

# XL Bully Type Dog Regulation Ireland

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Please note

1. These FAQs will be extended to include links to the relevant documents once they are finalised.
2. The Certificate of Exemption Documentation will not be available in your local authority until **after the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024**.
3. XL Bully type dog owners will have between **1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> January** to apply for a Certificate of Exemption.

### What is an XL Bully Type Dog?

The XL Bully type dog is a variant of the wider American Bully breed type. The XL Bully type dog is typically larger (both in terms of height and body shape) and more muscular than other American Bully breed types such as the 'Micro', 'Pocket', 'Standard' and 'Classic'.

### How do I know if my dog is an XL Bully type Dog?

The only legally recognised method of identification of your dog as an XL Bully Type in Ireland is by use of the [Physical Conformation Standard](#). Owners should use this standard to determine if their dog is covered by the ban.

### What are the height requirements to be considered an XL Bully type dog?

The minimum height requirement for an adult male is from 51cm (20 inches) at the withers\* and for an adult female from 48cm (19 inches) at the withers\*. Measure from the ground to the tops of the shoulders of your dog.

**\*Withers:** the highest point of body immediately behind the neck where height is measured.

It should be noted that **if the minimum height requirement is not met then your dog is not considered an XL Bully type dog and no further assessment is needed.**

### How do I measure my dog at the withers?

Blue Cross have a very useful video explaining how to measure your dog at the withers. See link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMyUsEKO-Jg&list=PL5-ApnVZFuiUkEIQsMncl54FVpxrgrery&index=3>

## Who is responsible for determining if the dog is covered by the ban?

It is the owner's responsibility to determine if their dog is covered by the ban. Use the [Physical Conformation Standard](#) to identify if your dog is an XL Bully type dog, and if you think your dog could be an XL Bully type dog, you should comply with all new requirements. This includes puppies that may grow up to be an XL Bully type dog.

## What are the new Regulations in Relation to XL Bully Type Dogs?

The Minister for Rural and Community Development intends to introduce a new regulation under the Control of Dogs Act in relation to XL Bully Type Dogs, which will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. This regulation will prohibit the ownership, keeping, purchase, disposal (whether by sale or otherwise), abandonment, allowing to stray, breeding or importation of XL Bully type dogs.

## What does owning an XL Bully type dog mean for me after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024?

After the 1<sup>st</sup> October anyone who currently owns an XL Bully type dog has 2 choices

1. If **you do not wish to keep your dog**, you will be able to surrender the dog to your local authority Dog Warden service where the dog will be euthanised in a humane manner.
2. If **you wish to keep your dog**, you will have until the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 to apply for a Certificate of Exemption which will allow you to keep your dog until the end of its natural life, provided you continue to meet the relevant criteria required to obtain the CoE.

## What does owning an XL Bully type dog mean for me after the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025?

1. After the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025, if you are the owner of an XL Bully type dog and have a **Certificate of Exemption** (CoE) then no further action is required. You may be requested to present that CoE to a Dog Warden or member of An Garda Síochána within 10 Days, if requested.
2. After the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025, if you are found to have an XL Bully type dog in your possession as determined by the dog warden in accordance with the XL Bully type dog standards, without a Certificate of Exemption or proof of application for a CoE, the Dog Warden can seize your dog and have your dog euthanised in a humane manner.
3. After the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025, if you are found to have an XL Bully type dog in your possession without a CoE or proof of application you may be charged with an offence under the Control of Dogs Act 1986.

## **What is a Certificate of Exemption?**

This certificate will be unique to each XL Bully type dog and owner. It will specify the dog's licence details, microchip details, neutering details, age and description. It will also specify the dog owner's name, address, date of birth and contact number.

A Certificate of Exemption is issued by the Local Authority and authorises the owner of an XL Bully type dog to keep that dog at a particular premises until the natural end of the dog's life.

Any XL Bully type dog owner granted a Certificate of Exemption will be required to comply with the following;

1. Keep the dog at the address specified on the certificate, except for a maximum of 30 days per year.
2. Apply to your Local Authority for a revised Certificate of Exemption if you change address, excluding changes within the 30-day period mentioned above.
3. Notify your Local Authority of the dog's death or export.
4. Keep the dog securely muzzled and on a short strong lead not exceeding 2 metres in length, when in a public place. Muzzling must adequately prevent the dog from biting, and the lead must be held by someone over the age of 16 years.
5. Ensure that the dog is accommodated in a premises that is secure, appropriate to its welfare, and in such a manner as to prevent the dog's escape.
6. Provide access for reading the dog's microchip upon request by an Authorised Officer.
7. Ensure that you are compliant with all other relevant legislation regarding dog ownership.
8. Provide the Certificate of Exemption to an Authorised Officer or member of An Garda Síochána within 10 days of their request.
9. If the dog is older than 18 months of age on 1 October 2024 and un-neutered, provide the Confirmation of Neutering Status Form countersigned by a registered veterinary practitioner by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
10. If your dog is younger than 18 months of age, provide the Confirmation of Neutering Status Form countersigned by a registered veterinary practitioner within one month of neutering or before 1st July 2026 at latest.

When signing the application form for a Certificate of Exemption, the dog owner will be making a legal declaration that they understand and will comply with all of the above requirements.

## **What does having a Certificate of Exemption mean for me as a dog Owner?**

It means that you are responsible for continuing to meet the criteria outlined in the CoE, for the lifetime of the dog.

Should you continue to meet all of these criteria your CoE will remain valid, and you will be in compliance with your obligations under the Control of Dogs Act 1986.

### **What happens if I am found to be non-compliant?**

Should you as the owner of an XL Bully type dog be subsequently found to be non-compliant you will have committed an offence under the Control of Dogs Act 1986.

Your dog may be seized and euthanised in a humane manner, and you as the owner will be subject to the penalties outlined in that Act.

Anyone found guilty of an offence under this regulation shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding €2,500 or to imprisonment for a term of up to 3 months or both.

### **How do I apply for a Certificate of Exemption?**

From October 1<sup>st</sup> you must apply to your Local Authority for a Certificate of Exemption.

The Local Authority will process your application and send you either:

- a Certificate of Exemption
- a Letter of Refusal
- Request for further information should the application be missing any relevant information.

### **How much does it cost to apply for a Certificate of Exemption?**

There will be no fee for the Certificate of Exemption

### **What documentation do I need to include with my CoE application?**

The following documentation should be included with your application;

1. Copy of valid Dog Licence
2. Copy of Microchipping Certificate for the dog.
3. Copy of Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status (see below)
4. Photographic Proof of Identity (Copy of Passport, Drivers Licence, public services card etc.)
5. Proof of Address (Copy of Utility Bill or bank statement within previous 3 months etc.)

### **Do I need to renew my Certificate of Exemption annually?**

No, the Certificate of Exemption is a certificate for the lifetime of the dog and remains valid providing all the criteria outlined in the application are met. You should keep the document in a safe place, as copies will not be issued.

### **What must I do if my application for a Certificate of Exemption is refused?**

In the event of refusal of your application for a COE for any reason, you will be notified in writing by your Local Authority.

If your application is refused on the grounds that the required paperwork was not submitted, you may reapply with the relevant documentation.

In the event of refusal of your application for any other reason, you may be required to surrender your dog to the Local Authority Dog Warden and the dog may be euthanised in a humane manner.

### **Should I have my dog neutered before I apply for a Certificate of Exemption?**

You must arrange to have your XL Bully type dog to be neutered by a registered Veterinary Practitioner in order to receive a Certificate of Exemption. Neutering must be carried out through castration if the dog is male or spaying if the dog is female.

Once your dog has been neutered, you must complete a Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status Form. This form must be countersigned by a registered veterinary practitioner and forwarded to your Local Authority by post or email.

When you need to do this depends on the age of your dog on 1 October 2024:

- If your dog has **already been neutered**, you must fill in this form straight away, have it counter-signed by your registered veterinary practitioner and return with the CoE application form.
- If your dog is **18 months of age or older and un-neutered**, you must return this form by 30 June 2025.
- If your dog is **younger than 18 months of age**, you must return the form by 30 June 2025, or within one month of the dog turning 18 months of age, whichever is later. In any event you must return a completed Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status Form to your Local Authority before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026.

A Certificate of Exemption will not be granted until the Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status Form has been received by your Local Authority.

### **What happens if my dog is not neutered before the 1<sup>st</sup> February?**

In some cases where the XL Bully type dog is not neutered for the reasons set out in the previous response an owner will not have a Certificate of Exemption before the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

In this context an application for a CoE should have been submitted and an acknowledgement of that application should have been sent to the XL Bully type dog owner. This acknowledgement will suffice in order to be compliant with the regulation

after the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 until the owner submits the necessary Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status form and receives their formal Certificate of Exemption for the dog.

### **What happens if my Veterinary Practitioner says that my dog is medically unfit for neutering?**

There will be a system to address this. You will be able to submit a Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status form where your dog is determined by a Veterinary Practitioner to be medically unfit for neutering.

### **Requirements for XL Bully Type puppies born between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

#### **What happens if my puppy is born between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024?**

If your puppy is born after 1<sup>st</sup> October and before 10<sup>th</sup> December, you must apply for a Certificate of Exemption before 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

#### **What is the minimum age for my puppy in order to apply for a Certificate of Exemption?**

Your puppy must be born before 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 for you to apply for a Certificate of Exemption for the puppy. Puppies born after this date will not be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption. This is because XL Bully type dogs must not be mated or bred after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. This includes mating of dogs which are likely to produce XL Bully type puppies e.g. American Pit Bull Terrier X Mastiff. Bitches mated before 1<sup>st</sup> October will have their puppies born before 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

#### **What should I do if I am uncertain whether my puppy will have the characteristics of a XL Bully type dog when it matures?**

If you are uncertain whether your puppy will have the characteristics of an XL Bully type dog on maturity, you should apply for a Certificate of Exemption. However, you may cancel your application if your puppy does not attain the characteristics of an XL Bully type dog on maturity.

You must provide a Veterinary Confirmation of Neutering Status form within 1 month of your dog turning 18 months of age, or by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 at latest. In all circumstances, you must apply for your Certificate of Exemption before 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

#### **Do I have to have my dog microchipped?**

It is a legal requirement in Ireland to have your dog implanted with a microchip and registered on an approved database by the time it is 12 weeks. The link below will

bring you to all the information required.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/905aa-my-legal-responsibilities-as-a-dog-owner/>

List of approved microchip databases:

[gov - Animal Welfare \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie/AnimalWelfare)

If you're unsure if your dog is microchipped, a veterinary practitioner may scan your dog for a microchip. If your dog does not have a microchip, a veterinary practitioner may insert a microchip and register the details in an approved microchip database.

### **What should I know about microchipping my dog?**

Since 2015, it has been a legal requirement to have all dogs in Ireland microchipped. The link below will bring you to all the information required. To be fully compliant with this legislation you are required to:

1. Have your dog microchipped and the details registered in a microchip database listed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The current listed databases are operated by:
  - a. Animark - <https://animark.ie/>
  - b. Fido - <https://www.fido.ie/>
  - c. Irish Kennel Club - <https://www.ikc.ie/breeding/microchipping/>
  - d. Microdog ID Ltd (Irish Coursing Club) - <https://microdogid.ie/DogIdentificationEnquiry/>
2. Be in possession of a valid Microchipping Certificate.

### **Is the Certificate of Exemption transferable to another person?**

A Certificate of Exemption is non-transferable. However, In the event of the death of the XL Bully type dog owner, or that the owner becomes incapable of keeping the dog, an application for a renewed COE accompanied by the relevant documentation may be made by person who is nominated to replace the owner of the XL Bully type dog to their local authority.

### **What is meant by an Authorised Officer?**

In general, for this regulation and any other enforceable elements of the Control of Dogs Act an Authorised Officer will be the **Dog Warden**.

An Garda Síochána have authority to carry out certain functions under the Control of Dogs Act and therefore may be considered an Authorised Officer, for example in the context of stray dogs.

### **What happens if I have been living abroad and want to return with my XL Bully type dog after the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025?**

The regulation will provide for applications for Certificates of Exemption after the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2025 in exceptional circumstances, and on a case-by-case basis. This will specifically facilitate any XL Bully type dog owner who wishes to become resident of Ireland after a period abroad, and is only for owners who can prove they owned the XL Bully type dog prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

Please see link below to pet travel rules for information.

<http://www.pettravel.gov.ie/>

### **Where can I find general information about my responsibilities as a dog owner?**

**DRCD** has a dedicated space on its website for information about responsible dog ownership.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/1a517-responsible-dog-ownership/>

The **Citizens Information Services** has information regarding an individual's responsibility as a dog owner at the link below.

<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/environment/pets-and-wildlife/control-of-dogs/>