



This excellent Guide to dog parks developed by NYCDOG is being distributed by the Long Island Dog Owners Group as a service to our fellow dog owners. Thanks to NYCDOG for their permission! Check us out on the web at www.lidog.org or email us at lidog_news@yahoo.com.

Dog Park Etiquette

In order that everyone enjoys their time in the dog park, we ask that you respect the rules and be considerate of your fellow dog guardians.

You are responsible for your dog's safety, behavior and for any damage or injuries caused by your dog while at this park. Help us keep the dog park safe and clean!

We thank Sharon Mear, Trainer and Behaviorist of Training Cats and Dogs, for consulting and contributing for this poster. To learn more contact: www.trainingcatsanddogs.com.

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***Open and close one safety gate at a time.** Dogs love to meet and greet newcomers. Please pay special attention when entering and exiting so no dog has a chance to run out.

***Unleash your dog within the safety gates** before releasing your dog into the dog park. A leashed dog can excite problem dogs into aggression. Dogs can also be more aggressive when leashed due to the loss of control over their environment. They may feel frustrated, anxious and or threatened and since they can't do what they instinctually do (flee or fight) to protect themselves and/or their owners they do what they can--they bark and lunge. It is also safer to leash your dog up within the safety gates and not in the dog park itself.

***Stay conscious of the environment.** Using headphones is not a good idea.

***Keep an eye on your dog.** Always keep your dog in view and under control. Be especially aware of your dog when children are near.

***No aggressive dogs.** At the first sign of aggression, please remove your dog from the dog park. When a dog park is open to all, we and our dogs can be vulnerable to dogs that don't know their physical boundaries.

***Know the signs of aggression.** Although difficult to define on certain breeds, the conflicted or overly confident dogs' ears are usually up and/or forward. They face and stare directly at the other dog or human with whom they are interacting. Eye contact is sustained hard and direct. Their brow is

furrowed. The tail carriage is likely to be high up and arched over the rump. The (hackles) fur along their back stands up like a ridge and the chest and stance is forward. Dogs with shorter tails might be straight and wagging stiffly.

The dog that knows good physical boundaries can play without shoving the other dog. Dogs at play often mouth, jump on, and/or nip each other. It can look like fighting, but no blood is drawn and the biting is inhibited as it doesn't break the skin. A dog in play will play without accentuated or obsessive physical contact. If your dog begins to get aroused, divert his/her attention before it escalates and if necessary leave the dog park.

***If your dog consistently harasses** other dogs by intimidating, mounting, or annoying them, correct the behavior immediately. If it continues, take your dog out of the dog park at least for a short time out.

***Closely supervise intact males.** If your intact male is involved in any altercation, regardless of which dog started it, please leave. (Intact males commonly provoke aggression.)

***No dogs in heat in the dog park.** Since most females go into heat 2x a year and are considered to be "in heat" for 21 days (7 days going in, 7 days in heat and 7 days going out), do not bring them into the a dog park during this time.

***Teach your dog to be quiet.** Some barking is normal. However incessant barking can be annoying to those around you. Find creative ways to discourage barking by changing your dog's focus towards something more fun like a game of chase or interaction with you.

***If a fight breaks out,** try and remain calm and **never** put a body part between the fighting dogs.

It is helpful to carry an air horn, loud whistle or spray bottle filled with water to use to distract dogs involved in a fight. You can also try using a blanket, shirt or jacket to throw over the dogs.

For the experienced guardian only. Take your dog by its hindquarters, just below the rump, and raise them up like you are holding a wheelbarrow and start backing up slowly. Be very careful as you pull because if one dog has another by a body part, you risk tearing the skin.

Once the dogs have separated themselves, take yours away. If you suspect damage has been done to you or your dog, exchange vital information with the other party as you leave to get vet care.

Do's And Don'ts:

***Pick up after your dog at all times and alert others if they miss a pick up.**

***No prong, spiked collars or choke chains in the dog park.** The rings and prongs can get caught on other dogs' collars, in their teeth and on other objects. Leave your dog's regular collar with ID and license tags on.

***Do not bring rawhide and favorite toys into the dog park.** Many dogs are so crazy for rawhide and toys that they will fight over them.



ATTENTION PARENTS

Bring your children into the dog park at your own risk.** We recommend that children under the age of eight not be brought into the dog park. However, if you choose to bring them in, ***keep children under your supervision and within arms' reach at all times.

Please educate children on smart behavior around dogs:

- 1. Do not run or scream in the dog park.** Running and screaming are invitations for dogs to chase.
- 2. Do not touch or take a dog's ball.**
- 3. Ask an adult before petting an unfamiliar dog.**
- 4. Do not touch dogs while they are resting or sleeping,** especially if they are under a bench.
- 5. Do not hug or kiss dogs that are not your own,** however friendly they may seem.
- 6. Avoid rough play with dogs or other children while in the dog park.**
- 7. If a dog growls at you, avoid eye contact by looking immediately away and back away slowly.** If you have something in your pocket like a ball, toss it to distract the dog as you continue to back away.

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