

## Dog Park User Guide and Tips

There are no entrance fees or membership fees required to use this park, it is open for public use just like any other park, but here, your dog is allowed to run and play off leash! All that we ask is that you follow the rules. The following tips will help make this dog park both safe and enjoyable for you and your dog. **Please remember that dogs, like all animals, can be unpredictable in unfamiliar situations, and so you must closely watch your dog.** We offer these dog park user tips, to help you enjoy the experience at the dog park, however the Centerville-Washington Park District cannot guarantee that following these tips will eliminate all hazards. Always be careful and alert when using any dog park.

### Know The Park

Please familiarize yourself with the dog park before your first visit with your dog. Become familiar with the rules for the park. Talk to park users and find out if there is any information a first time user should be aware of. Most dog park rules are very similar but vary from park to park. Dog Park etiquette however is universally the same. **Obey the posted rules, pick up after your dog, and make sure your dog doesn't cause problems for others.**

### Know Your Dog

Before you use the dog park, know your dog! Is he a bully and pushy with other dogs? Is he shy and timid? Is he old and might he feel vulnerable in this environment? Dog Parks are great for most dogs, but for some you must sure that they WANT to be there.

### Know Which Area is Best for Your Dog

Please be cautious when allowing a small dog to play in the large dog area. Even in play, a larger dog could seriously injure a small dog if the size difference is too great. Again, many problems can be proactively avoided if all parties ! When available, it is advised that little dogs play in little dog areas.

### Know When and How to Use Your Leash

Please use your leash while in the parking lot or just outside the dog park. This is the law but it is also a matter of common courtesy to your fellow dog park users. UNLEASH your dog inside the double-gated areas or just inside the dog park while other dogs are not immediately close to your dog. When a leashed dog is greeted by off leash dogs, the leashed dog will not be able to display normal doggie greetings and he may feel trapped or threatened. If he does feel this way he may act defensively and a tense situation may arise. When all dogs are off leash they can display normal dog greeting signals and they can get away from a pressure situation if they feel they need to. This is very important!

### Know When Your Dog Should Not Visit the Park

Females in heat are not allowed in the dog park. Dogs that are not vaccinated or that have a current medical condition requiring medicines should not be at the dog park. **Dogs must be a minimum of 4 months old to visit the park.**

### Know How Dogs Interact

Dog play can be quite physical. Chasing, wrestling, and even chewing on each others' faces while making fearsome noises is normal. As long as both dogs are enjoying it, let them play. Occasionally fights do break out. While they sound ferocious, these don't usually last long or cause injury and will usually stop on their own. You may want to walk your dog away for a time-out afterwards. Some dogs have rough play styles and can be overpowering though non-aggressive. Unless a dog is a known aggressor, all-out fights are rare when two dogs meet on neutral territory. **If your dog is in any way menacing another dog-please remove your dog to another part of the park, and if it continues you will need to leave the park.**

### Know What to Bring to the Park

You should not bring any type of food (human or dog food) inside the dog park, for obvious reasons. First of all, you would become the object of attention of almost every dog in the park. You would not enjoy your food, and a dog could get a hold of something it shouldn't have. It is not a good idea to bring dog treats either. Dogs can become aggressive toward one another in the presence of food. Please leave treats at home, or in your car. Play toys from home can also cause a problem for the dogs. Many dogs can become very possessive of "their" toys around other dogs, so it is best to leave them behind.

### Know How to Handle Problems

If you are concerned that someone is not following the posted rules and he or his dog is presenting a problem for others (even after receiving considerate requests from others to comply) please do not hesitate to call for help from Park District staff (433-5155 week days 8:00 am - 4:30 pm or weekend and second shift 470-9265) to handle the situation. If there is a situation in which you feel there is an immediate danger, please call the Sheriff's Department at 433-0152.

### Know Who Can Come to the Park

**Children under the age of 8 are prohibited in the dog park and children between the ages of 8 and 14 must be accompanied by an adult at all times.** It is for your child's safety after all.

If you have older children and decide to bring them to the park, make sure they understand that not all dogs are not as nice as theirs, and not every dog is accustomed to children.

- No running or screaming is allowed in the dog park.
- Do not chase the dogs, do not approach them, and especially **do not pet them** (unless the owner says it's ok and the parent says it's ok).
- If approached by dogs, just stand still and ignore them, do not raise your arms as that will most likely trigger the dog to jump on you and it could knock you over on accident.