



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®**

DOG EAR CROPPING/TAIL DOCKING/DEWCLAW REMOVAL

BACKGROUND:

Many owners of specific breeds of dogs choose to have their puppy's ears cropped, tails docked, or dewclaws removed. These are important practices in not only defining and preserving breed character, but also to enhance good health. These procedures should not be banned, as long as appropriate veterinary care and oversight is provided.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- **THESE PROCEDURES PROTECT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF MANY DOGS**
Many opponents argue that dog owners choose cropping, docking, and dewclaw removal for purely aesthetic reasons. This is a false statement. These procedures are long-accepted animal husbandry practices that protect the health and safety of dogs. For example, docking a tail prevents it from being snagged, caught, or damaged. This is especially important for security dogs, police dogs, and hunting dogs that may have to go through thick brush, under a fence, or other tight places where a tail could get caught and harmed. Cropping ears, among other benefits, helps prevent ear infections common among dogs with long, floppy ears. A “dewclaw” is essentially an extra claw on dogs that serves no function. These can get snagged or torn, causing great pain. Removing the dewclaw shortly after birth protects the dog from a more serious injury later. Tail docking and dewclaw removal are performed shortly after birth before a puppy's nerves have fully developed, and before pain is felt.
- **BREED STANDARDS ARE DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED BY BREED EXPERTS**
Official standards for each breed are carefully established and maintained by an American Kennel Club parent club. The members of these parent clubs include recognized experts in a particular breed, whose goal is to protect the health and welfare of the breed and preserve the function it was bred to perform. Ear cropping, tail docking, and dewclaw removal are accepted animal husbandry practices, and not merely an aesthetic whim of certain dog owners.

The American Kennel Club and its member clubs are extremely concerned about animal cruelty and mistreatment. We support laws that target irresponsible and cruel owners and establish good standards for dog care. Ear cropping, tail docking, and dewclaw removal are long-accepted animal husbandry practices and do not constitute animal cruelty. These procedures improve the health and safety of dogs and should not be banned.