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Keep pets safe this Christmas

Dog owners should take the time to ensure fences and gates are 'dog-proof' ahead of the holiday season.

Under new laws, owners of dogs found on the streets off leash, will face a fine of \$330, up from \$220.

The NSW Government recently introduced legislation to increase the penalties for dog related incidents.

Under the new laws, a dog owner or the person in charge will be fined \$1350 when a dog rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases a person or animal, whether or not an injury is caused. The previous penalty was \$550.

Orange Mayor Reg Kidd said now was a good time to ensure your pet was safe, especially if holidays were on the cards.

"The majority of people do the right thing by their pets and by the community," Cr Kidd said.

"This is the time of year when dogs have a tendency to go wandering as families go away and the pets get creative and escape.

"It's also a time of big summer storms, which tend to cause distress n pets and they are more likely to escape the yard.

"As well as fireworks giving them the frights.

"So triple check your fences and if you are going away organise a pet sitter or take your dog to one of a number of local kennels."

Orange Companion Animals Committee Chair Cr Stephen Nugent said the tougher fines were designed encourage people to keep their pets and the community safe.

"These fines are set by the NSW Government and we abide by that legislation," Cr Nugent said.

"It's devastating for everyone involved when there is an incident involving a dog.

"It's important to make sure your dog has enough entertainment in the yard when you are away.

"Dog toys with food inside and things for them to chew on can keep them occupied.

“It’s also important you take your dog for regular walks and get the right training for your dog.

“If you own a dog you need to be aware of your responsibilities.”

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