

THE SPRAY COMMANDER COLLAR

The Spray Commander Collar is a hand held remote controlled system for sending either of 3 reactions direct to the collar for up to 80 metres away from the owner via a device on a nylon collar. This is NOT an electric shock collar.

The 3 options are:

- a buzzer noise,
- a light spray vapour emitted,
- a substantial spray vapour emitted.

The time delay from depressing 1,2 or 3 is 1 second.

The written instruction leaflet stating that 'buzzer' option is to be used as a 'reward' noise is **WRONG**. It should be used as a 'stop and listen to me' noise.

Option 2 (light spray) should be used once if buzzer ignored.

Option 3 (heavy spray) is for emergencies only e.g. dog on headlong flight into path of car.

The non-smell spray fill should be chosen NOT the citronella. There is a minimal amount of citronella in the non-spray, anymore would stay on the coat and cause distress.

Once assembled, the collar endings should be sewn together as the weight of control unit will cause the collar to come undone very quickly. The nylon collar does stretch and may need re-stitching if that occurs. I do not find it has to be as tight as instructions state - the weight of the unit keeps it in place.

With collar assembled, unit filled with 'vapour', batteries in, take unit outside and away from the dogs' sight. Experiment with unit controls so that you are familiar with results of pressing each option, (how long they take to react and how far away you can send them successfully).

The hand control is very sensitive. Carried in a pocket it can easily be set off accidentally. I have attached a string to mine and loop this round my belt so I don't lose it and then hold it in my hand at all times. It's also an advantage that the dog cannot see that you are carrying the control.

Note - every time you use this collar, test the unit on the buzzer before putting collar on your dog, to ensure it is working.

It is vital that before putting on the collar and 'using' it, that you decide what your words of instruction will be e.g. running off = 'come'. Do not use 'negative' instructions e.g. 'don't eat that' but use instead the instruction 'leave'. Short, one word instructions must be instantly called following use of the unit to get the message across of what you want the dog to do - they cannot comprehend what NOT to do.

If your dog has absolutely no idea of where it is going wrong, it may initially be wise to try and teach some understanding of your chosen instruction word on the lead and with a quick

squirt from a small, cheap water pistol as your 'listen to me'. Certainly for a timid or nervous dog, the unit could come as a shock and defeat the original purpose plus cause major confidence issues or worse, dog panic and run away.

For the first time of using choose a reasonably small, familiar, securely contained area where you can be reasonably certain the dog will perform the undesired action. The moment the dog does wrong:

- call out your one word instruction, if ignored then press option one quickly (the buzzer).
- If dog ignores still, call one word instruction again once only, if ignored press option 2. (light spray).
- If still ignored, press 3 without further words.

Dog will either do as asked in which case that's the end of the matter i.e. no praise, or. . rush round wildly rubbing to rid itself of collar - don't panic, call the dog to you calmly, if necessary distract dog with toy etc. Repeat in enclosed area until you and dog are confident that buzzer means 'listen'.

In order for this collar to help in training, it must be viewed as a 'plus' by the dog and not something to be feared. The plus must come as a means for the dog to be certain that it 'heard' correctly and in time responded so was rewarded by praise and an expanding confidence and calmness in its owner. It should be viewed as a training 'aid' not a 'punishment'.

My own dog is still very immature mentally, had an established non-return if it was interesting elsewhere habit and so will continue to wear his collar for some weeks. He views his collar as a plus, fetches it without being asked and rarely needs even a 'buzz'. He learnt within minutes to respond to the buzzer.

I have only used option 3 once when he blatantly ignored my call with a backward look of 'sorry, going anyway'. Option 3 resulted in him stopping dead in his tracks and spinning round to return to me at a rate of knots. I said nothing, carried on walking as if nothing had happened and, as I said, have never had need to use Option 3 again.

Having spoken to others who have used this collar, they took it off too early/soon and now have to regularly return to it again and again. This tells me their dog only associates doing things correctly with the collar, not because they are obeying the owner out of choice/training/habit.

The only other thing I can add is that I initially had a faulty collar. The unit only worked for a couple of times from being switched on. When I got a replacement, I took the collar off mid-walk and tested it a couple of times to make sure the new one was ok.

I've had no trouble with the new one.

Hope this helps.