Tail Docking
and Ear Cropping

What can I do?
• Let the breeder know from the start that you do not want your pup altered. Do this before the pup is born because tail docking is done within a few days of birth.
• Do not buy from breeders who insist that their dogs have cropped ears or docked tails.
• Lobby North American breed clubs to change their standards. Visit the British Kennel Club website at www.the-kennel-club.org.uk to compare standards.
• Ask your MLA and your MP to push for legislation against unnecessary surgery on dogs.
• Write to your provincial veterinary association and ask them to sign the Convention of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (see back panel).

Laws about ear cropping and tail docking

CANADA
• Newfoundland & Labrador: Ear cropping is illegal under the Animal Protection Act of 1978.

OTHER COUNTRIES
• Ear cropping is illegal in Australia, New Zealand and many European countries. Tail docking is illegal in Norway, Sweden, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland and many Scandinavian countries. Tail docking is illegal in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Australia.

Switzerland, Luxembourg, Flanders, Germany, Belgium, France, Croatia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Sweden, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland and many European countries.

Veterinary policies

CANADIAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
“Surgical operations for the purpose of modifying the appearance of a companion animal for non-therapeutic purposes should be discouraged. Where possible, veterinary surgeons should be aware of the presence of a companion animal for therapeutic purposes in modifying the appearance of a companion animal for non-therapeutic purposes. Where possible, veterinary surgeons should be aware of the presence of a companion animal for therapeutic purposes in modifying the appearance of a companion animal for purely cosmetic purposes... The CVMA recommends that breed associations change their standards so that cosmetic procedures are not required. Position Statement 3.

BRITISH COLUMBIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

THE BC VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION signed the
WVS/VAEA Convention.

WORLD SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY ASSOCIATION
“Surgical operations for the purpose of modifying the appearance of a companion animal for non-therapeutic purposes should be actively discouraged. Where possible, legislation should be enacted to prohibit the performance of non-therapeutic operations that modify the appearance of a companion animal for non-therapeutic purposes. Where possible, legislation should be enacted to prohibit the performance of non-therapeutic operations that modify the appearance of a companion animal for purely cosmetic purposes.”

Further information:
www.wsva.org/welfare.asp
www.cvma-acmv.org/welfare.asp
www.bccma.org/education/doctor/tail-docking.html
www.bccma.org/education/doctor/ear-cropping.html

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre
exists to provide tangible benefits to animals, through research, service and education. For further information, please visit our website at: www.upei.ca/awc
**What is ear cropping?**

Ear cropping is a surgery that is performed on puppies when they are 9 to 12 weeks old. The pups are anesthetised and part of the ear flap is removed. After surgery, splints and tape hold the ears upright. The veterinarian has to change the bandages regularly until the ears are healed and erect. This may take up to 20 weeks and some ears fail to stand.

**Why is ear cropping an issue?**

Ear cropping can cause pain and infection, and there are risks with general anesthesia. Ear cropping can also affect behaviour because it is done when puppies are learning about their environment and are developing social behaviour. The pain of ear cropping may make puppies afraid of handling and new situations. These experiences can affect the puppies’ behaviour when they become adults.

**What breeds are involved?**

In North America, dogs of the following breeds may have cropped ears. However, it is quite easy to find dogs of these breeds with natural ears.

- Boston Terrier (ears cropped at 6 months)
- Boxer
- Doberman Pinscher
- Great Dane
- Schnauzer (all sizes)

**Why are these procedures done?**

Ear cropping and tail docking are done to change a dog’s appearance. They are not required for health reasons.

Ear cropping began during the 19th century, but the procedures have been performed on dogs for hundreds of years. Ear cropping and tail docking are still done today because they are traditional for some breeds.

**What is tail docking?**

Tail docking is a surgery that is performed on puppies when they are 3 to 5 days old. Part of the tail is cut off, and the wound is sutured. The tail may drop off in the next few days. Some breeders use local anesthesia instead.

**Why is tail docking an issue?**

Tail docking can cause infection and chronic pain. The pain occurs because extra nerve cells grow in the stump of the tail.

**Which breeds are involved?**

In North America, the following breeds typically have docked tails. It is unusual to see dogs of these breeds with natural tails.

- Boxer
- Doberman Pinscher
- Miniature Pinscher
- Poodle (all sizes)
- Rottweiler
- Schnauzer (all sizes)
- Schipperke
- Most herding breeds
- Most hunting breeds
- Most spaniels

You can check the American Kennel Club website (www.akc.org) to see if the erect ears or short tail is natural for a particular breed.

**Where is ear cropping allowed?**

In North America, ear cropping is allowed in the following breeds:

- Boston Terrier (ears cropped at 6 months)
- Boxer
- Doberman Pinscher
- Great Dane
- Schnauzer (all sizes)

**Why is ear docking an issue?**

The practice of ear cropping and tail docking is not recommended by veterinarians. These procedures can cause pain, infection, and chronic pain. Ear cropping and tail docking can also affect a dog’s behaviour when they become an adult.

**Which breeds are involved?**

In North America, the following breeds typically have docked tails. It is unusual to see dogs of these breeds with natural tails.

- Boxer
- Doberman Pinscher
- Miniature Pinscher
- Poodle (all sizes)
- Rottweiler
- Schnauzer (all sizes)
- Schipperke
- Most herding breeds
- Most hunting breeds
- Most spaniels

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