

Dear Retailer,

My family, friends, and I are committed to using our power as consumers to shop at retail outlets that do not sell shock collars. As educated pet owners, we understand the risks and dangers of using shock to train. We choose to give our loyalty & business to retail store owners and staff who would never mislead a person into using these painful collars on their beloved companion dogs, cats, and horses. To ensure the humane treatment of pets, we are asking pet supply chains and retailers to take shock collars off their shelves. We are reaching out to ask your organization to take a position.

Common sense, recognition of the sentience of animals, and the current scientific research all affirm that animals learn as we do. Learning is enhanced by providing the learner the freedom and safety to think, make decisions, and process without the fear of being punished. The most effective way to train is with positive reinforcement using rewards and praise. Electric shocks are antithetical to everything we know about how to improve a dog's ability to learn.<sup>1</sup> The risk of harm is not only physical. The psychological damage is often difficult for a pet owner to measure, but can wreak havoc with an animal's emotional state, long after the shocks have ceased.<sup>2</sup>

Veterinarians and behaviourists across the country are dealing with the fallout of the unrestrained use of shock collars for basic training and behavioural concerns. As the world-renowned and impeccably credentialed, Dr. Karen L. Overall, MA, VMD, PhD, DACVB, CAAB states:

*"The use of shock in the treatment of behavioral conditions is abusive, is doomed to fail, and will make situations less, not more, safe and reliable."*<sup>3</sup>

In the last two decades, an enormous increase in canine research has provided us with a wealth of insight and understanding about dogs. Animals are conscious beings, self-aware, and live rich emotional lives, just like us. They feel pleasure and pain, and therefore, it is our moral responsibility when we take an animal under our care to protect them from acts of abuse, neglect, and cruelty.

This new knowledge about our canine companions is transforming our culture and raising the bar on how we treat animals. We are making buying decisions based on facts. And the facts are clear. To electrically shock animals is cruel and unnecessary. You can be assured that the next generations will strengthen their commitment to treating animals with respect and kindness, and using their power as consumers to make this happen. Retailers that abide by their code of ethics will win us as customers.

Pet owners have already shifted their perceptions. It is the pet industry that is lagging behind. An independent survey commissioned by the UK Kennel Club in 2014 indicated almost three quarters of the public disapprove of shock collars, and would support a ban. And almost 80% of the public believe there is no need for negative training methods under any circumstances.<sup>5</sup> A Survey Monkey poll conducted in 2017 by BanShockCollars.ca showed most pet owners in Canada, and the USA, would never consider using shock collars on their pets, believe shock products are cruel and unnecessary, and would support legislation to ban such products.

All products can't please all people, but those causing pain, fear and harm need to be excluded from the inventory of businesses that claim to be pet friendly. To do so, would invite accolades. If we share common ground in our desire to provide for the best interests of our companion animals, removing shock collars from your shelves is a clear and an obvious solution.

Thank you for listening.

## References

<sup>1</sup> The Defra Study & Research Project Final Report  
[http://www.banshockcollars.ca/pdf/Defra\\_Study.pdf](http://www.banshockcollars.ca/pdf/Defra_Study.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Training dogs with help of the shock collar: short and long term behavioural effects  
Matthijs B.H Schilder, Joanne A.M van der Borg  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S016815910300248X>

<sup>3</sup> Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Cats & Dogs, Dr. Karen L. Overall 2013  
<https://www.amazon.ca/Manual-Clinical-Behavioral-Medicine-Dogs/dp/0323008909>

<sup>4</sup> The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness  
<http://femconference.org/img/CambridgeDeclarationOnConsciousness.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> UK Kennel Club Commissioned Electric Shock Collar Survey, 2014 & Ban shock collars Canada survey  
<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/our-resources/kennel-club-campaigns/electric-shock-collars/>  
<https://banshockcollars.ca/alerts.php#a62>

## Other Resources Available

Pet Professional Guild Position Statements  
<https://www.petprofessionalguild.com/search/position+statements/>

Policy Statements of Leading Animal Welfare Professionals  
[https://banshockcollars.ca/position\\_statements.php](https://banshockcollars.ca/position_statements.php)  
American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior Position Statements  
<https://avsab.org/resources/position-statements/>