



# SEIZURE & IMPOUNDMENT OF DOGS IN VICTORIA

*This factsheet outlines Victorian laws as at November 2025 about the seizure and impoundment of dogs.*

## WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S POWERS TO SEIZE MY DOG?

Council officers in Victoria have the authority to seize and impound dogs when they are stray, unregistered, dangerous, of a restricted breed or involved in an offence under the *Domestic Animals Act* (the DA Act).

If your dog is seized and can be identified (through a microchip or collar tag), the council must provide you with a **notice of seizure within four days**.

It is important to ensure contact details on the microchip are up to date as the notice will be sent to your last known address.

You have **eight (8) days from the date of seizure** to comply with the council's requirements. You must pay any costs incurred by the Council in holding your dog, and you must prove that you are the owner.

Proof of ownership is normally established by providing the council with your dog's **registration papers**. If your dog is not registered, you can ask to provide a statutory declaration stating that you are the person who is taking care of the dog. Council may require that you undertake to microchip, desex and register your dog.

If you have been charged with offences under the DA Act, the council may impound your dog until the charges have been determined in Court.

## WHAT IF MY DOG ATTACKED?

If your dog attacks any person or animal and causes death or a serious injury to the person or animal, the Council will investigate. An attack includes biting, rushing at or chasing. The person in control of the dog may face criminal charges, including fines.

If the Council reasonably suspects your dog was **involved in an attack** and **poses a risk to the community**, it **may seize the dog**. Following the investigation, the Council may:

- Declare the dog dangerous or menacing, or
- Require, either through Council decision or a Magistrates' Court order, that the dog be euthanised.

If your dog has been seized, you should contact the Council immediately. If the Council allows the dog to be released, you must meet all recovery requirements within eight (8) days. This includes **proving ownership** of the dog, and **paying all costs incurred by the Council** during the holding period.

If the Council decides that your dog should be euthanised, you have the right to **request a formal review** of the decision.

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### SEIZED DANGEROUS DOGS OR RESTRICTED BREEDS

If a dog is from a restricted breed and was seized by council for being at large (outside of the place where the dog usually lives) and the keeper cannot be identified, councils are required to euthanise the dog after **two (2) days**.

If a dog is seized after attacking a person or animal, or if the council believes a dog poses an immediate risk of serious injury or death to a person or animal, council officers have a **discretion to euthanise the dog**, even if a court has not ordered this.

A council may refuse to allow a declared dangerous or restricted breed dog to be registered or for the dog's registration to be renewed. If this happens you have **28 days** to request a review.

### NEXT STEPS IF A DOG IS SEIZED

Make notes of conversations and keep copies of all communication with the council.

Request a copy of any investigation report or brief of evidence. This will help to explain what factors are influencing the council's decisions, and whether they have followed the correct process.

Seek legal advice if:

- council intends to hold the dog;
- you are notified that the dog is to be destroyed; or
- you are charged with an offence.

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The Animal Law Institute provided free legal services to Victorian residents from 2014 to 2025.

The Animal Defenders Office acknowledges the enormous contribution of the Animal Law Institute to the practice of animal law in Australia.

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If you are unsure of your rights and how to move forward, contact a community legal centre or private lawyer to discuss how they may be able to assist you.

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*This factsheet provides general information only. It is not specific to individual circumstances and is not intended as legal advice. You should speak with a lawyer about your own situation before taking any legal action.*

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