

BVA GUIDE FAQs FOR REPORTING SURGICAL PROCEDURES ON KC REGISTERED DOGS

FAQs

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1. Am I obligated to report any surgery?

BVA, BSAVA, RCVS, and Kennel Club all encourage vets to submit these reports. However, you are not legally required to report.

We recommend that all vets participate in reporting schemes regarding surgery to correct health and welfare problems relating to conformation, including animals that have required a caesarean section due to birthing difficulties that are a result of extreme conformation.

On welfare grounds, the Kennel Club will not register a litter from a bitch who has previously had two caesarean sections.

2. Who do I report to?

Reports of surgeries / caesareans should be submitted to [the Kennel Club](#):

- There is an online reporting form for operations which alter the natural conformation of a dog and caesarean sections.
- If you are unable to complete the online reporting, you can also download a printable version.

3. How can I report this surgery without breaking client confidentiality?

It is a condition of registration and of continued registration with the Kennel Club that the owner consents to veterinary reporting of any surgeries to the Kennel Club. When registering a litter with the Kennel Club, breeders sign a declaration which means that vet does not breach client confidentiality when reporting such surgeries. The declaration says:

"I/we confirm and agree that any veterinary surgery performing a caesarean section and/or operation on any of my/our dogs in such a way that the operation alters the natural conformation of the dog or any part thereof may submit a report to the Kennel Club."

The declaration regarding the reporting of operations which change natural conformation was made a condition of Kennel Club registration in 1990 and caesareans were added to the declaration in 2010.

Please see [RCVS Supporting Guidance 14.7](#) for further details.

4. Should I report conformation defects where the owner does not request surgery or accept the vet's recommendation for surgery?

No, the reporting is for conformation altering surgery only and not for reporting defects that have not been or cannot be corrected. The purpose of the KC regulation that permission to show must be sought is to ensure as far as possible that nothing is done to deceive the dog show judge.

5. Am I obligated to ask the client if their dog is Kennel Club registered?

No, however you may wish to consider keeping any dog's Kennel Club registration details on your patient records as a matter of practice policy.

The Kennel Club do not necessarily need the dog's registration details as they can often source identification details on their system using owner details, microchip number, date of birth or event coat colour. If the dog is not registered with the Kennel Club they will destroy the report in line with GDPR.

You could consider discussing the reporting scheme at your initial consultation with a new client. You may already discuss the problems that can occur in that breed as a matter of practice with any new client. The client may already be aware of any breed specific health problems, especially if they purchased the puppy from a breeder who had the bitch/stud dogs tested under the BVA/KC Health Schemes.

Ensuring owners are fully aware of the Kennel Club regulations and well informed at the beginning of their relationship with your practice could take away some of the reluctance associated with reporting, rather than viewing it as a personal reaction to their dog in particular.

6. I have all the dog's registration details on record already. As I don't need any further permission to report from the owner, can I just report the surgery without telling them?

It is advisable to tell the client that a report will be made, as covert reporting may be construed negatively by the client.

7. What if my client is unaware of the regulations?

The owner may not have fully read the Kennel Club registration documents they received from the breeder and so may not be aware of the regulations. If this is the case, you may therefore want to let the client know that the Kennel Club asks that you report the surgery you are due to perform on their dog, and that they report it themselves.

You should also explain that it is a condition of continued registration that they consent to veterinary reporting of these types of surgeries.

An explanation of the reasons for reporting could also be helpful.

8. Doesn't this put some vets in a difficult situation if another practice nearby is known to not report surgeries?

Yes. This is why BVA, BSAVA, RCVS and Kennel Club all encourage reporting; it's something all vets need to do as professionals in the interests of dog health and welfare.

We have been told by the Kennel Club that the number of reports by vets is far lower than the number of reports by the owners themselves, which suggests that many owners do not understand the need for compliance with KC regulations and why reporting is important for monitoring dog health and welfare.

9. Should I report surgeries to non-showing Kennel Club registered dogs or just to the ones that participate in showing?

You should report for both – it will help the Kennel Club to identify potential genetic/breed specific problems; they are interested in the health and welfare of all dogs, not just in show dogs.

10. What does the Kennel Club do with the report?

The reports form the basis of any application by the owner for permission to show the dog. As an example permission will be granted where the operation was necessary due to some type of trauma experienced by the dog e.g. fractures, removal of toes, testicles, warts, tip of tail, mastectomy, corneal rupture, torn ear.

Applications for permission to show are not necessary for the removal of dew claws, dental extractions or suturing of wounds. Applications for permission to show or reporting of operations for other types of surgery will be considered on a case by case basis. Please refer to the BVA's [list of conformation problems requiring surgical correction](#).

11. Why am I being asked to report these surgeries?

This information is collected by the Kennel Club to:

- Provide information regarding breeding lines appearing to perpetuate certain defects.

- Help to deter breeders from breeding from animals displaying evidence of hereditary problems, or whose natural conformation has been altered, or where breeding routinely relies on caesarean operations (vide Regulation B22c (5)).
- Assist dog show judges to be sure that they are not being called upon to assess dogs with hereditary defects which have been so well corrected by surgical intervention that these cannot be detected.
- Collect and utilise clinical data over time, to assist in inferring prevalence and monitor changes and trends to support health and welfare.

12. The printable PDF form has a space for “Counter signature of Client to confirm the dog’s identity (if applicable)” and says that a copy should go to the client – what should I do if the client refuses to sign the form?

You should proceed to send the form to the Kennel Club with what information you have (for instance microchip number / pet name / description) and the Kennel Club will follow this up with the client.

13. My client has specifically asked me not to report this surgery, what should I do?

You can still report the surgery without their signature if you wish as it is a condition of the dog’s continued registration with the Kennel Club that the owners have already consented to reporting surgeries.

You are not obligated to submit these reports but it is encouraged by BVA, RCVS and the Kennel Club.

However, you will need the dog’s Kennel Club registration number in order for the report to be able to be recorded by the Kennel Club, which can sometimes prove difficult to obtain from the owner. Even without this information the Kennel Club would wish to receive the report in order to add to the overall statistics relating to a particular breed. The Kennel Club will follow up with the owner if they refuse to provide the registration number if you provide whatever information you have (eg microchip number, pet name, description).

14. I want to report surgical alterations to natural conformation; what should I tell any client when recommending surgery?

a. It is advisable to let the client know that the Kennel Club asks that you report the surgery you are due to perform on their dog, and to reiterate that if they show or plan to show their dog, they will need to ask for permission from the Kennel Club to do so after the surgery.

b. Explain why the Kennel Club needs to collect this data.

c. If the client wants to breed from their dog you can advise that the problem is or may be hereditary, so they are aware of any problems they may have with future progeny.

15. Do owners know they are supposed to ask for permission from the Kennel Club to show their dog after it has had surgery?

The owners of registered dogs are required to request permission to show after any surgical procedure. In fact, the majority of applications for permission to show are received from the dogs' owners, therefore it can be assumed that most dog show exhibitors are aware of this requirement. The Kennel Club publishes, in its monthly magazine, a list of the dogs granted/not granted permission to show which also emphasises the requirement to seek approval.

The client will have signed, or received from the breeder, the registration documents from the Kennel Club. They should therefore be aware that it is a condition of registration that they consent to veterinary reporting of these types of surgeries.

16. I don't want to report the surgery because then my client's dog will/might be prevented from showing and I don't want to upset my client. Do all reports result in a ban?

Many procedures are actually granted automatic permission to show, (see Q10 above) which means owners generally uphold this duty to report surgeries and ask for permission to continue to show.

However, some reports go to an internal committee of the Kennel Club for consideration and to decide whether the dog should be prevented from showing in the future. This means some owners are reluctant to inform the Club of surgeries, even though it is a requirement that they do so. The Kennel Club is therefore requesting vets to report surgeries carried out on Kennel Club registered dogs.

17. I have had owners refuse surgery on their dog when I tell them they will not/might not be able to show them anymore. As a result, the welfare of that particular dog suffers. How can a dog which is suffering be allowed to compete in a show?

Owners refusing surgery on their dog is a dilemma and a matter of conscience for vets.

Ultimately, the welfare of the animal has to come first and you have an obligation to explain to the owner why the surgery needs to be done. When the KC receives this type of enquiry it always emphasises that the health of the dog must come first in any decision making.

Ensure your client is aware of what the Kennel Club will be doing with reports of surgeries such as this. The reporting system is in the interest of the health and welfare of all Kennel Club registered dogs, and your client may not realise that not all reports result in a refusal to continue showing.

KC Regulations require exhibitors to ensure the needs of their dog(s) are met. The KC has in the past taken disciplinary action against dog owners who put their dog's health at risk.

Many dogs with reported procedures are granted automatic permission to continue showing.

All [Best of Breed Winners of Category Three Breeds must pass a veterinary health check](#) before entering the group competition. Further, all Category Three Breeds must pass a veterinary health check before a champion title can be confirmed by the Kennel Club. Show officials can also report evidence of any dog suffering from a visible condition which adversely affects its health or welfare to the show vet for possible exclusion from further competition at the show.

18. [Won't the breeders just withhold the dog's Kennel Club number to prevent reporting?](#)

It is not imperative that you get the details before the procedure; the details can be provided after the surgery is completed.

You may wish to consider keeping any dog's Kennel Club registration details on your patient records as a matter of practice policy.

The Kennel Club do not necessarily need the dog's registration details as they can often source identification details on their system using owner details, microchip number, date of birth or event coat collar.

Unfortunately, some breeders/owners may not cooperate even after explaining the rationale for reporting.

19. [Should I report this particular surgery? I'm not sure if it counts.](#)

On the whole it is better to report and allow the Kennel Club to dismiss, than not to report in the first place.

20. I know I am supposed to report caesareans, what else should I report?

We recommend that all vets participate in reporting schemes regarding surgery to correct health and welfare problems relating to conformation. See the [BVA position on extreme conformation](#). The Kennel Club also asks that any surgeries to alter the natural conformation of a Kennel Club registered dog are reported.

21. My client doesn't want me to report this surgery, even though I've explained they won't definitely be banned from showing by the KC committee. If the Kennel Club finds out later by some other means (eg show judge picks up on it from scars etc) that my client's dog had surgery to correct this problem, does that mean they get banned for not reporting the surgery, as although it is not compulsory for vets to report it, owners have to as a condition of their registration?

If an owner is found not to have reported an operation which altered the natural conformation of the dog and thereby obtain permission to show, the matter will be investigated which may result in a ban or other disciplinary action being taken by the Kennel Club.

22. I support the initiative to report caesareans to the Kennel Club but I'm concerned that it may result in bitches not being presented to vets and a consequent impact on welfare.

In the extreme an owner may refuse to give details of the dog's Kennel Club registration and then reporting would not be possible.

It seems unlikely that an owner of a pregnant pedigree dog is not going to contact the vet if the bitch is having trouble whelping.

This also only applies to Kennel Club registered dogs.

23. Are any breeds exempt from the 2 caesarean rule due to the 'scientific reasons' clause?

No.

24. Does the report go on the dog's Kennel Club record and mean that a male dog won't be able to be used for stud anymore?

It will go on the dog's record but does not mean it will not be allowed to be used as a stud dog.

25. Who is responsible for reporting surgery for cases sent to a referral centre? Does it then become the referral centre's job to report this or the referring vet?

The vet who does the surgery is responsible.

26. Can a veterinary nurse submit a report?

A veterinary nurse can fill out the reporting form, but the report should be signed by the vet who performed the surgery.