



News Release

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Dog License Audit Underway

There are about 3,300 'missing' dogs in the Central Okanagan...dogs who were licensed in 2017, but are not licensed for 2018.

This week owners of these 'missing' dogs will be contacted in order to update the dog license registry. All dogs in the Central Okanagan must be licensed. The Regional Board recently reconfirmed its support for '**zero tolerance**' when it comes to unlicensed dogs. A fine of \$300 will be levied to owners of unlicensed dogs (if paid within 14 days it is reduced to \$150).

Communications Officer Bruce Smith says, "We'll be contacting the 3,282 owners in order to determine the status of the dog so that we can update our records. In the past we've found about half the owners no longer have their dog: it may have died or they've moved out of the region and didn't let the Regional District know. Others still have their dog(s) and forgot to renew their license. That impacts all taxpayers because license fees have increasingly contributed to the cost of providing dog control services in the Central Okanagan."

Smith says, "The goal of updating the registry is to ensure dog owners are responsible by licensing their dogs each year. We've seen a remarkable turnaround in licensing compliance over the past five years. Approximately 25% of the dogs that come into the pound are unlicensed. Prior to encouraging and supporting **Responsible Dog Ownership** in the Central Okanagan, that figure was 75%. There are more than 20,000 licensed dogs in the Central Okanagan and we thank those owners for being responsible and embracing the need for a license."

The benefits of having a current dog license include:

- A license tag on a dog's collar or harness makes it easier for staff to reunite 'at large' dogs with their owners;
- A one-time, free ride home;
- Fees contribute to the operation of the Pound so that food, shelter and veterinary care can be provided to lost and homeless dogs;
- Public Safety—service to our community 24/7 including investigation of aggressive dog attacks and protection from dangerous dogs;
- Financial support of the SPCA spay and neuter program, public education initiatives including school programs, and dog adoption services;
- Address-resolve neighbor dog-related conflicts;
- Capturing and assisting injured or stray dogs;
- Placement for unclaimed dogs;
- Easy online dog license renewals and account management using the My Dog Matters App;
- Education about barking, at-large and dog behavior;

- And only licensed dog owners receive the *My Dog Matters Rewards Program card*. Showing it at more than 60 local businesses participating in the program provides owners with the opportunity to receive discounts and special services. Visit the program website at: mydogmatters.ca.

There is information available on dog licensing and Responsible Dog Ownership on the region's website: regionaldistrict.com/dogs.

Licenses can be conveniently purchased, renewed or accounts maintained online or by using the My Dog Matters App (www.mydogmatters.ca/MDMApp) or at the Regional District office (1450 KLO Road, Kelowna); at the Regional Dog Pound (890 Weddell Place, Kelowna); each municipal government office and at the Kelowna branch of the SPCA (3785 Casorso Road). North Westside residents may also purchase a license when staff is available at the main fire hall (514 Udell Road) in Killiney Beach.

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Contact:

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