

Press Release



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For Immediate Release

Don't fall foul of the law

Christmas is a time to share but one thing not at the top of Santa's list is dog mess. Dog owners in the district are being reminded by South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) to 'bag and bin' any dog mess when they are out and about in public places.

Most dog owners are responsible and pick up after their dog, but for those that don't they are breaking the law as dog faeces pose a public health risk. If a council officer witnesses a dog owner not picking up they may be liable to a fixed-penalty fine of £75. If the fine is not paid the owner could be fined up to £1,000 plus court costs. Members of the public can help reduce dog fouling in the area in which they live by contacting the environmental protection team on 01327 322323 or filling in an online form. It is important to include the name and address of the person in charge of the dog if known, a description of the dog plus the date, time and place of the offence. If fouling occurs at regular times it may be possible for an officer to witness the fouling and take the necessary action.

Dog owners should always take a poop scoop or bags with them to use to clean up after their dog. The waste can be put in any public bin, not just the designated dog waste bins. Some owners take the trouble to wrap the dog mess in a plastic bag, but then leave it at the side of the path. This is a littering offence and if the offender is found guilty in the Magistrate's Court the fine could increase to £2,500 plus costs, and they will get a criminal record.

Councillor Dermot Bambridge, portfolio holder for environmental services, said: "Thoughtless dog owners are not only spoiling other people's enjoyment of our streets and countryside but also threatening public health and giving responsible dog owners a bad name. For this irresponsible minority the message is clear – they risk being prosecuted.

"Those who choose to disregard our repeated pleas should remember that serious illnesses such as 'Toxocariasis' can be contracted from dog faeces and this condition can lead to blindness."

Here are a few tips for dog owners:

- Train the dog to go in the garden, if you have one. You can then bury the mess or clean it up and bin it

- If you walk your dog always carry the means to clear up after them. A simple plastic bag will do the trick or buy a poop scoop from a local pet shop
- You can also buy biodegradable plastic 'doggy bags' from our council offices at Springfields in Towcester or phone 01327 322323. The cost of these bags is just £6 for 300. Similar bags can be purchased from other retailers
- Remember to take a bag or poop-scoop with you, just in the way you would with your dog's lead
- Every time your dog fouls, bag it and bin it
- Take the poop scoop home and dispose of it there or use a bin if available and remember rain does not wash the problem away
- Never let your dog out alone to 'go to the loo'
- Worm your dog. Virtually all puppies are born with the toxocara infection which can cause blindness in humans. They may need to be wormed at two, four, six and eight weeks and thereafter every two months, depending on the worming product. Check details with your vet.

To report someone for failing to clean up after their dog call the council's environmental protection team on 01327 322323, or visit www.southnorthants.gov.uk/998 to report online.