



## Canadian Association of Professional Pet Dog Trainers (CAPPDT)

### Position Statement on Breed Specific Legislation

Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) refers to any legislation that targets an animal (particularly dogs) of a certain breed (or 'breed type') based on appearance, rather than behaviour. The intentions of BSL are commonly to reduce public concern and fear about a specific breed or breed type of dog, to reduce the number of dog bites/serious human-dog injuries and to reduce the number of dogs perceived as dangerous living in the community.

The CAPPDT fully understands and support the need for animal control laws which protect humans and animals from dog bites or attacks through community outreach programs, bite prevention education (particularly for children under 12 prior to the summer school holidays), and responsible ownership programs. We encourage potential dog owners to consider choosing breeds that are lifestyle and area suitable – for example, an owner might be well-advised to choose a smaller, non-guardian-type breed in a high-density urban setting with limited open-space access.

Our association also strongly opposes any legislation that specifically targets a breed of dog, or mix of breeds, based solely on their physical appearance for these reasons:

- Studies have shown that in locations where BSL has been in place, sometimes for decades, the incidence of bites and attacks causing major injury have not decreased. Additionally, some communities have seen an increase in incidents; causing the exact opposite of the intended outcome. Many factors contribute to this, including possibly the false sense of security the public may have around dogs not typed as “dangerous”.
- There are significant potential welfare impacts to dogs misidentified as breeds of concern, and the general public and trainers are poor at identifying dog breeds from strictly visual identification.
- Dog trainers report anecdotally that when specific types of dogs are banned (such as “bully breeds”, there are increases in the number of owners purchasing other large guardian breeds (such as the Dogo Argentino and Bull Mastiff).
- Costs to rescues and shelters who care for dogs targeted by these laws have increased as organizations who do not want to kill dogs that cannot be placed legally transport to other locations without BSL.

Researchers have determined that – unlike breed - several factors exist that increase the potential for dangerous behaviour in dogs, including:

- inadequate exposure when young to a variety of things found in modern urban life (poor socialization)
- living conditions that do not provide for the basic necessities of life
- inappropriate training
- injury, abuse or neglect

In the event that a dog, of any breed, is observed displaying dangerous behaviour, early intervention such as veterinary care, the services of a train and/or a behaviourist, or additional dog containment requirements (such as muzzles and increased fence heights), are likely far more effective at reducing or preventing dog related incidents. To improve community safety and prevent dog bites we encourage owners to contact the trainers on our referral list (available at [www.capdt.ca](http://www.capdt.ca)), who are committed to helping owners and humanely training dogs.

For comment and references please contact [communications@cappdt.ca](mailto:communications@cappdt.ca).

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