

THE RISK OBSERVER

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PROFESSIONAL UNDERWRITERS

DAILY 5 CENTS, SUNDAY 15 CENTS

DOG PARKS - RULES AND SAFETY TIPS

Going out to the park is a fine way for a dog and its owner to exercise and interact with each other. However, dog owners may not be aware that your park may have rules as to the conduct of the dog and the owner. Knowing this, it is recommended that park managers post signage of the rules and suggestions in a visible area near the entrance of the park using highly readable type. It may also be beneficial to post additional signs of the park rules in other areas within the park to increase awareness.

DOG PARK RULES

1. **Control Your Dog;** keep your dog in sight and under voice control at all times.
2. **Clean up** and dispose of feces left by your dog. Owners must possess a device for removal of feces.
3. **Licenses and vaccinations** for dogs are required.
4. **Aggressive dogs** are not allowed. If your dog becomes unruly or plays rough, leash it and leave immediately.
5. **Female dogs in heat** are not allowed in the park.
6. **Dogs under the age of four months** are prohibited.
7. **Three dogs per visit** is the maximum.
8. **Children must be supervised** by a parent or guardian.
9. **Stay within the park boundaries.**

Use the dog park at your own risk. Owners are responsible and liable for the actions and behavior of their dogs at all times.

SAFETY TIPS FOR DOG PARK VISITORS

1. **Familiarize yourself first** - Make your first visit without your dog to familiarize yourself with the site (parking, access gates, etc). Make your initial visit at a time that is not busy. Daytime hours during the week and late afternoons on the weekend are generally quiet times at the dog park.
2. **Keep children close and do not allow running, screaming or food.** Remember that dogs who visit the dog park may not be friendly to children. Do not allow your children to approach a dog without permission from the dog's handler.
3. **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.
4. **Let your dog off-leash** as soon as you arrive within the boundaries of the park. Mixing leashed and unleashed dogs commonly causes problems. Leashed dogs often feel threatened by the free dogs and will display provocative body language and defensive behavior. If you are uncomfortable about letting your dog off its leash, **do not** visit the off-leash park.
5. **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.
6. **Be aware that dogs have different play styles, temperaments and physical abilities.** Many dogs love to be active, but some dogs 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 active. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting in an aggressive manner.
7. **Pick up after your pet - always, everywhere!** Be prepared to clean up after your dog. Bring plastic bags with you to the park and deposit the used bags in the trash cans at the park.
8. **Keep the area safe and clean.** Don't allow your dog to dig holes, which can cause injuries to unsuspecting people and dogs. Leave the park as you've found it.

