

# Dog Park Etiquette

For most dog owners, going to the dog park is a fun way to let your dog get exercise while socializing with other dogs. In order to keep the dog park fun for all visitors, we all need to be mindful of proper dog park etiquette when we visit.

Once you and your dog get to the dog park, it may be tempting to just stand back and watch all the activity while your dog runs around. Everybody will have a much more rewarding time if you observe some basic etiquette for visiting a dog park. Many of the suggestions below are more common sense than anything, but they should be heeded.

These may not be official dog park rules, but following this etiquette will make the dog park / dog run a better place for all who visit.

- Never leave your dog unattended and always keep your attention on your dog.
- Phone calls, emails, and iPhone games or apps should be kept to a minimum so your focus can always remain on your dog.
- Always clean up after your dog. Most parks have poopbags or scoopers, so use them. This is a primary reason that dog parks get complaints, so pay attention and pick up the poop.
- If you see trash, debris, or anything else that's out of place, pick it up or put it back so none of the dogs get injured.
- Make sure your dog is current on her shots and has a valid license.
- Don't bring dogs younger than 4 months to a dog park. They won't have had all the necessary inoculations that allow them to play safely with other animals.
- Don't bring a female dog in season if not spayed.
- Before coming to the dog park, ask your veterinarian if your dog is healthy enough to play.
- Spayed/neutered animals are recommended.
- Don't bring more than two or maybe three dogs. It subjects parks to overuse, and if they're not your dogs, you may not have full control over them. It's hard enough for many people to watch one dog!
- Keep your dog on-leash until you get to the off-leash area. This is not just respectful to other park users, it's much safer for your dog.
- Close all doors to the dog park or dog run after entering or exiting.
- If your dog becomes unruly or plays rough, leash him and leave immediately.
- If you must bring children to a dog park, supervise them closely.
- Don't smoke or eat while at the dog park. Cigarette butts and food wrappers are tempting treats to dogs, but bad for them.
- Don't scold or touch someone else's dog. You wouldn't want them to do that to your dog.
- If it seems like a group of dogs are bullying another dog, make sure your dog isn't participating and encourage other owners to do the same.
- Be friendly with other dog owners. It's more enjoyable if everyone is nice to each other.
- Always observe all of the rules posted at your local dog park. Each town has its own set of regulations: please follow them.