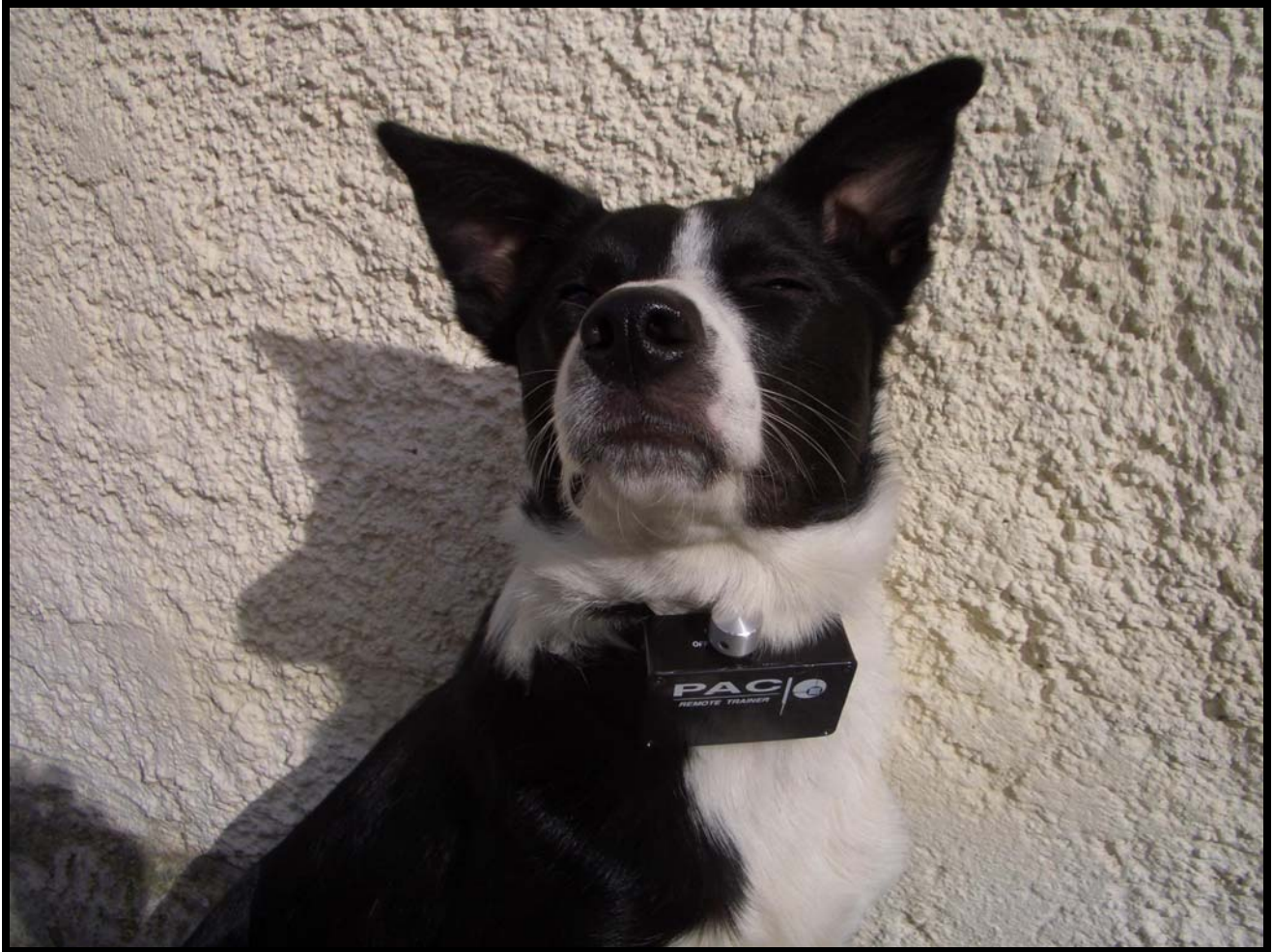


WHY ELECTRIC SHOCK COLLARS FOR DOGS SHOULD BE BANNED



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1. WHY SHOCK COLLARS SHOULD BE BANNED

An electric shock collar is a device intended for training or controlling a dog by delivering a painful electric shock to the dog's neck in order to change the dog's behaviour. Three main types of devices are sold for public use:

- Electric shock collars for **training and control**
- Electric shock collars to discourage or punish **barking**
- Electric shock collars for confinement or **fencing**

When intended for obedience training or to stop unwanted behaviour when it occurs, the shocks are delivered via a remote control handset operated by the owner or trainer. Where shocks are used with the intention of preventing barking, a sensor on the collar detects barking and activates the shock mechanism. Where shocks are used as an 'invisible fence' or 'freedom fence' to deter dogs from leaving a property or going to a particular location, the shock is triggered by a signal from a boundary wire.

The proponents of shock collars claim that these devices are safe, effective for training and control and non-harmful to the dog in both the short and long term. There is no doubt that some dog owners believe that these devices have solved their problems in dealing with their dogs' undesirable behaviour or controlling their dogs, with relatively little cost in time and money. But these claims fail to stand up to scrutiny on the grounds of either effectiveness or animal welfare. The experience of dog behaviour experts and scientific studies both provide clear evidence that the use of shock collars is unsafe, unnecessary, inhumane and can lead to long-term behaviour problems for dogs.

The leading dog welfare organisations, including the Kennel Club, the Scottish Kennel Club, the Scottish SPCA, the RSPCA, the Dogs Trust, Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Blue Cross, and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers condemn the use of shock collars for dog training and have called for them to be banned.¹ All these organisations believe strongly that dogs need to be trained, but they believe that shock collars are an unacceptable method of doing this. It is almost unnecessary to point out that such devices would be illegal for the correction or control of mentally impaired humans or young children, who were unable to understand and respond to verbal instructions.

Shock collars are devices that are capable, in the wrong hands, of effortlessly inflicting suffering and punishment at the touch of a button. Inevitably, shock collars can get into the hands of owners or trainers who may be inexperienced, careless, impatient, angry, frustrated or even sadistic. It is likely to be true that people who are the least willing to put time and effort into training their dogs and developing an understanding of dog behaviour are also those who are most likely to resort to the use of shock collars as a 'quick fix' solution. In addition, all shock collar systems, particularly sensor-controlled shock devices such as anti-bark collars, can malfunction and cause uncontrolled shocks and burn injuries.

Most dog behaviour experts believe that it is unacceptable to subject dogs to pain, fear and possible lasting psychological or even physical harm by using shock collars when alternatives such as good training based on an understanding of dog behaviour (or the installation of secure fencing) exist. **Advocates for Animals believes that shock collars are unsafe, unnecessary and have the potential for cruelty, and that they should be banned.**

2. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST SHOCK COLLARS

The remainder of this briefing will examine the evidence and arguments against shock collars, which fall into three main areas:

1. Are shock collars humane? The evidence is that electric shocks delivered by collars used for training or behaviour control are experienced as painful by dogs and that this causes them distress and fear and may affect their long-term confidence, behaviour and welfare.

2. Are shock collars effective or necessary? The evidence is that shock collars are hard to use effectively and that they can be counterproductive, leading to additional problems in a dog's behaviour. Modern views on dog training suggest that an understanding of dog behaviour and the use of mostly reward-based training are more effective methods and result in a more positive relationship with their owners.

3. Are shock collars safe? Shock collar systems incorporate features such as timers, user-controlled levels of electric shock, water resistance and instruction manuals, that are intended to ensure their safety in use. However, as systems that deliver electric shocks they are inherently dangerous devices and numerous cases have come to light where malfunction or irresponsible use has caused distress and/or injury.

TYPES OF SHOCK COLLAR ²

Shock collars (sometimes referred to by manufacturers as 'electronic dog training systems' or 'freedom fences') can be bought freely and are advertised for sale on the internet.

Shock collars for obedience and deterrence

For remote control training collars, typical prices range from under £200 for a system with a relatively short range of up to 100-200 metres (m) and lower power (designed for smaller dogs) to £250 - £300 for higher power, longer range systems (designed for large dogs sometimes described as very tough, headstrong or very excited). The long range systems are designed to work at over 1000m (1 km) distance. The system consists of a collar holding the small battery-operated electronic unit, incorporating 2 metal contacts (prongs) facing inwards to touch the dog's neck, and a remote-control transmitter that is operated by the owner or trainer. Signals from the transmitter are received by the collar unit and trigger electric shocks through the metal contacts (and/or audible beeps). The transmitter is a small handset that typically has keys to select either a continuous shock, limited to a duration of several seconds (for example, 8 or 12 seconds in two commercial models), or a single shock lasting a fraction of a second, together with a key to select a numerical setting for the level of shock required, within the range of the product. Settings are shown on a display screen. There is a beeper key to give the dog an audible signal before the shock is delivered. There may also be a 'booster' button, designed for 'emergencies'. Some models can be used to deliver shocks selectively to up to 4 different dogs. For professional police and guard dog training, it is reported that the duration of shocks used may be as long as 30 seconds. ³

'Anti-bark' shock collars

Shock collars advertised to discourage barking cost around £70 and consist of a collar holding a small electronic unit incorporating two metal contacts (prongs) touching the dog's neck. When the collar mechanism detects a bark, audible warning beeps and electric shocks are emitted according to schedules depending on the product. The level of shock is selected by the user, within the

product limits. Some products automatically increase the level of shock, up to the limit for the product, until the dog stops barking.

Shock collars for containment

These systems are advertised to prevent dogs from running out of a garden onto a road or from damaging areas such as flowerbeds and pools. Similar systems are available for use inside houses to deter dogs from going into particular rooms or areas. These systems are known as 'invisible fences' or 'freedom fences'. A boundary wire in the ground or on an existing fence transmits a continuous signal which is received by the dog's electronic collar when the dog approaches within a pre-set distance of the required boundary, triggering the collar unit to deliver a shock to the dog's neck. The level of shock is pre-selected for the size and personality of the dog(s). Manufacturers claim that the dog will learn to avoid approaching the boundary wire in under 2 weeks. The cost, between £170 and £250, is considerably less than the cost of secure fencing for a large property.

3. ARE SHOCK COLLARS HUMANE?

Proponents of shock collars typically deny that they cause pain to the dog. In line with this view, electric shocks are usually referred to in the manufacturers' literature as "*impulses*", "*stimulation*" or "*correction*". However, this claim is contradicted by evidence from dog behaviour and training experts and from scientific trials.

According to behaviour and training experts, the essential point is that the shock collar could only be effective in changing the dog's behaviour if it were experienced as painful.⁴ This is because the shocks are used to deter the dog from carrying out behaviour that is natural to the dog and which the dog is highly motivated to do (asserting dominance, defending, running, chewing, barking, etc). People have tested the devices on themselves and found them to be very painful. The Kennel Club and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers have tested a shock collar that has shock intensity levels of 0 to 100. A short impulse shock at level 20 on a volunteer's hand was painful and a shock at level 35 (only a third of the collar's full power) was "*practically unbearable*".¹ Volunteers who tested the 'continuous shock' facility at level 20 (which delivers a continuous shock for 12 seconds) were unable to keep the collar on their hands for more than 2-3 seconds.⁵ Clearly, a dog would be unable to escape from the collar and would be subjected to this degree of pain for the full 12 seconds.

Scientific studies of the behaviour of dogs subjected to shocks make it clear that the experience is painful and frightening. Studies presented at the July 2005 International Veterinary Behavior Meeting showed that high intensity shocks cause a physiological stress response in dogs. Studies of beagles at the Hannover Veterinary School subjected to shocks in a number of situations showed that the increase in the levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) in the dogs' saliva was greatest when the shocks were randomly applied.⁶ When commercial shock collars are used by unskilled people in everyday situations it is likely that dogs often receive random shocks.

Experiments as far back as the 1980s showed that high intensity electric shocks given to dogs caused yelping, struggling, biting, freezing, withdrawal, hiding, running to the owner, cowering, trembling, defecation and urination. These are all responses associated with fear and distress.⁷ Studies at the University of Utrecht published 2004 showed likewise that the immediate reactions of dogs to electric shocks suggested stress, fear or pain (lowering of body posture, high pitched yelps, barks and squeals, avoidance, biting, flicking their tongues). These reactions make it clear that the dogs (tough dogs being trained quite roughly for police and guard work) experienced the shocks as painful and/or frightening. There was also evidence that dogs that had been shocked were more

likely to show long-term stress-related behaviour such as lowered ears, tongue-flicking and lifting front paws, during free walking or in training.³ Even dog training professionals who accept the use of shock collars admit that strong electric shocks can cause significant distress and emotional harm to a dog.⁸

Given the certainty that the shocks are painful, it is also almost certain that use of shock collars by unskilled or possibly frustrated or angry owners results in many dogs receiving painful high-level shocks and/or repeated shocks.

How are users to determine the 'right' level of shock for their particular dog? Shock collars are not precise instruments and are not at all easy to use in what their proponents claim is the optimum manner. The theory is that the dog is given a shock of a level sufficient to have the desired effect immediately, but not high enough to cause prolonged fear or anxiety responses. It is much more likely that dogs are very often given either too many or too strong shocks. Scientists at Bristol University Veterinary Department have pointed out that it is difficult to reliably set the level of punishment required for a particular dog, since even within one breed it has been found that different dogs vary in their tolerance of aversive stimulation.⁹ The level of effective shock experienced will also depend on factors such as the thickness of the dog's fur and the atmospheric humidity.

Users may try increasing the level of shock from an initial low intensity, but this is likely not to be effective, since animals can habituate to aversive stimuli. To effectively suppress a behaviour, the initial level of punishment needs to be sufficient to have the desired effect.⁹ Therefore it is likely that dogs are given very painful high level shocks initially, or else that they are subjected to a large number of trial shocks as the user attempts unsuccessfully to reach a level that has the desired effect. Use of shock collars in these ways is clearly inhumane.

A recent review of the scientific evidence points out that "*Animal trainers and clinical behaviourists have an obligation to use the least aversive means necessary to produce behavioural change.*"¹⁰

Advocates for Animals concludes that there is clear evidence that electric shocks can be highly aversive (painful and distressing) to dogs and that there is an urgent need for shock collars to be banned.

4. ARE SHOCK COLLARS EFFECTIVE OR NECESSARY?

Proponents of shock collars put forward evidence that these devices are capable of delivering a rapid and trouble-free solution to a dog's problem behaviour, such as barking, biting or chasing livestock.¹⁰ One manufacturer advertises with the following: *'Is your dog out of control? Are you finding it difficult to train him using orthodox methods? [This product] can help you achieve a well trained and contented dog within days.'*¹¹ Manufacturers also claim that the successful use of shock collars has saved the lives of dogs who would otherwise be euthanased because of their behaviour, or who would have run into road traffic and been killed. Shock collars are also advertised for routine obedience training, such as returning when called, and even for puppy toilet training.⁴

None of these claims stands up to examination as a justification for the use of shock collars, in the view of most experts in dog behaviour and welfare (including the Kennel Club, the RSPCA and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers). Shock collars are unlikely to be used effectively by non-expert people and are more likely to cause additional, unpredictable and often long-term problems in the dog's behaviour. Modern views on dog training suggest that an understanding of dog behaviour

and the use of mostly reward-based training are more effective methods and result in a more positive relationship with their owners.

The risks of ineffective use of shock collars

Shock collars are not easy to use effectively. Timing the shock effectively is acknowledged to be difficult. Even experienced trainers have been observed to give shocks immediately after a command without giving the dog time to respond, so that the dog is confused and associates the command itself with the shock.³ Similarly, some owners repeatedly shock a dog for running off even after the dog has started to return.⁹ Incorrect and therefore ineffective use of shock collars is likely to be very common.

When shock collars are used ineffectively, various problems result. The most obvious is that the dog is subjected to repeated and/or high intensity painful shocks with absolutely no benefit to either the owner or the dog in terms of achieving the desired changes in the dog's behaviour. Additional and potentially serious problems occur if the shocks have unintended and unexpected negative effects on the dog's behaviour.

Proponents of shock collars even recommend them to modify behaviour associated with anxiety and fear. This recommendation seems obviously counter-intuitive, since there is a high risk that shocks will simply exacerbate the dog's fear¹² and lead to increased psychological suffering and behavioural problems in addition to the pain caused by the shocks.

One of the major risks of using a shock collar is that the dog associates the shock with something other than its own behaviour. This danger is emphasised by animal behaviour experts.^{1, 9, 13, 14} The dog can make unexpected associations between the shock and something in the environment at the moment the shock is received, resulting in an increase, rather than decrease, in problems such as aggression, non-cooperation or phobia. The unintended association could be another dog or other animal, a person or something inanimate such as a location. For example, the dog may associate the owner or trainer³ or the owner's back garden with the shock, thus damaging their relationship, or resulting in intense fear or aggression in relation to the supposed cause of the shock.⁹

The dog may completely misinterpret (from the trainer's perspective) the reason for the shock. The Kennel Club reports a case of an Irish Setter fitted with an anti-bark shock collar for 5 years, who learned that if she kept barking long enough the shocks would stop. The shock collar therefore resulted in longer bouts of barking rather than less barking. In addition, the dog had open sores on her neck due to the shocks.¹⁵ Similarly, when dogs get shocks from 'invisible fences' at their garden boundary, they may learn to associate any people or dogs approaching the boundary with the shocks⁹ and begin to threaten, fear or even attack approaching individuals.

The unintended consequences of electric shock training can be very serious. The dog may well become angry, defensive or fearful rather than obedient. The Kennel Club reports the case of a woman who was attempting to use shock collars to prevent her three Alsatian-cross dogs from running away from her on walks. On one occasion she accidentally shocked her dogs when a small dog was walking by. The dogs thereafter became afraid of all small dogs and subsequently killed a Shi Tzu they encountered on a walk.¹⁵

Positive training

Punishing dogs by the use of electric shocks is not necessary in order to train them to behave appropriately.^{14, 16} Positive (reward-based) training methods are equally or more effective than punishment, whereas punishment can cause further problems. For example, very high performance

in competitive dog trials can only be achieved by positive training methods. A questionnaire survey of dog owners in England (Hampshire and Cambridgeshire), carried out by Bristol University and reported in 2004, found that the owners rated their dogs' obedience as being higher when the dog had been trained using reward rather than punishment. In addition, the owners who reported more problem behaviours in their dogs were also more likely to have used punishment in training. These results strongly suggest that reward-based dog training is the more useful method for dog-owners to use.¹⁷

Modern and humane methods of dog training take advantage of a dog's natural motivation to cooperate and to seek human acceptance and praise. Training to deal with problem behaviour is also based on an understanding of dogs' natural motivations and the various reasons for problems such as excessive barking, chasing, aggression and chewing. Distracting the dog's attention is used rather than punishment, such as by removing the dog from a problem situation, or by the use of mildly aversive signals such as an unexpected noise or a puff of compressed air.

The use of shock collars is often counterproductive, causing suffering for dogs and additional problems for dog owners. Humane training methods that are based on rewards and an understanding of dog behaviour are widely available and are more likely to be effective and to promote a good relationship between owner and dog. **Advocates for Animals concludes from the existing evidence that shock collars have inherent disadvantages as a method of dog training and should be prohibited.**

5. ARE SHOCK COLLARS SAFE FOR DOGS?

Shock collars are advertised to the public as being entirely safe for their dogs and incorporating fail-safe devices such as time-outs, power limits and waterproofing. The Electronic Collars Manufacturers Association's self-regulatory guidelines state that their products are "*based on scientific evidence of no harm*".¹⁸ These claims cannot be seen as convincing. There is clearly a considerable danger to the dog from either malfunction, misuse or abuse of a shock collar. It is essentially unsafe to keep a dog wearing a device that, if it malfunctioned or was abused, might be capable of delivering sustained high-level electric shocks over a long period of time. However good the manufacturer's instructions, they can have no control over how the device is used after it has been sold.

Dogs wearing shock collars are often unsupervised or out of sight of their owners. Shock collars are indeed intended to be used when the dog out of sight, in which case the owner cannot see how the dog immediately reacts to the shock. Long-range training shock collars, designed for hunting dogs, can operate at over 1 km range. In this case the owner or handler would be in no position to know what terrain the dog was in or what he or she was doing, or even whether the dog was in difficulties or in a potentially dangerous situation. The handler could have no knowledge of the potential effect of a shock in these circumstances. A shocked dog could for example panic and run across dangerous roads. It is also a concern that, because shock collar systems are relatively costly, owners may be motivated to make the fullest use of them in order to justify the financial outlay.

The risk of harm and misuse is admitted even by the Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association (ECMA). ECMA's submission to the Scottish Parliament on the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill, while maintaining that electric collars are safe when correctly used, confirms that "*It is acknowledged that incorrect use of these devices could pose some degree of physical and/or*

psychological risks to dogs.”¹⁹ ECMA’s submission suggests that users of electronic collars should also be aware of the following points:¹⁹

- ‘Contact points may irritate skin, causing infection, so dog’s neck should be examined frequently’
- ‘It is possible that a first shock may result in fearful or aggressive response’
- ‘Not recommended for dogs with existing fear or aggression problems’

Shock collar systems can fail to function correctly because of failing batteries, improper fitting of the collar, faults in either the transmitter or receiver, damage to boundary wire or extraneous radio signals. While physical fencing can be made secure, the failure of an electronic fence system could enable a dog to run loose and potentially run into danger. Some bark-activated shock collars have been activated by noises in the environment.⁹

Shock collars have been known to cause wounds and burns on the necks of dogs wearing them, especially in wet weather, because of the high intensity of shocks.⁹ Damage from the collar is particularly likely to be ongoing and unnoticed when the collar is used for an anti-bark device or as a boundary fence, since the dog wears the collar for a long period of time. The collar itself can cause skin injury if it is badly fitting.

Proponents of shock collars point out that many other conventional types of equipment, such as collars and leads, are sometimes misused in ways that cause accidental injury to dogs. While this is true, electric shock collars are dependent on automatic control systems and, because they deliver shocks, have a much greater potential to cause pain and injury than conventional collars and leads. **Advocates for Animals believes there is no good argument for exposing dogs to the additional and unnecessary risk of pain and injury that inevitably arises from malfunction or misuse of shock collars.**



Rufus, a young Labrador puppy, about to undergo veterinary treatment for electric and/or chemical burns caused by an electric collar that malfunctioned when it got wet. The hole burned into his flesh by the electric collar’s metal contacts (metal prongs), which can be seen on the left of the electronic device on the collar in this photograph.²⁰ Photograph © Kennel Club



The electronic unit of a shock collar: left, showing metal contacts; right, on collar attached to dog's neck
Photographs © Dogs Trust

6. OPINIONS OF VETERINARY, DOG WELFARE AND TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) and British Veterinary Association (BVA)

BSAVA and BVA oppose the use of electric shock collars, as in the policy statement below, published by BSAVA and endorsed by the BVA (reproduced in full with permission).²¹



'POLICY STATEMENT

31. Policy Statement on the use of Electronic Shock Collars in Companion Animals

Note: this statement refers only to electronic shock collars.

In principle, the BSAVA opposes the use of electronic shock collars for training and containment of animals. Shocks received during training may not only be acutely stressful, painful and frightening for the animal but also may produce long term adverse effects on behavioural and emotional responses.

The Association recognises that all electronic devices that employ shock as a means of punishing or controlling behaviour are open to potential abuse and that incorrect use of such training aids has the potential to cause welfare problems.

Apart from the potentially detrimental effect on the animal receiving the shocks there is also evidence that there is a risk to public safety from the use of shock-collar based containment systems, as they may evoke aggression in dogs under certain circumstances.

The BSAVA strongly recommends the use of positive reinforcement methods in training dogs wherever possible and supports investigation of positive reinforcement training methods that could replace those using aversive stimuli.

Reviewed December 2004, Revised March 2006 by BSAVA Council'

The Scottish SPCA

The Scottish SPCA's Parliamentary Briefing on the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill states that:

- 'The Scottish SPCA is opposed to the use of electric shock collars as training devices for dogs
- The Society considers that electric shock collars can cause considerable distress and are unnecessary and undesirable training devices'

The statement concludes:

"The Scottish SPCA considers electric shock collars unnecessary and undesirable and wishes to see their use and sale prohibited under regulations under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill".²²

The Scottish Kennel Club

The Scottish Kennel Club's submission to the Scottish Executive on the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill states:

"The Scottish Kennel Club strongly recommends the Executive regulate the sale and use of shock collars as soon as possible. Independent, scientific evidence proves that the use of shock collars is cruel.... [A] power should exist in the Bill for regulations to be introduced to ban the use of shock collars".²³

The Kennel Club (UK)

The Kennel Club (UK) is campaigning for a ban on the use of electric shock collars for dog training and states:

"The Kennel Club strongly believes that the use of remote control shock collars to train dogs is not only cruel, but also outdated and unnecessary. Modern dog training has progressed a long way

from the days when punishment was the most common method of teaching dogs – in the same way as education has progressed from caning children in schools. The sale and use of remote control electric shock collars should be outlawed as part of the forthcoming legislation because they compromise animal welfare”.¹

SHOCKING?

Thankfully this would be illegal	Regrettably this would not
	
To use an electric shock collar on Olivia would be illegal.	To use an electric shock collar on George would not.

Gerald Majeres is in jail in America charged with felony child abuse after using an electric shock collar on his stepdaughter's leg. Thankfully Section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 offers Olivia the protection she deserves.

Nobody would be prosecuted for using an electric shock collar on George.



THE KENNEL CLUB

Dogs Trust

Dogs Trust (founded in 1891 as the National Canine Defence League) is the leading UK organisation dedicated to the welfare of dogs and deals with 11,500 dogs in a year. Dogs Trust believes that shock collars used for training or for invisible fencing, or any other devices that give shocks to dogs, should be banned. In a memorandum of evidence to the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on the Animal Welfare Bill, the Dogs Trust stated:

*“Dogs Trust welcomes the proposal [to regulate training equipment] and suggests regulation to ban the use of electric shock devices should be introduced as soon as possible”.*²⁴

In advice to dog owners, Dogs Trust comments: ¹³

“Some desperate owners may regard the shock collar as a quick-fix way of stopping certain unwanted behaviours; however, people who own dogs must be prepared to put in the time and effort required to have responsible, well-behaved and happy animals. If they need help to train their dogs or deal with problems, they should get in touch with a professional such as a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (www.apdt.co.uk), the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (www.apbc.org.uk) or the UK Registry of Canine Behaviourists (www.ukrcb.co.uk)”.

The RSPCA

The RSPCA believes that the use of electric shock collars and fences for dogs should be banned. In a Briefing on the Animal Welfare Bill, published in April 2006, the RSPCA states:

“The RSPCA recommended to Defra during the government’s consultation in 2002 on new animal welfare legislation that a new offence should be created prohibiting the sale and use of devices designed for the training or control of companion animals that work by causing the animal pain. The RSPCA believes that no technical device should be used or offered for sale where an animal can be subjected to a painful stimulus at the direct instigation of a human or where a painful stimulus is delivered as a result of an animal’s action from which it cannot retreat. The Society is very concerned about the use of electric shock collars and fences to train or control dogs that work by causing the animal pain, stress or fear. There is no place for these items in modern dog training.

The RSPCA is disappointed that there is no express provision in the bill to ban the use of electric shock collars and fences for dogs....The Society believes that the use of such equipment is cruel, frequently counter-productive and unnecessary as there are humane alternatives available”. ²⁵

Blue Cross

“No remotely operated appliance capable of administering an electric shock with the intention of influencing a dog’s behaviour should be available for purchase or use in this country.” ²⁹

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)

The APDT has joined the Kennel Club’s campaign to achieve a ban on the use of electric shock collars for training dogs and states: ¹

“There is no behaviour or training problem in dogs that is best dealt with by delivering an electric shock into the dog’s neck. The APDT addresses all problems by using up-to-date reward-based training methods and responsible dog ownership – following its motto of “kind, fair and effective”.

The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC)

“The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors condemns the widespread use of devices which deliver electric shocks to dogs for the purpose of training or curing behaviour problems. Their potential for accidental misuse is high and they could easily cause considerable and unnecessary

*pain and distress to the animal....Sophisticated methods of punishing dogs are not necessary in order to train them to behave appropriately.... Humane methods which rely on a sound understanding of the dog's mind are more effective for training or bringing about a lasting cure for behaviour problems".*¹⁴

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

"We are deeply concerned by the common use of electric shock collars by pet owners and trainers. We believe that as a shock collar is intended *to train a dog to suppress undesirable behaviour out of fear of further punishment, it causes unnecessary pain and distress to the animal. As such, we believe that the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill will fail in its overall aims to better protect the welfare of animals unless it bans this cruel practice.*"²⁸

Association of Chief Police Officers

*"... the ACPO Police Dog Working Group do not endorse the use of pinch collars and electric collars. This is formalised within the Police Dog Training and Care Manual."*³¹

The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS)

*"... the ACPOS Policy is that electric shock collars are not used in police dog training in Scotland."*²⁷

This policy has been in place since 2000.

The UK Armed Forces

In answer to a UK House of Commons Written Parliamentary Question, Adam Ingram MP (Minister for the Armed Forces) stated:

*"Dog training within the Armed Forces is conducted at the Defence Animal Centre. Training is supervised and conducted in progressive stages, and the dogs are trained wearing either a plain leather collar or a high visibility harness with a rope or leather lead. Training is reward-based, including verbal praise, physical play or a combination of the two. No devices (such as electric shock collars) are used in the evaluation, training or retraining of Service dogs."*³⁰

7. COUNTRIES THAT HAVE BANNED ELECTRIC SHOCK COLLARS

The Kennel Club has investigated the legal status of shock collars outside the UK and has listed several countries that ban or severely restrict their use.²⁶

The Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI), a federation representing over 80 canine organisations worldwide, prohibits any use of shock collars. Electric shock collars for training are banned or severely restricted under animal protection legislation in Denmark, in most

states/territories of Australia, in Germany, in Switzerland and in Slovenia. In Austria a ban is underway under a new animal protection law coming into force by 2009.

Under the New South Wales Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1997, the sale, possession and use of electric collars is illegal. Electric shock collars are a restricted import to Australia, although there are exemptions when veterinarians prescribe their use.

The German Animal Welfare Act states under Article 3 (para 11) that *"It shall be prohibited to use a device which by applying direct electrocution considerably restricts the species-specific behaviour of an animal, in particular its movement, or forces it to move, thereby causing the animal considerable pain, suffering or harm, unless federal or Land provisions authorise such practices"*.

The Swiss Animal Protection Ordinance 1981, Article 34, states that *"Training instruments delivering electric shocks, making acoustic signals, or using chemicals are prohibited, with the exception of whistling during training or the professional application of bordering systems"*. Cantonal authorities may grant persons who have passed a theoretical and practical examination permission to use such training instruments for exceptional therapeutic purposes (30 people have passed this examination since 2001). Current revisions to the law are expected to forbid the use, advertising and sale of training devices emitting electric shocks.

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