

Dog Park Etiquette



Following are some basic guidelines that should be taken into consideration when bringing your dog to a dog park. An ideal park will have all the desirable items and none of the undesirable items. However, just because a park doesn't have everything or does have an undesirable item doesn't mean it is not a good dog park. These guidelines are for dog park patrons to use as a guide – different items will be important to different people.

Be sure to take your dog's temperament into consideration and don't assume s/he's having a good time – watch your dog's demeanor and make an informed judgment about how happy s/he is to be there. Some dogs will have no desire to play, yet will love to sniff all the bushes and trees; other dogs will be thrilled to race another dog from one end of the park to the other. Both of these dogs can benefit from the dog park – they just enjoy it in different ways.

If you take the time to be an informed dog owner, you will be able to judge for yourself if the situation you and your dog are in is a good situation – so, have fun at the dog park and get yourself a pooper scooper!

Don't

- ever bring a dog that is under 4 months of age
- take sensitive dogs to an enclosed dog park where there are more than 2 dogs per every 20 square yards of space
- take your dog to a dog park if s/he is uncomfortable -- take your dog to a place that s/he enjoys
- bring or use treats and toys when other dogs are nearby
- allow dogs to form loose packs
- allow a dog to bully another
- ever let your dog off-leash in an un-fenced dog park if he/she is not responsive to your verbal commands
- worry if some dogs don't play with other dogs in a dog park
- bring intact males or females in estrus to a dog park
- spend your time talking on a cell phone - you must supervise your dog at all times and be able to give your dog your full attention

Do

- consult your veterinarian about your dog's overall health before going to a dog park
- make sure your dog is up-to-date on his/her vaccinations
- observe the dogs in the dog park to see if there are any potential health or behavior problems
- clean up after your dog
- supervise dogs when they are playing and interrupt any rough play
- be willing to leave a dog park if you feel that your dog is either being a bully, the play is getting too rough or your dog is just not having fun
- check to be sure there aren't a large number of intact males at the park
- make sure your young dog is not being bullied or learning bad manners from the other dogs
- be cautious about taking advice from other park patrons who are not dog professionals
- check to see if there is a knowledgeable human on staff to supervise the park – most parks will not have this, but if there is someone, it is a bonus