

# The Law on Docking Tails

### Animal Welfare Act 2007

The Animal Welfare act of 2007 brought new laws on tail docking. Whilst some breeds of dog naturally have short tails, most are born with a full tail. Traditionally, some dogs have had their tails cut off or “docked” for various reasons.

The docking of dogs' tails will be banned in England from 6 April 2007 and in Wales from 28 March 2007 but with exemptions from the ban for certain working dogs, and for medical treatment.

### Exemptions

The exemption for working dogs allows a dog that is likely to perform certain specified types of work to have its tail docked by a veterinary surgeon.

### In England the following can be docked:

1. Hunt point retrieve breeds of any type or combination of types.
2. Spaniels of any type or combination of types.
3. Terriers of any type or combination of types.

### Steps towards tail docking

The dog will have to be less than 5 days old and the veterinary surgeon will have to certify that he or she has seen specified evidence that the dog is likely to work in specified areas.

Puppies being docked must be microchipped, either at the time of docking or when the vet considers they are old enough.

Puppies from certain working dogs may be docked if evidence is provided to the vet that it is likely to be worked in connection with law enforcement, activities of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, emergency rescue, lawful pest control, or the lawful shooting of animals. It is accepted that in a litter, not all puppies docked will be found suitable for work.

The owner of the dog, or person representing the owner must make a signed statement that, the dam of the puppies to be docked is of a type which can be certified as set out below, the date on which the puppies were born and that it is intended that they will be used, or sold, for one of the working purposes set out in the regulations.

The vet must sign a declaration that the requirements of the regulations have been satisfied i.e. that he has been given the necessary declaration by the owner or person representing the owner and has seen the evidence required.

The vet must have a completed statement, signed and dated by the owner of the dog (or by another person whom the veterinary surgeon to whom it is presented reasonably believes to be representing the owner), made in the form set out in the regulations.

The vet must see the dam of the dog and a further piece of evidence such as:

- A current shotgun or firearm certificate issued to the owner of the dog, or to the agent or employee of the owner most likely to be using the dog for work in connection with the lawful shooting of animals
- A letter from a gamekeeper, a land occupier (or his agent), a person with shooting rights, a shoot organiser, a club official, a person representing the National Working Terrier Federation, or A person engaged in lawful pest control, stating that the breeder of the dog whose tail is to be docked is known to him and that dogs bred by that breeder have been used (as the case may be) on his land, or in his shoot, or for pest control.

### Showing of Docked Dogs

A dog docked before the 28 March 2007 in Wales and 6 April 2007 in England may continue to be shown at all shows in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland throughout its natural life.

A dog docked on, or after, the above dates, irrespective of where it was docked, may not be shown at shows in England and Wales where the public is charged a fee for admission. However, where a working dog has been docked in England and Wales under the respective regulations set out above, it may be shown where the public are charged a fee, so long as it is shown “only to demonstrate its working ability”. It will thus be necessary to show working dogs in such a way as ONLY to demonstrate their working ability and not conformity to a standard. A dog legally docked in England, Wales, Northern Ireland or abroad may be shown at any show in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

### Remember:

If you go to buy a pup and it has a docked tail, make sure that it comes with the necessary certificate and that it must be chipped.

