

Removal of the muzzling requirement for pet greyhounds

FAQs

Greyhounds to which the changes apply:

Do the changes apply to all greyhounds?

The removal of the muzzling requirement applies to all registered pet greyhounds. The only greyhounds it does not apply to are the ones owned by racing industry participants.

Do pet greyhounds need to be registered?

Yes. Registering pet dogs on the NSW Pet Registry is a requirement under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. Doing so and keeping your details up to date on the NSW Pet Registry is also the best way of ensuring your dog is returned to you should it go missing.

Removal of the muzzling requirement:

Do pet greyhounds still have to be muzzled while in public?

No. From 1 July 2019, registered pet greyhounds are able to go muzzle-free in public.

However, in the case of newly adopted greyhounds, the Office of Local Government advises owners to adopt a cautious approach and keep the greyhound muzzled for at least eight weeks in public to allow the owners to settle the dog within its new environment and to monitor and assess the dog's behaviour.

Does a pet greyhound have to be on a leash in public?

Yes. Like all dog breeds, greyhounds need to be on a leash in public.

Why are you removing the muzzling requirement when a greyhound might attack someone?

If a greyhound rushes at, chases or attacks a person or other animal, the same penalties that apply for any breed of dog will apply. Like any other breed, greyhounds can also be declared dangerous or menacing based on their behaviour.

As with all dog breeds in NSW, greyhound owners will continue to have the discretion to muzzle their dogs should they choose to do so.

The Office of Local Government recommends that owners muzzle their pet greyhound for at least eight weeks after adopting a new animal. This cautious approach will allow the greyhound to settle into its new environment and the owner to monitor and assess the dog's behaviour.

Doesn't this change put the public at risk?

These reforms are being implemented in a way that promotes the welfare of greyhounds and other animals as well as community safety.

The Office of Local Government recommends that owners muzzle their pet greyhound for at least eight weeks after adopting a new animal. This cautious approach will allow the greyhound to settle into its new environment and the owner to monitor and assess the dog's behaviour.

The change also delivers on a recommendation by the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel and follows extensive consultation with the industry and the community.

Greyhounds in off-leash areas:

Are pet greyhounds allowed in off-leash areas?

Yes. However, pet greyhounds need to wear a muzzle while in off-leash areas unless they have successfully completed an approved retraining program. Greyhounds should only be let off their lead in off-leash areas once owners are aware of how the dog socialises in different settings and they are confident it will remain under effective control while leash-free (for example, the dog will recall on command).

How can I tell if a greyhound has been through a retraining program?

Greyhounds that have successfully completed a retraining program need to wear an identifying collar, or alternatively the person in charge of the animal can carry a 'proof of completion' card.

What is an approved retraining program?

Currently, *Greenhounds* and *Greyhounds As Pets* are the only approved retraining programs in NSW. For further information on putting your pet greyhound through a *Greenhounds* retraining program, please visit: www.greenhounds.com.au.

Greyhounds As Pets is a greyhound rehoming organisation. Greyhounds adopted through *Greyhounds As Pets* are automatically enrolled in the *Greenhounds* program, while some may have already successfully completed the program. To find out more, please visit: www.gapnsw.com.au.

How do I get a proof of completion card?

The Office of Local Government is working with other relevant State agencies to develop this card, which will become available to greyhound owners in the near future. In the interim, pet greyhounds that have completed a retraining program should continue to wear their green collars in off-leash areas.

Does my ex-racing pet greyhound have to complete a retraining program?

No, unless you would like your pet greyhound to be muzzle-free in an off-leash area. You may also like to put your pet greyhound through such a program in order to get a better idea of its temperament. This will ensure that you are better informed when deciding whether or not your pet greyhound should wear a muzzle while in public.

What if the greyhound is not muzzled in an off-leash area and it has not completed a retraining program?

The same penalty that applies now for an un-muzzled greyhound will still apply. This is currently a \$180 fine or a maximum court-imposed penalty of \$880.

I have just adopted an ex-racing greyhound. Do you have any information about keeping greyhounds?

The Office of Local Government, in partnership with key industry stakeholders, is developing new educational material to advise prospective greyhound owners about ex-racing greyhounds. This will provide information about exercise and enrichment, body language and behavioural cues and managing agitation and hyper-excitability.

Useful information can also be found on the Greenhounds website: www.greenhounds.com.au and on the Greyhounds as Pets website: www.gapnsw.com.au.

Education and enforcement:

How have my compliance and enforcement responsibilities changed?

From 1 July 2019, pet greyhounds that are registered on the Companion Animals Register are permitted to be muzzle-free while in public. If a pet greyhound is unregistered, it does not qualify for this exemption and is in contravention of section 15 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (certain breeds of dogs to be muzzled). This may also be an offence under section 9 of the Act (registration required from age 6 months).

If a pet greyhound is muzzle-free in an off-leash area and it has not successfully completed an approved retraining program, this is a contravention of section 15 of the Act. The greyhound needs to wear an identifying green collar or, alternatively, the person in charge of the greyhound will need to carry a 'proof of completion card' in order to prove that their pet greyhound is able to be muzzle-free in the off-leash area. The Office of Local Government is working with other relevant State agencies to develop this card, which will become available to greyhound owners in the near future. In the interim, pet greyhounds that have completed a re-training program should continue to wear their green collars in off-leash areas.

Should greyhounds be treated any differently if they rush at, chase or attack a person or other animal?

No. The same enforcement framework that applies to all other dog breeds also applies to pet greyhounds. This includes penalty amounts, dangerous/menacing dog declarations and dog attack reporting requirements.

Do you have any educational material that we can distribute locally?

A brochure is available on the Office of Local Government's website at: www.olg.nsw.gov.au/content/greyhound-muzzling (under 'Related Downloads').

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