



**VETERINARY IRELAND**

**POLICY DOCUMENT**

**ON**

**LEGISLATIVE CHANGES REQUIRED**

**FOR PERFORMANCE OF TAIL**

**DOCKING AND DEW CLAW REMOVAL**

**OF DOGS**

**2016**

**RATIFIED BY**  
**VETERINARY IRELAND NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
**26<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016**



## **Veterinary Ireland Policy Document on Legislative Changes Required for Performance of Tail Docking and Dew Claw Removal of Dogs**

Prior to 2013 longstanding principles of the veterinary profession as outlined in the document “Veterinary Ireland Policy on Performance of Painful Procedures on Animals” were not adequately reflected in Irish law and accordingly Veterinary Ireland campaigned for legislative changes to reflect its policies.

With the enactment of the [Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013](#) these general principles are now reflected in Irish law, specifically by Sections [12](#), [16](#) and [17](#) of the Act as well as relevant Statutory Instruments.

There are however exceptions whereby Veterinary Ireland is not in agreement with some specific provisions of these Statutory Instruments.

Specifically in relation to allowance of tail docking and dew claw removal of dogs as permitted by [SI 128 of 2014 \(Prohibition on Tail Docking and Dew Claw Removal \(Dogs\) Regulations 2014\)](#), Veterinary Ireland policy is that prophylactic tail docking and dew claw removal of dogs should be prohibited without exception.

This opinion is based on the fact that the incidence and severity of tail and dew claw injuries suffered by dogs is not high enough to warrant the prophylactic removal of the healthy tail or healthy dew claws of dogs. The document “[Final Report of the Expert Veterinary Working Group on Tail Docking and Dew Claw Removal of Dogs](#)” refers (copy attached as Annex 1).

Veterinary Ireland therefore calls for the repeal of [SI 128 of 2014 \(Prohibition on Tail Docking and Dew Claw Removal \(Dogs\) Regulations 2014\)](#) which permits prophylactic tail docking and dew claw removal under certain circumstances. The effect of this would be to limit the removal of the tail or dew claw of a dog to therapeutic circumstances only (i.e. by a veterinary practitioner to treat an existing injury or disease).

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