

## Make the Most of Your Dog Park Experience

In addition to the official Dog Park rules (see right column), here are some other things you should consider to help make you, and your dog's, visit to the Dog Park a success.

- First time users should consider coming at off-peak times for their initial visit. Ask questions of those people inside the fence about how to ease your dog's initial stress of entering for the first time. At times, the park can become quite crowded. If you are not sure how your dog will react to the current conditions, don't put pressure on your dog by forcing it into what it thinks is a threatening situation. Instead, come back at another time when it is less crowded.
- If entering or leaving the off-leash area, do not enter the double-gated transition area if there is already someone in that area. This will eliminate the possibility of both gates being open at the same time.
- Place your dog off leash in the transition area before entering the unleashed area. Some dogs can feel threatened if they are leashed in the presence of unleashed dogs.
- Quickly move away from the entrance area as you enter. That will help disperse the group of dogs that will come over to welcome your dog to the park. Move away from the fence so that your dog will not feel cornered or threatened. This will lessen the problem caused when several off leash dogs, already in the park, come running over to greet the new arrival, perhaps overwhelming the arriving dog.
- One of our primary goals is to socialize our dogs to have good manners. We should practice what we preach and always be considerate of others and YOUR dog park will be an enjoyable, healthy, educational experience for dog owners and dogs.
- If any dog becomes aggressive or disruptive, the responsible owner will remove the dog from the fenced area until socialization measures can be undertaken.
- **ALWAYS SCOOP YOUR DOG'S POOP!!!** This is the complaint heard most often from opponents of dog park proposals. Bags and scoops are provided, use them! Also, please help with "Orphan Poop." You will occasionally miss some of your dog's poop and our continued use of this type of public amenity will depend on our control of this issue!!!
- Keep your dog leashed at all times while outside the fenced dog park area. Even if your pet is under perfect voice control, many non-dog people have fears and any dog off-leash outside the fenced area violates City Code.
- Please clean up YOUR park! Trash, cigarette butts, and anything else on the ground may end up in a dog's mouth. Before you drop something on the ground, ask yourself, "Would I want my dog to eat this?" We must all work to keep our park clean.
- All dog owners must provide proof of current vaccinations if asked. Your dog must have a collar or harness that includes a rabies tag and license. It is also an excellent idea to have an ID tag on the collar or harness as well. If your animal does not have proof of a rabies vaccination and license, you may be asked to leave the park.

- Remember that choke, prong, or spiked collars are not recommended inside the off-leash area. Each of these collar types can result in injury to its wearer, another dog, or a person depending on the situation. If a choke collar gets hung on something while running, its wearer can become choked. Some dogs, while playing, like to softly bite the back of another dog's neck. Dogs wearing prong collars receive a much stronger bite during this type of play while dogs wearing spiked collars can inflict injury.
- Be a responsible dog handler. If your pet has a contagious condition, stay away until a veterinarian has said that there is no danger to other dogs. The "Golden Rule" applies here! Legally, only a rabies vaccination is required to enter the dog park; however, you may wish to consult with your veterinarian to get advice on other vaccinations such as Bordetella (Kennel Cough), Distemper, Parvo, etc. Don't forget heartworm protection!
- Each owner is legally responsible for his or her dog, and the City of Cupertino will assume no responsibility for any injuries to humans or animals; therefore, each handler is responsible for supervision of his or her animal. All owners must remain in the park with their dog at all times.
- While it is not recommended that small children use the dog park, children are welcome - however, child's play is not. This is a playground for dogs, not children. Be sure you teach your child how to behave properly in a dog park environment. Playful, unsupervised children and playful, unleashed dogs mixed together could result in injury. Please understand that this area is provided for dogs to interact with other dogs and that your child could be considered an interruption in dog play. If you choose to bring your child within the park, you should SUPERVISE VERY CLOSELY!!! Teach your child proper dog park behavior. Children should not run around, scream, pick up and wave sticks, or approach animals that they do not know.
- Many dogs will be experiencing the off-leash environment for the first time and may not be used to the experience. Please watch your dog closely. If your dog acts aggressively, please put the dog on a leash immediately and let the animal "cool down". It takes time for a new dog to become comfortable with the fact that other dogs all share the neutral environment. Keep in mind that everyone at the park wants the same thing - socialized dogs that can have fun together. If you are not sure how your dog will react, try to come to the park when few other dogs are there to keep the intimidation level as low as possible. You may wish to keep your first visit to the dog park rather short to minimize the stress on your pup. Leaving early when your dog is having a good time will make it more likely that your dog will be anxious to return for subsequent visits.
- No bare feet please! Some types of worms can enter your body through the soles of your feet. Are you absolutely certain that every dog in the dog park is worm-free?
- Keep your head on a swivel at all times as there will likely be groups of dogs running around the park and having fun. People standing around are obstructions. A dog being chased may try to run its pursuer into a person in order to gain an advantage. Stay alert!
- Do not bring human food to the dog park. Small dog treats are acceptable since that's what one uses to train a dog; however, human food or long-lasting dog chews should

not be brought into the off-leash area. Many dogs are on diets to keep their weight under control. A normally well-behaved dog can jump at or lunge for food, especially tasty human food, when hungry. Also, do not give any treats to a dog without first checking with the dog's owner to see if that would be permissible. Some dogs have food allergies and that treat might make a dog ill.