



**HOME OFFICE**  
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To all Chief Constables in  
England and Wales

Your reference

Our reference

Date  
26 July 1991

### **DANGEROUS DOGS ACT 1991**

As you will be aware, the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 received Royal Assent yesterday. It comes into force on 12 August 1991. We enclose a copy of initial information to assist in the recognition of the pit bull terrier. Further information and pictures will be provided when available.

2. We are now working on a Circular to be sent to Chief Constables in England and Wales. Scottish Office are working on a similar Circular for Scotland. Until this Circular is available, any enquires about the Act and its implementation may be directed to Lynn Hellmuth on the number given above.
3. The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 requires owners of 'prohibited dogs' (that is the pit bull terrier, Japanese tosa, Fila Brazilierero and Dogo Argentino) to have had their dogs exported, put down or exempted by 30 November 1991.
4. In all cases the first step owners will be required to take is to collect a notification form from their local police station between 12 August and 12 October this year. One part of this form is to be completed by the owner and retained by the station. The owner then sends the rest to the Index of Exempted Dogs which is the agency selected to administer the compensation and exemption schemes.
5. Newspaper advertisements outlining this will be placed in national papers on 12 August. We also plan to issue sufficient posters for them to be displayed at each police station. It is therefore important that each local police station has its poster and a supply of forms by 12 August. To achieve this we are working to ensure that 1,000 forms are at each Force HQ by Monday 5 August at the latest. The package will be labelled: "Urgent, Dog Exemption Forms". We would be grateful if the forms could then be distributed to all police stations in the force area by 12 August.

6. If you would prefer the bulk delivery of 1,000 forms to be made to an address other than that given at the top of your entry in the Police and Constabulary Almanac, please contact Lynn Hellmuth here at the Home Office on 071-273 3386 (fax 071-273 2423) by noon on 30 July with the alternative address. We anticipate that we will have distributed enough forms for each force areas but if stocks do run out, photocopies may be taken.

7. If you have any queries about this letter please contact Lynn Hellmuth in the first instance.

HUGH MARRIAGE  
E Division

## **DEFINITION OF A PIT BULL TERRIER (BACKGROUND NOTE)**

### **HOME OFFICE**

#### Description of the main characteristics of the Pit Bull Terrier type

##### General Description

Muscular smooth-haired dogs  
Looks powerful  
Athletic, but not very slim  
Heavy built  
Chest and hindquarters slim by comparison  
Has a rectangular profile  
Height (Shoulders) 35-50 cm.

##### Head

Rectangular, box-shaped, heavy in comparison to body  
Broad jawbones  
Broad skull  
Strongly developed nostrils  
Remarkably broad  
Facial zone under eyes  
Strongly developed cheek and jaw muscles.

##### Muzzle

Not pointed.

##### Ears

Located high on skull  
Tips of ears flop forward or sideways or have been docked  
No wrinkles.

##### Eyes

Round, deep-set, rather small  
Set well apart from each other (big gap between).

##### Neck

Muscular all the way up to skull  
Short

### Chest

Deep  
Ribs strongly curved. Towards the abdomen they tend to  
Converge and become narrower  
Broad.

### Back

Muscular  
Short

### Legs

Front legs are straight and give a massive, solid  
Impression  
Hips are long and broad and continue on to become  
Relatively long hind legs.

### Coat

Short haired.

### Tail

Located low down in hindquarters  
Thin  
Rather short in comparison to body  
Narrows to a slender tip or has been docked.

This description is based on  
one provided to the Dutch  
Minister of Agriculture.