

Standard Operating Procedure

Service: Animal Control

Version: Dog attack

Date Approved: 11/02/2026

Review Date: 11/02/2029.

Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to document the process for investigating and taking enforcement action under Section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996, Dog attacking person or animals.

Glossary:

DCA – refers to the Dog Control Act 1996

SOP – Standard operating procedure.

ACO – Animal control officer

RM – Regulatory Manager

Council – refers to Rotorua Lakes Council

OneCouncil – refers to the operating system used to electronically record information.

REQ – Requests

Responsibilities and authorities:

This SOP is applicable to the following positions:

Position	Delegations
TL	May investigate & take enforcement action
SACO	May investigate & take enforcement action
ACO	May investigate & take enforcement action

Background:

1. Dog attacks can be very serious and can lead to death; because of this dog attacks are priority 1 jobs that need to be attended to ASAP. Owners of dogs involved in an attack may be prosecuted so dog attacks must be investigated fully.

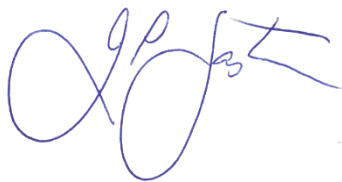
2. This SOP applies to a dog that:
 - a. Attacks a person.
 - b. Attacks, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.

Dog attack complaint received:

3. The ACO should assign REQ to themselves. (So other ACO's do not pick it up)
4. If attack in progress ACO's must attend immediately.
5. The ACO shall contact the complainant to determine:
 - a. Nature of complaint.
 - b. Severity of attack.
 - c. Description and behaviour of dog.
 - d. Does complainant know the owner or where the dog came from.
 - e. Any evidence collected:
 - I. Photos or video recordings.
 - f. Time frame. (how long ago)
 - g. Check OneCouncil for dogs that match description in area.
6. If dog is known check history:
 - a. Check address and owner.
 - b. Check for dangerous or menacing status.
 - c. Check SDO status and determine if status should be revoked.
 - d. Determine if infringement is warranted.
 - e. Determine if probation or disqualification warranted.
 - f. Determine if dog needs to be seized.
7. Visit complainant if required:
 - a. Gather evidence (refer to investigation SOP)
 - b. Gather statements (refer to investigation SOP)
8. If victim has required medical attention:
 - a. ACO shall attend place where victim has been taken at earliest opportunity.
 - b. With permission of victim, guardian, hospital, medical centre:
 - I. Obtain photos.
 - II. Obtain statements.
9. If victim is a child you must obtain consent from parent or guardian to talk to child and they must be present whilst doing so.

10. Known dog / address pre visit checks:
 - a. Check safety alert. (under name, additional details)
 - b. Check other dogs at address.
 - c. Determine if more ACO's needed.
 - d. Decide whether visit will be pre-arranged.
11. Produce a plan on what outcome you want to achieve (prosecution, seize, infringement, warning) before you visit customer and attack scene depending on:
 - a. Severity of attack.
 - b. Injuries sustained.
 - c. Medical attention required.
 - d. Witnesses and evidence.
12. ACO shall visit owner of dog. (if complainant willing to provide statement and evidence)
 - a. Park Vehicle in a location that cannot be blocked in easily.
 - b. ACO to turn RT to lone worker mode.
 - c. Check for any hazards.
 - d. Introduce yourself and explain complaint received.
 - e. If Tempers start to escalate or you feel threatened or unsafe:
 - I. Use de-escalation training.
 - II. Leave site immediately.
13. ACO shall visit owner of dog (if complainant anonymous or unwilling to provide statement and evidence)
 - a. Explain complaint received. ACO shall give guidance and explain potential consequences if more justified complaints are received.
14. If dog unknown but dogs matching description in vicinity ACO shall visit owners and explain situation, there has been an attack in the area with a dog matching your dog's description and if they know anything about it.
15. If dog not known and was out roaming when it attacked, the ACO shall conduct roaming procedure.
16. To Complete request:
 - a. Contact complainant and explain actions taken.
 - b. Determine if an infringement should be issued. (An infringement should be issued if the dog is classified dangerous or menacing or it is the second complaint within a 2 year period where the dog has not been previously impounded or seized)
 - c. Determine if SDO status should be revoked.
 - d. The ACO shall make clear detailed notes in OneCouncil to provide a detailed history of the processes followed, actions taken and advice given during investigation.

Approved by:



Jean-Paul Gaston

Group Manager – Destination Development

Date: 11 February 2026