



Highgate Veterinary Clinic
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Small Animal Information Sheet



The law on tail docking

From April 2007 a new law on tail docking came into force. Whilst there are a few breeds of dog that have naturally short tails egg pugs and bulldogs, most are born with a full tail. Traditionally some have had their tails 'docked', or cut off, soon after birth. Spaniels and terriers for example.

In Scotland all non-therapeutic docking has been banned. In England it is now illegal to dock most puppies, although some specific cases are still allowed. The law in Wales and Northern Ireland is similar to the English version. The procedure will only be performed at a vet's discretion; the legislation does not require a vet to dock an eligible dog's tail. It is illegal for any pup born on or after the 6th of April 2007 to be docked unless;

It has been docked by a vet before it is 5 days old,
and

It is a terrier, spaniel or hunt point retrieve breed,
and

It comes from a working background and it is intended to go to a working home. Work means dogs involved in the armed forces, emergency rescue, law enforcement, the prison service, revenue and customs services, pest control and legal hunting. A vet must see proof of this before they will do the operation, and

It has a certificate, from the vet, that states the operation was performed legally and must be microchipped before 3 months of age.

So if you go to buy a pup and it has a docked tail, make sure that it comes with the necessary certificate and remember that it must be chipped.



Undocked Jack Russell