

Dog Park Etiquette

What you need to know about good manners and your dog's well-being.

By Chris Cox-Evick

If you own a dog who enjoys playing with her own kind, a dog park presents a wonderful canine playground. To help keep everyone safe, parks usually post detailed rules, but expect owners to fill in the blanks with common sense and courtesy.

Basic etiquette begins with taking only fully vaccinated puppies or dogs to a dog park to avoid spreading disease. Clean up your dog's waste inside or outside the play area. Most parks use a two-gate entry to prevent dogs from escaping, so carefully close the first gate before opening the second.

Watch your dog's reactions to assure she seems comfortable joining the group. Stay attentive, keep a leash handy, and remove her if she acts aggressive, bullying, frightened, or stressed.

Always be polite with other owners, and soon you'll enjoy the dog park as much as your dog does!