

# LEGAL DUTIES OF PET OWNERS

*Because they have no one else but you!*

---

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
SMU LAW OUTREACH CLUB**

Be a responsible owner today!





## **CONTENT PAGE**

Definitions - 3

What are the types of animals allowed as pets? - 4

Please avoid doing these to your pet! - 5

Pet owners in general - Be responsible for others! - 6

Dog owners in general - 7

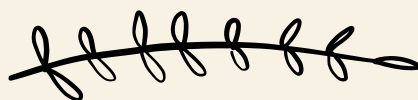
Specified dogs in 2nd Schedule (Part I) - 8

Specified dogs in 2nd Schedule (Part II) - 9

Pet custody: Who gets the pet? - 10

Pet owners who no longer want to be owners - 11

References -12



The information set out in this brochure shall be as a **matter of guidance only**, and is not intended to replace, substitute or supplement legal advice that may be needed in each case.

The information contained in this brochure is **based on the prevailing law and Code of Animal Welfare** (for the Pet Industry) in force as at [date].



# SOME LEGAL DEFINITIONS TO START WITH...

## WHO IS A PET OWNER? [1]

A pet owner includes anyone who is in charge of any animal or bird, for the time being.

An "owner" is defined as "in relation to an animal, includes a person in charge of the animal".

A "person in charge" is defined as "a person who has ... the animal in the person's possession, custody or control, or under the person's care or supervision, and includes an individual who has the animal in such a manner in the course of the individual's employment";

## WHAT COUNTS AS A PET? [2]

A pet can be classified as an animal or a bird that someone keeps at home.

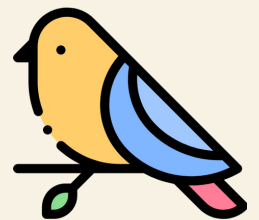
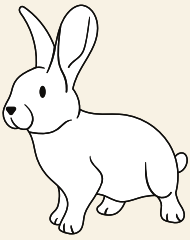
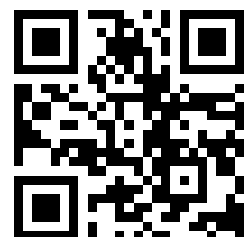
"Animals" include any beast, bird, fish or reptile, whether wild or tame.

"Beast" is defined as an animal, a domestic animal, whether four-legged or otherwise, that may be used for food or labor or sport.

## **NOTE! NOT ALL ANIMALS MAY BE LEGALLY KEPT IN SINGAPORE**

It is illegal to keep endangered animals and controlled animals as pets, unless a CITES permit has been obtained. [3]

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WHICH PETS ARE CONSIDERED ILLEGAL, SEE MORE AT THIS QR CODE:



# What are the types of pets allowed in premises in Singapore?

Based on the Housing and Development Board (HDB)  
Animals Rules 1989



Pet owners can keep 1 dog from the list of approved breeds in their flat.



- QR codes for the list of approved breeds:
- Flat owners found to breach this regulation can be fined up to a maximum of \$4,000

Most small breed animals, such as rabbits and guinea pigs are allowed.\*

- QR code for small breed animals:



For HDB  
Flats



Cats are **not allowed** in flats [\[4\]](#).

- They are difficult to contain in flats.[\[4\]](#)
- When allowed to roam indiscriminately, they tend to shed fur and defecate or urinate in public areas, and also make caterwauling sounds, which can inconvenience your neighbours. [\[4\]](#)

~ adapted from HDB's website, see [\[4\]](#).



Pet Owners are allowed to keep up to 3 pet dogs in one premise.

- Of the 3 dogs, **all 3** dogs can be from the list of unscheduled dog breeds.
  - QR code for scheduled breeds of bigger dogs:



- Alternatively, all 3 dogs can be from the list of small dog breeds.



For Private (non-  
HDB residential  
and commercial)  
premises

# Please avoid doing these to your pet!

## DO NOT ABANDON YOUR PET!

If your pet is missing, you have to make reasonable efforts to find it. [5]

---

NPARK'S ANIMAL AND VETERINARY SERVICES  
INVESTIGATES CASES OF ANIMAL ABANDONMENT.

IF YOU ARE FOUND GUILTY OF ABANDONING YOUR PET,  
YOU CAN BE FINED UP TO \$10,000 AND/OR IMPRISONED  
FOR A TERM UP TO 12 MONTHS AS A FIRST-TIME OFFENDER.

SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS IMPOSED ARE FINES OF UP TO  
\$20,000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT FOR A TERM OF UP TO 2  
YEARS.

## DO NOT BE CRUEL TO YOUR PET!

Don't beat, kick, torture, terrify or infuriate your pet.  
Don't cause your pet unnecessary suffering. [6] This scope is  
broader than just being cruel. [7]

For example, if you keep your pet confined in a small space that  
does not allow it to move around or if you leave your pet alone in  
the balcony or corridor, neglecting it and exposing it to the  
elements.

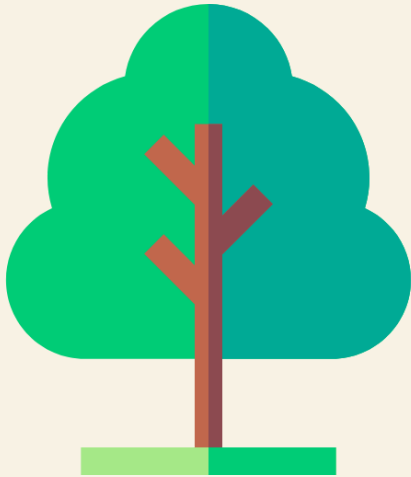
---

IF YOU ARE FOUND GUILTY OF ANIMAL CRUELTY, YOU CAN BE FINED UP TO  
\$15,000 AND/OR JAILED UP TO 18 MONTHS FOR FIRST-TIME OFFENDERS.

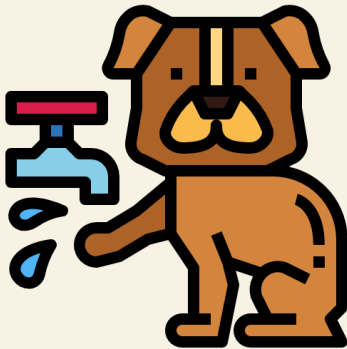
FOR SUBSEQUENT OFFENDERS, YOU CAN BE FINED UP TO \$30,000  
AND/OR JAILED UP TO 3 YEARS.



# Pet owners in General: Be responsible for others too!



Ensure that your pet does not damage **public property / plants**. [\[8\]](#)



Your must not **wash** your pet on any **public road**, or beside **public tanks, reservoirs**, etc. [\[10\]](#)



You must **clean up** after your pet in public. [\[9\]](#)



Your must not urge your pet to **attack or threaten** other people or animals. [\[11\]](#)

Make sure other people and property are safe.

---

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE CAN LEAD TO FINES OF UP TO \$1,000. FOR FIRST TIME OFFENDERS.**

# Dog Owners in general: take note!



Ensure that your dog does not run at other **people**, or at **vehicles / bicycles** on a public road. [\[12\]](#)

Fine of up to \$1,000.



Ensure that your dog does not **injure** members of the public. [\[13\]](#)

Fine of up to \$5,000.

Additionally, up to \$2,000 compensation for such injury.



Remember to leash your dog in all public places.

Fine of up to \$5,000.



Remember to **muzzle** your dog (if ferocious). [\[14\]](#)

Fine of up to \$5,000.

---

We love our dogs, but we must be responsible for other people too!

# SPECIFIED DOGS IN THE 2ND SCHEDULE

## PART I\*



**Leash** and **muzzle** your dog in a public place.



**Microchip** your dog.



Newly licensed dogs must undergo **obedience training**.



You must take an **insurance policy of at least S\$100,000**, to cover injuries to people and damage of property.



All Part I dogs must be **sterilized**, if over 6 months old.



You must take up a **banker's guarantee of \$5,000**. If you break any of these rules, you will lose the guarantee, and must take up a new one.



# SPECIFIED DOGS IN THE 2ND SCHEDULE

## PART II\*



**Leash** and **muzzle** your dog in a public place.



**Microchip** your dog.



Newly licensed dogs must undergo **obedience training**.



You must take an **insurance policy of at least S\$100,000**, to cover injuries to people and damage of property.



You must take up a **banker's guarantee of \$2,000**. If you break any of these rules, you will lose the guarantee, and must take up a new one.

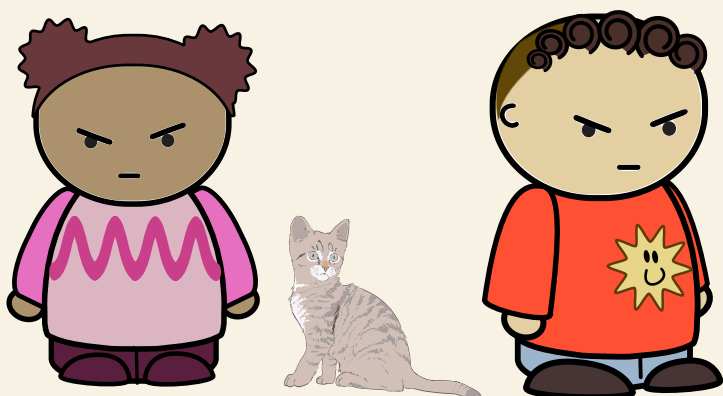
# Pet Custody

~Who gets the pet ?

It is not uncommon for pet owners who are a couple to jointly raise pet. So what happens when the couple divorce and are in dispute over the possession of their pet?

**~ Couples could bring their case to the court and the court will decide who will get to keep the pet.**

- The courts is likely to take into consideration the following factors to determine who should keep the pet
  - Who had been taking care of the dog
  - Who was closer or more attached to the dog
  - Who the dog was more attached to
  - Who would be better able to take care of the dog and attend to all its needs
  - What the home environment for the dog was going to be like
  - What should be done in the dog's overall best interest



This was reflected in the case of *Tan Huey Kuan (alias Chen Huijuan v Tan Kok Chye)* [\[17\]](#)

- This is the **first case** on pet custody in Singapore. Note that this area of law has not been explored in great detail by the Family Justice Courts

# Pet owners who no longer want to be owners



~ A pet is for life and they are sentient beings. Having a pet is a commitment and this should be the "last resort" solution.



The best solution is for Pet Owners to find a new family for their pet by asking family, friends or through social media advertising

- SPCA allows a re-homing advertising notice on their website click the QR code: 
- For dog owners, the ownership of the dogs licence will be transferred to the new owner who must renew the licence before the expiration date. [\[18\]](#)



Alternatively, Owners may decide to surrender their pets to animal shelters or the government pound

[\[19\]](#)

- See the list of animal shelters in Singapore via the QR code

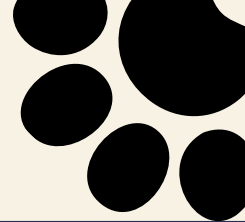


## Do not sell your pet without a licence

- Selling your pet is illegal unless you have a pet shop licence under the Animal and Veterinary Services regulations. If convicted, you can be fined up to \$5,000 or jailed up to 6 months [\[20\]](#)
- Some may charge adoption fees, but a very high adoption fee may signal backyard breeding -- which is illegal in Singapore [\[21\]](#)



# References



- [1]: Animal and Birds Act, Section 41
- [2]: Animal and Birds Act, Section 41
- [3]: Wildlife Act, Section 9
- [4]: <https://www.hdb.gov.sg/cs/infoweb/residential/living-in-an-hdb-flat/keeping-pets>
- [5]: Animal and Birds Act, Section 41C
- [6]: Animal and Birds Act, Section 41C
- [7]: SEE, Alvin W. L.. Challenges in the Enforcement of Animal Protection Laws in Singapore. (2014). 1-14. Research Collection School Of Law, available at: [https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/sol\\_research/1304](https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/sol_research/1304)
- [8]: Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act, Section 12(1)(a)
- [9]: Environmental Public Health (Public Cleansing) Regulations, Regulation 17A
- [10]: Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act, Section 11(1)(b)
- [11]: Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act, Section 11(1)(g)
- [12]: Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act, Section 8
- [13]: Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act, Section 10(1)
- [14]: Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order and Nuisance) Act, Section 9
- [15]: Animals and Birds (Dog Licensing and Control) Rules, 2nd Schedule, Part I
- [16]: Animals and Birds (Dog Licensing and Control) Rules, 2nd Schedule, Part II
- [17]: <https://www.supremecourt.gov.sg/docs/default-source/module-document/judgement/2011-sghc-86.pdf>
- [18]: <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/avs/pets/owning-a-pet/licensing-a-pet/dog-licensing-e-services>
- [19]: <https://mutts.com/2016/11/09/8-mutts-comic-strips-show-love-animal-shelter-workers/>
- [20]: <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/avs/animals/animal-related-businesses/pet-shops/licensing-conditions>
- [21]: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/adopt-kitten-adorable-pets-in-demand-backyard-breeders-avs-11499252>

