

Dog Urination Concerns

How do I get my dog to urinate off-leash?

Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a Miniature Toy Poodle. We live in a very rural area in Kauai and she has access to all kinds of small animals to chase. She has killed chickens and is now chasing baby pigs that come onto the property. She has been corrected for this behavior several times and still, when she sees a small animal, she just takes off. She doesn't respond to the command to come and she returns whenever she is done chasing. The problem is that she is used to going to the bathroom without being on a leash and if she is leashed she will walk for long periods of time without doing anything. Then she will secretly sneak into an area inside the house and urinate or defecate. In other words, if she can't run freely outside, she will not go to the bathroom. My fear is that she will chase an animal into the high grass and get lost or worse. What should I do?

A. A killer Toy Poodle! To be honest, chasing down and killing other animals is not a trait I would associate with a Toy Poodle. As a veterinarian, this is an image that could give me bad dreams!

Like some other dogs that are used to chasing rabbits and squirrels for too long without correction, it may be too late to train her out of this bad habit. I would consider fencing in an area for her to run around in. As you said, some dogs will only eliminate if they have privacy and are off-leash.

There are some newer fencing materials that are more nature-friendly, and would not detract from what sounds like a scenic backdrop at your rural location in Kauai. Hopefully, it would only need to be about 4 feet tall, unless she also is able to leap over tall fences in single bound! Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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