



Guide to having pets in private rented accommodation

This document is intended as a guide only and does not purport to be a legal guide. For further assistance please get legal advice.

A survey in 2016 found that **61%** of all Irish households own either a dog or cat, and owners truly cherish their pets with **91%** recognising both dogs and cats as a family member, friend or companion that provides them with comfort and prevents loneliness.¹

One in five homes are privately rented which means that many households either have or want to have a pet.

What is the Law?

The Residential Tenancies Act covers privately rented accommodation in Ireland outlining basic statutory obligations for both landlords and tenants. The law is silent on whether a person can have a pet or not.

Viewings

If you are looking for private rented accommodation and have a pet then you should clarify that the landlord accepts pets before agreeing to take the property.

Lease/Contract

If you are offered or have a lease or contract it may or may not have a specific clause in relation to pets. If there is a clause which prohibits having pets then you cannot have pets as this would be a breach of your tenancy obligations and could potentially put your tenancy at risk.

¹ Pedigree Ireland and Whiskas Ireland study of pet ownership in Ireland as part of Pawsitive Living campaign March 2016.

Guide to having pets in private rented accommodation, April 2017

In some cases landlords may be willing to accept pets but may seek an additional deposit to cover pet damage or for special cleaning to be undertaken at the end of a tenancy to avoid pet allergies for the next tenants.

Why would a landlord refuse?

There are many different reasons why a person may refuse to allow pets including a belief that there will be more damage to the property, the pet may not be looked after, the pet could cause a nuisance to neighbours.

We would recommend talking to the landlord or agent to allay any concerns they may.

Guide Dogs/Assistance Dogs

Private rented accommodation is covered by Equal Status legislation and you cannot be discriminated against on a number of grounds including disability.² If you are refused accommodation or given notice of termination as you require a guide dog or assistance dog for example to aid children with autism this may be discriminatory and you may be able to take a case to the Workplace Relations Commission.

For more information on Equal Status Legislation visit www.ihrec.ie

Looking after your pet

If you have a pet in your private rented accommodation please ensure that you have appropriate space and shelter for your pet and that it is suitably fed and cared for, getting lots of exercise and stimulation.

² Equal Status Acts 2000-2015

Dogs

There are a number of specific rules in relation to keeping dogs all of which have penalties such as fines for breach.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for dog control and licensing services.³ By law all dogs must be kept under effective control – owners may be held liable for any injury or damage caused if their dog attacks a person or livestock.

Dog Fouling

It is an offence for a person in charge of a dog not to clean up when their dog fouls in a public place.⁴

Dog Identification

If you own or are in charge of a dog you must ensure that the dog wears a collar at all times with the name and address of the owner on an attached plate, badge or disc.

All dogs must be microchipped and registered on an approved database.

Barking dogs

Excessive barking which causes a nuisance to any person is an offence and a complaint can be taken through the District Court.

Rules relating to certain breeds of dog

Specific controls are in place for 10 breeds of dogs namely the American Pit Bull Terrier; English Bull Terrier; Staffordshire Bull Terrier; Bull Mastiff; Doberman Pinscher; German

³ The Control of Dogs Acts 1986 and Control of Dogs (Amendment) Act 1992

⁴ Section 22 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997

Guide to having pets in private rented accommodation, April 2017

Shepherd (Alsatian); Rhodesian Ridgeback; Rottweiler; Japanese Akita; Japanese Tosa and to every dog of the type commonly known as a Ban Dog (or Bandog).⁵

When the dog is in a public place, it must be muzzled and kept on a strong short lead of up to 2 metres long by a person over 16 years of age who is capable of controlling them.

For further information and help in relation to pets and private rented accommodation contact your nearest Threshold advice centre.

⁵ The Control of Dogs Regulations 1998