

Safety Tips for Dog Park Users

Welcome to Pawm Springs Dog Park. Please observe these tips to fully enjoy the park.

- Make your first visit to the dog park without your dog. Familiarize yourself with how the area works and its posted rules.
- Know your dog! Not all dogs like meeting new dogs. If your dog has not regularly interacted with other dogs, find out how he will react before forcing him to meet lots of unfamiliar dogs. You may want to get the help of two friends, one with a large fenced yard, and the other with a dog that is known to be “dog friendly”. Introduce the dogs on this neutral territory off leash. Walk around to encourage the dogs to explore the environment and each other. You should get a pretty good idea of how your dog will react with other dogs.
- The first visit can be a little stressful for both you and your dog so keep it short and happy. Choose a time when the park will not be busy or crowded. Weekday evenings, weekends and holidays are busy times. If things go well, gradually work your way to longer visits. Do not rush this process. If your dog has a bad day at the park, do not hesitate to leave and come back another time.
- Your dog should wear a flat buckle collar while in the park and you should carry his leash with you at all times.
- The equipment you use on your dog can be dangerous. Wrestling dogs have been known to catch their teeth in their play buddies’ prong, choke and pinch collars, leading to tragedy. When jaws or teeth get tangled, they can injure or even strangle a dog. Neck Scarves and body harnesses also might become a hazard if a play partner decides this is a handle to drag your dog around with.
- Observe the posted rules! Complaints about you and your dog threaten the success of the dog park.
- Leashes must be used when entering and leaving the park, but remember to UNLEASH your dog once you enter the park. Mixing leashed and unleashed dogs can be an explosive situation. Leashed dogs cannot display normal doggie greetings while on the leash and may feel “trapped” and unable to get away from an unfamiliar dog that approaches too quickly. The dog may also be protective of his owner in this situation. Either situation could lead to aggression. If the dog is free to move about and interact, a more natural greeting is allowed. Leashed dogs, and their owners, often display body language and behavior that is threatening to the free dogs and may provoke them to counter-defend.
- Keep walking! This park was designed to encourage you and your dog to be active. Walking defuses defensive behaviors and keeps the off-leash area a neutral territory; this means your dog is more likely to pass by another dog with just a sniff-sniff rather than a stare down.

If you must sit for long periods of time and you frequent the park often, it will help to sit in different locations throughout the park during each visit so that your dog does not become territorial or protective of that area.

- Be aware that dogs have different play styles. Educate yourself about dog behavior and be honest and objective about your dog. Every dog has its limits, which in no way makes him a bad dog or you a bad owner. Always respect another dog owner’s wishes if they are not comfortable with how your dog is interacting with theirs. Behavior that concerns some dog owners may simply be a rambunctious play style or the start of something more serious. Simply move to another part of the park and give the dogs a time-out from each other. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting in an aggressive manner or having a bad day.

- Keep the area safe and clean. Pick up trash, cigarette butts, and litter. Pick up any “orphan poops”. Don’t let your dog dig holes. Leave the site better than you found it! It’s the small gesture multiplied by dozens of daily visitors that makes these sites successful.
- PLEASE carefully consider whether you want to bring a child into the park. The park rules state that no children under the age of 12 are permitted. This is a park built for dogs and some can act unpredictably with children. Dogs who are not familiar with children may chase them or treat them like they do their canine buddies. Unleashed large dogs sometimes play rambunctiously. Children can easily be run over or knocked down by running or playful dogs.
- Please do not give treats to dogs other than your own without the permission of the dog’s owner. You never know if the dog is allergic to specific ingredients, will snap quickly at the food offered, or act aggressively if food is given in crowded circumstances. Know how your dog acts when you have food with you and refrain from giving your dog treats if it will create problems with the other dogs. Do not bring human food for yourself to the dog park.
- Do not bring any toys or balls that your dog will not want to share. Dogs are often possessive about their favorite toys and will fight to keep other dogs away from them. If you want to throw a ball or toy for your dog and it begins to create a problem with the other dogs, put the toy away or move to a vacant area of the park. Keep in mind that when the park is busy, you and your dog may not be able to play with your toys