enter and exit any training area on lead.
2. All dogs must be kept on a lead during a class unless specifically instructed by the instructor that the lead can be removed. Once the exercise has been completed the dog must be put back on lead.
3. Our club has a no tie up policy which means dogs must not be tied up and left unsupervised at any time before, during or after any class. Dogs must not be left unsupervised on a mat in a stay except when actually training that exercise. If a demo dog is required it must be returned to the car or securely crated. There are club crates available in the garage.
4. Dogs must be kept under control at all times. Handlers need to pay attention to what their dogs are doing at all times and dogs should be kept on a short enough lead that they can't interfere with any other dog. Flexi leads are not permitted during class. The class instructor or code coordinator may instruct a handler to change equipment if adequate control is not being maintained.
5. Where a dog requires extra space, the class is to be informed of this, and required to comply.
6. Class members will be instructed to not allow their dog to go up to other dogs at any time without first asking the other handler and ideally there should be no dog interaction during a class.

Canine Companion 1 classes

Handlers are to be asked prior to enrolment;

- whether their dog shows or has shown at any time any undesirable or aggressive behaviour towards people or other dogs and;
- whether their dog has ever been subject to any substantiated complaint in relation to aggression to DCC or Dogs NZ.
- If the answer is "yes" further questioning is required and, if necessary, the owner will be referred to a professional trainer instead of coming to our classes. If a dog of concern is allowed to attend classes anyway, it may be required to be muzzled initially.
- The class instructor is to be advised that a particular dog needs to be assessed and to make sure the handler acknowledges there may be a problem.
- If at the first class the dog shows any aggression towards other dogs or people then they are to be given plenty of space. If the dog cannot be given enough space to get into a trainable state then club training may not be for them.
- Handlers should be shown how to muzzle train their dogs. Muzzling a dog may be required in the future for many reasons eg if the dog is in pain or has been injured and has to be treated.
- No dog showing any form of serious aggression will graduate from CC1.

All club classes

Behaviours instructors may observe (this list is not comprehensive but indicative of the types of behaviors):

- ♣ The dog is barking and lunging at other dogs, with the intention to connect
- ♣ The dog is growling at other dogs or other people
- ♣ The dog is lifting its lips
- ♣ The dog has its hackles up
- ♣ The dog is staring intently and displaying stiff body language, that may or may not result in lunging

- ♣ The handler does not display competence to control the dog
- ♣ The handler fails to notice the dog's body language as a warning
- ♣ The handler denies there is a problem or refuses to control the dog or follow instructions
- ♣ The trainer feels threatened by the handler or dog
- ♣ The trainer does not feel that the dog is trustworthy

If at any time the instructor feels there is any immediate danger to any person or animal, or a biting incident has occurred, the instructor will tell the handler to remove themselves and their dog from the training session straight away.

If this occurs the trainer will explain to the handler

- Temporary removal from training is about ensuring safety for themselves and others.

- As soon as possible the OCTC Secretary will be informed about the situation by the instructor, coordinator or any other club member who witnessed the altercation. The Secretary will contact the members of the management committee (MC).

An investigation into the incident will be carried out in a manner deemed appropriate by the MC. This will include interviews with relevant instructors, coordinators, witnesses, and the handler involved.

As a result of this investigation, the MC may choose to take no further action, to put a plan and conditions in place to allow the dog to return to classes, or to ban the dog from classes until further notice.

Conditions that may be imposed on a dog returning to classes may include (but are not limited to): muzzling, specific equipment, desexing, no off leash training, successful rehabilitation and a report to that effect, banned from specific classes, handler behavior, etc

In the event of a dog fight

If all precautions are taken a fight should not happen, but if it does;

1. Stay calm. Resist the urge to grab your dog by the collar. You may get bitten.
2. Make as much noise as you can which may distract the dogs eg stomping your feet, clapping hands, banging metal.
3. Use a hose, bucket of water, spray bottle, citronella spray.
4. Use a physical barrier to split them up without putting your hands in harms way eg plywood, chair, small table etc.
5. Throwing a large blanket, towel over the dogs. Some dogs will stop fighting if they cannot see each other.
6. Once the dogs have stopped fighting keep them out of each other's sight or they may start fighting again. Put them back in their cars.
7. If you have to pull two fighting dogs apart, one person grabs hold of each dog's two hind legs. Lift their back paws off the ground into a wheelbarrow position and begin walking backwards, circling to one side.

Suggested remedial action (this list is not comprehensive but indicative of the types of actions the trainers may agree on)

- It is recommended that you talk with your own vet initially to rule out any medical or physical problems that may be causing your dog's aggression. Blood tests should probably be completed. If the dog is not neutered this should be discussed with your vet.
- Referral to an animal physiotherapist to ensure the dog is not in pain or has a chronic or acute injury.
- Referral to a private vet behaviorist
- Referrals to private trainers via the OCTC Secretary who has a list