

Good Information to Know **BEFORE coming to the Park**

[1] **Always clean up after your dog!** Always, scoop the poop right away! It's easy to forget, and all eyes will be on you! **This is the single most important thing owners can do to insure the ongoing success of the Dog Park.** If dog waste is left on the ground, it can cause unsanitary conditions for our residents as well as the Public Works employees. This is an unacceptable situation and could cause the park to be closed.

[2] **Visiting the Dog Park:**

Keep your dog on-leash until you enter the double-gated entry area. Once inside the park, all dogs should be off-leash, since leashed dogs may feel threatened and growl or bark when approached by off-leash dogs.

Keep the park gates closed, and watch for dogs on the other side when you are entering or leaving, so that they do not escape. Watch your dog to prevent him/her from escaping the off-leash area.

Supervise your dog closely at all times to help prevent aggression and other inappropriate behavior.

Ask the owner's permission to approach a dog before befriending it.

Use caution when permitting curious dogs to greet yours, both within and outside the Dog Park.

Use caution when using toys and other objects to play with your dog. Dominance issues may arise which could cause your pet to become unusually aggressive and bite someone.

Be aware that dogs have different play styles, temperaments and physical abilities. Many dogs love rambunctious play, but some dogs suffer from injuries and some are more timid and aloof. Always respect the wishes of the handler and be prepared to move to another area of the park if your dog is too rambunctious. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting in an aggressive manner.

Keep walking! walking, rather than sitting or standing will help minimize defensive and territorial behaviors. This means that your dog is more likely to pass another dog with a friendly sniff instead of a stare down.

Because the first dog-park visit can be a little stressful for the novice user (human and dog), first-time visitors might consider visiting the park at non-peak times (mid-day Monday through Friday). Peak times are Monday through Friday in the early morning or late afternoon until dark and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. It may take of couple of tries, or even a few weeks of visits, before your dog comes out of his/her shell. If you give your dog a little time, however, you may be pleasantly surprised (even amazed) by the change, and you will have a healthier, friendlier, and more playful dog.

[3] Aggression and Mounting:

Do not bring dogs with known aggressive tendencies into the Dog Park. You are risking harm to others and creating a potential liability for yourself.

Dog fights in dog parks are rarely a problem, because dogs consider it to be neutral territory. This is because, since all of them are visitors, none of the dogs is protecting its own turf. However, if a fight does break out, owners are responsible for immediately breaking it up. The safest way to break up a dog fight is to pull the dogs apart from behind. If any dog remains unruly, the owner must immediately leash and remove the dog from the park.

Mounting can initiate a potentially harmful situation. The owner of any dog displaying mounting behavior must immediately leash and remove the dog from the situation.

[4] Injury: If your dog inflicts an injury, give your name and phone number to the other owner before leaving the area. Owners are legally and financially responsible for their dogs' behavior.

[5] Know your dog! Not all dogs are good candidates for off-leash dog parks. If your dog has not had regular interaction with other dogs, it may lack the necessary social skills to make your visit safe and enjoyable. Check for training schools that offer remedial socialization classes for adult dogs or for trainers who will work with you at the off-leash dog park. Socialize young puppies (8-16 weeks of age) at a puppy kindergarten class, not at the dog park.

WARNING: The Dog Park is NOT a safe place for children. Therefore, it is strongly urged that small children not be brought into the park. The Dog Park was created as a place for people to enjoy their dogs off-leash.

The Dog Park is not a petting zoo or a place to “get the child over his/her fear of dogs.” While most dogs are curious and friendly, not all dogs are child-friendly. Some have strong prey-chasing instincts and may mistake a baby for a small, injured creature. A running, screaming child attracts attention and becomes a target for many dogs, because the child resembles an injured animal or running prey. Herding breeds may nip children in an attempt to round them up. Children are just the right height to make direct eye contact with dogs, placing them at great risk from dogs which consider this a confrontational challenge. Children are easily run over and knocked down by running or playful dogs. Dogs can jump high enough to investigate babies in front- and backpacks.

If you still decide to bring your child into the Dog Park—which you do at your own risk—please observe these safety precautions: Do not allow your child to wildly wave his/her arms around. Do not allow your child to run and scream. Do not allow your child to bring toys in the park. Do not allow your child to approach or pet a dog without the owner's presence and permission. Before coming to the park, teach your child what experts suggest in an emergency situation: Never run. Hide face, fold arms, and stand still “like a tree”; or lie down, tuck arms and legs into the body, and lie still “like a log.” Wait until the dog leaves or help arrives.