

Dog Fouling

Environmental Health

**Public Protection
Partnership**

**Bracknell Forest
West Berkshire**



Dog fouling

It is every owner's moral duty and legal responsibility to clean up after their dog.

Parks

The disgust that dog mess causes to those who have stepped in it, sat by it or seen their local parks ruined by it is felt keenly enough by dog owners who walk there every day. The offence and anger fouling causes to the general public is so great that letters of complaint on the subject are received daily by MPs and councillors across the UK. While these complaints have sometimes resulted in more special bins being provided and awareness raising projects being funded, they have also resulted in campaigns and policies that punish not only the guilty owners and their dogs, but all dog owners.

The countryside

Dog mess is not only a problem in our towns and urban areas. Some owners, visiting the countryside, seem to forget about their duty when they are out of town. The mess of visiting dogs often surrounds car parks at popular beauty spots and public open spaces, which are often the same areas where people picnic and children play. Wherever you are, you must always collect and dispose of your dog's mess.

The law

The Council has the power to prosecute under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996. This Act allows for a fixed penalty fine of £50. In certain circumstances offenders can be taken to court where the maximum fine is £1,000 and a criminal record.

It is every dog owner's duty to clear up after his or her dog. There are no excuses, fouling is unacceptable.

The solutions

1. If you have a garden, teach your dog to “go” there, **before you leave home**. The faeces can then be put straight into your dustbin or digested in a sunken “dog loo”.
2. **Always** carry the means to clear up after your dog. Research shows that simple plastic bags are far more convenient, more effective and cheaper than most poop scoops. Your bags should be as unforgettable as a lead when you take your dog out.
3. **Every time** your dog fouls, “bag it and bin it”, whether it is in a park, wood, path or roadside gutter. Remember the rain does not wash it away.
4. **Respect** your Local Authority rules on dog-free areas. Dogs cannot read signs, so it is up to you to keep them away from children’s play areas and sports pitches. If dog-waste bins are provided, then use them.
5. **Never** let your dog out alone to “go to the loo”. This should go without saying, but it does still happen. Apart from the fouling problem, you may never see your companion again.
6. **Get involved** when your Local Authority is considering new rules on dog access. Keep an eye on the announcements in your local paper. If positive views, opinions and the benefits of dog ownership are not presented, they will never be considered.
7. Get your dog **wormed**. Visit your veterinary surgeon for advice on the products suitable for your pet and the frequency of doses.
8. Politely but firmly encourage guilty owners you meet to **do their duty**. You do not need to be rude, simply offer them one of your bags; embarrassment over their unacceptable behaviour often gets results.

9. **Always** wash your hands after walking your dog and before eating. While Toxocara infections are very rare and are more likely to affect children (because of their play habits), remember adults can become ill too.

Toxocariasis

Fears about the danger to human health from dog faeces have spread throughout the population. However, most people's knowledge of the rare *Toxocara canis* infection is limited to hearsay and media reports. The facts are:

- The eggs of the *Toxocara* worm, if deposited in soil, can lie dormant for up to three years. They are highly resilient to temperature changes and chemical disinfectants have little effect on them.
- In tests five per cent of dogs were found to expel *Toxocara* worm eggs.
- Of this five per cent, the majority were puppies between two weeks and six months of age or pregnant bitches.
- As the eggs of the *Toxocara* worm take over two weeks to hatch and become active, there are no health risks to you from immediately clearing up after your dog.
- Foxes and cats also act as hosts to the *Toxocara* worm.
- Toxoplasmosis can also be caught from eating raw or undercooked meat, unpasteurised goats' milk products and food contaminated by infected faeces.



Check list

- Teach your dog to foul in the garden.
- Always carry a poop bag.
- Always clean up after your dog.
- Your dog should be taken out to exercise, not to foul.
- Try to make sure your dog never fouls in a public place.
- Remember you could be committing an offence if you fail to remove and dispose of your dog's faeces.
- Worm your dog – dogs that are not wormed regularly can carry infections.
- Encourage other dog owners to do the same.

If your dog fouls in a public place – clean it up!

If you need more information, please contact your local Animal Warden using the contact details on the back of this leaflet

We are committed to being accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please call Environmental Health and Licensing on Telephone 01635 551111.

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