



TRIDENT

PUBLIC RISK SOLUTIONS
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Best Practices for Dog Parks

As a service to residents with pets, many communities have provided dog parks in order to provide a safe location for dogs to get some unleashed exercise, play, and socialize with other dogs. To ensure a dog park is as safe as possible for your residents, and to protect your organization should an accident occur, please consider the following best practices.

Pre-Construction Planning

Location

- Research local regulations. Some cities or towns may have local regulations that prohibit establishing a dog park immediately adjacent to residential property lines. For example, ordinances may require a minimum distance of 200 feet between a dog park and any businesses or residences and a minimum distance of 100 feet to any bodies of water.
- Meet with any local residents or businesses in the area to let them know of your plans and to avoid any future zoning disputes.
- Avoid locations surrounded by tall grass or heavily wooded areas to reduce the potential for tick bites.
- Avoid locations near busy roads in order to avoid an accident if a dog strays from the park.
- Allow for plenty of room for dogs to play if the park gets busy.
- Ensure the park is built to allow for proper drainage to avoid puddles and mud.
- Be mindful and respectful of a location that could create nuisance complaints.

Maintenance

- Maintenance of the dog park should be considered in the city or town's budget. Expenses include: frequency of the collection and removal of debris, restocking waste disposal bags, repairing signs, filling holes, repairing fences, irrigation, and maintenance of the surfacing.
- Consider staffing needs and time allocation regarding ongoing inspections and maintenance of the park. Keep in mind that as the park ages and gets more use, it will require more maintenance. Inspect the park regularly based on use.
- Document all inspections and maintenance. Store records in case of litigation.

Surface

- Avoid grass if possible as dogs will destroy the grass in time and it will just leave dirt. If grass is used, mow regularly.
- Consider a low maintenance options such as turf, bark or wood chips, decomposed granite, sand, heavily compacted base rock, or combinations of thereof.
- Consider accessibility for those with disabilities. Allow access for all residents and ensure compliance with ADA law.

Fencing

- Typically a fence should be about five feet in order to prevent dogs from jumping over it, however please consider any local regulations that may require the fence to be higher.
- The entrance gate should be easy to open/close and wide enough for residents to enter with their dogs. A double-gate system is preferred.
- Consider accessibility for those with disabilities.

Avoid placing the gate in the corners of the park as dogs could get aggressive if they feel cornered.

Other Considerations

- Provide pet waste bags and trash cans so that dog owners can clean up after their pets. Remove trash daily.
- Provide benches to allow for residents to sit as their dogs play.
- Post rules for the dog park and post them at the gate entrance. See sample rules on page 2.
- Investigate any reported accidents and document with a report. Be sure to outline any corrective action taken.
- If dog fountains or water features are provided, make sure they are clean and not leaking.

Sample Dog Park Rules

Off-Leash Dog Areas - Rules and Regulations

1. All dogs must be legally licensed and have a current rabies vaccination.
2. All dogs must be leashed upon entering and leaving the off-leash dog areas. Dogs should be wearing collars with ID tag at all times.
3. Dogs in heat or younger than 4 months are not allowed in the park.
4. Dogs must be removed at first sign of aggression to other dogs or humans.
5. The owner or custodian of the dog must remain in the dog area with the dog.
6. Dog feces must be cleaned up by the dog owner or custodian.
7. Holes dug by dogs must be filled by the dog owner or custodian.
8. No pronged training collars or choke chains allowed.
9. No glass containers or food of any kind are permitted in the park.
10. Dog handlers must be at least 16 years of age or older.
11. Children under the age of 10 years old are not permitted in fenced area for safety reasons.
12. The dog park is closed when Park's Department Personnel are conducting maintenance. The park must be vacated during park maintenance.
13. The park is open from dawn to dusk.
14. Violators are subject to removal and/or exclusion from the dog park.
15. Owners or custodians are responsible for all actions of their dogs.

WARNING

Users of this facility assume all risks of injury or damage to personal property.

This park is made available in accordance with laws governing recreational use (*site local code*).

The City/Town of _____ does not assume responsibility for injuries or damage to personal property.

In the event of an emergency dial 9-1-1.

About Trident

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