

Stray Dogs Must be Removed from Public Localities, Held in Shelters:
Supreme Court's Firm Directive to Delhi NCR Authorities

On **August 11, 2025**, the **Supreme Court of India** took notice **on its own** of the increasing problem of stray dogs in Delhi and nearby cities such as Noida, Gurugram, and Ghaziabad. The Court highlighted the **rising occurrences of dog bites and rabies**, which particularly put infants and young children at risk, and **issued significant directives to permanently remove stray dogs from public areas and confine them to designated shelters**.

The Court instructed the **Government and authorities of NCT of Delhi, the MCD, and the NDMC to set up dog shelters** within eight weeks, initially accommodating at least 5,000 dogs. These shelters must be equipped with sufficient infrastructure, staff, and CCTV surveillance, and **dogs placed there should not be returned to the streets**. Authorities were ordered to promptly begin collecting stray dogs from all neighborhoods, with the possibility of forming a dedicated team for this purpose. **Any resistance from individuals or organizations would result in contempt charges.**

The Court dismissed the current practice under the Animal Birth Control Rules that allowed for the release of sterilized dogs back into their original locales, **asserting that once captured, strays should remain in shelters indefinitely**. It also mandated the establishment of a helpline within one week for reporting dog bites, with required action to capture the animal within four hours. Authorities must keep daily logs of captured dogs and information about the availability of rabies vaccines, which need to be reported to the Court.

The Supreme Court, **prioritizing public safety despite objections from animal rights advocates**, turned down proposals to either adopt out stray dogs or return them to their neighborhoods, highlighting over 60,000 dog bite incidents reported in Delhi in 2023 and the significant threat of rabies. While activists criticized the ruling as lacking scientific basis, inhumane, and detrimental to the animals, the **Court dismissed such "sentimental factors," describing the situation as "grim" and ordering the immediate and permanent sheltering of all strays**. Emphasising that the **fundamental right** of citizens especially **children to live and move without fear** outweighs these objections, the bench made clear that **disease prevention and public safety take precedence over activist concerns**.