

ISPCA Policy on the use of Negative Reinforcement Training Methods

The ISPCA is opposed to the use of any negative reinforcement (aversive) training methods to control companion animals and believes that positive reinforcement (reward based) methods should be used instead.

Negative reinforcement methods are based on the principle of applying an unpleasant stimulus to eliminate or prevent an unwanted behaviour.

Such methods or training techniques include:

- Electric shock collars, including:

Those activated remotely to stop an unwanted behaviour

Those used in fencing systems and which are activated when the animal reaches a boundary*

Those used as anti-barking devices, activated when a dog barks

- Choke chains
- Prong collars
- Physical force / Coercion (e.g. hitting / forcing into a position)
- Use of citrus sprays which may cause distress in dogs
- Use of high pitched sonic devices which may cause distress to dogs

These techniques can cause pain, fear or distress and may result in poor welfare. Behavioural problems can be made worse and other behavioural problems emerge as a result of such techniques which have no place in modern companion animal training.

The ISPCA supports and advocates for positive (reward based) training and strongly encourages all dog owners to properly train their pets using reward based techniques.

*These may be acceptable in circumstances where all other methods have been tried but have been unsuccessful and where the dog's welfare is at risk if not used.