



DOG PARK Safety Tips

DOG PARKS HAVE BEEN CREATED IN COMMUNITIES TO ALLOW DOG LOVERS TO BRING THEIR DOGS TO A SECURE ENVIRONMENT AND HAVE THEM PLAY AND SOCIALIZE. UNFORTUNATELY, DOG PARKS CAN BE UNSAFE IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND TAKE SPECIFIC PRECAUTIONS...

NOT ALL DOGS LIKE CROWDS. Some dogs just don't like crowds. If your dog is a "loner", he probably won't feel comfortable in a dog park.

MAKE SURE YOUR DOG IS HEALTHY. Be sure your dog is up to date on his shots and medications.

IT'S A "DOG PARK". Let's leave your young kids at home. You will have your hands full keeping tabs on your dog and not having to worry what your kids.

WHAT ABOUT PUPPIES? A Dog Park is not a Puppy Park. Puppies under 4 months still don't have their complete set of shots. They also are still in the process of socialization and understanding how to interact with other dogs. Older dogs might "run right over them", causing fear, aggression, and even injuries. Find a puppy class or puppy club designed for socializing puppies of their specific age and size.

DON'T BRING UNNECESSARY "STUFF". If you have ever been to a dog park, you will probably notice that there are tons of discarded balls and toys scattered all around. Because of this, there is no need to bring more. Bringing your dog's own toys or treats could cause possessive or food aggression.

GET A LAY OF THE LAND. Think about visiting the park without your dog at the time you might expect coming on a regular basis. Check out the people and the dogs to see if there are any aggressive or overly active dogs. Are the owners properly managing their dogs? Are there dog fights? Are there just too many people and dogs? Don't be shy, go in and chat with them. Visit at different times until you find the right combination of people/dogs that you think will work for your dog.

NOW THAT YOU ARE READY, TAKE BABY STEPS.

Start out slow when you take your dog to the park. The first time, have him walk around the outside of the fence and just spend some time on a bench, allowing him to observe. You might do this more than once. When you actually take him inside the fence, stay for short intervals (15 min) and expand from there.

LET HIM OFF LEASH QUICKLY. Let your dog off leash as soon as you enter the park. Keeping your dog on leash while the others are off leash takes his "fight or flight" choice away and could promote his aggression and a fight might ensue.

MANAGE YOUR DOG AT ALL TIMES. Don't get too involved with conversations or become distracted. Always keep your eye on your dog so that you can keep him safe. If there is a dog he normally gets in a tussle with, guide him to another side of the park. If he pops, be a good citizen and pick it up quickly.

DOGS TALK THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE. Educate yourself regarding your dog's body language. You should understand your dog telling you if he is playing, feeling threatened, fearful, angry, etc. This is key in keeping everyone safe and happy. We would be more than happy to assist you in learning how your dog talks.

DO NOT PHYSICALLY BREAK UP A FIGHT.

Jumping into the middle of a dog fight only gets you hurt. If "things go wrong" and your dog gets into a fight, toss water in their faces or distract them by throwing something near them.

TIME TO GO. If your dog is becoming bullied by other dogs, is becoming aggressive, or is just worn out, time to go home and have a nice nap.