



## City of Easton Dog Park Information Office of Recreation and Neighborhood Programs

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### Mission:

- To create well-maintained, off-leash public spaces where well-behaved canine citizens can exercise in a clean and safe environment.
- To help develop a more educated and caring community of dog owners who will uphold the park's rules and regulations for the betterment of all users
- To cultivate a sense of stewardship among park users and view the dog parks as community assets that satisfy the needs of dog owners and their 4-legged companions

### Locations:

The City of Easton maintains two Dog Parks. One is located along the Karl Stirner Arts Trail and the other is located in Hugh Moore Park.

### Health and Safety Requirements:

All park users must have their dogs up to date on the following vaccinations:

#### DHPP:

DHPP is a yearly vaccine administered to immunize your dog against (D) distemper, (H) hepatitis, (P) parainfluenza and (P) parvovirus.

#### Rabies:

PA code (16.41 Rabies Vaccination Required) states, "A person living in this Commonwealth owning or keeping a dog or cat over 3 months of age shall have the dog or cat vaccinated against rabies under the act and this chapter."

#### Canine Bordetella:

Bordetella, also known as kennel cough is a highly contagious upper respiratory condition that affects a high amount of dogs. Canine Bordetella is spread from dog to dog. It is often passed when there is a high amount of dogs in one contained area, such as with boarding kennels, shelters, obedience classes, dog parks and dog day care facilities. Infected dogs are not permitted in the dog park.

#### Health:

All dogs must be in good health. Owners will be responsible to ensure their dog is in good health with no communicable condition which could potentially jeopardize other dogs. Male dogs are required to be neutered. Female dogs are not permitted in the park while in heat.

#### PA Dog License:

In accordance with Pennsylvania State law all dogs are required to have a current license.

***Dogs don't break rules because they want to; they do it because we let them. Proper training is essential to create a safe and structured environment in which our dogs can flourish.***

## Dog Park Rules and Regulations

To ensure the safety and enjoyment of all park users and their dogs, patrons are expected to understand and strictly adhere to the following rules and regulations. Those found in violation will lose dog park privileges and may be subject to fines or other enforcement actions.

- 1) Dog Park Hours: Open dawn to dusk weather permitting
- 2) The dog park is for dogs, their handlers, and those accompanying them. No other use is allowed.
- 3) Use of the dog park is at your own risk. Each owner is solely responsible for their actions and the actions of their dog. Patrons assume all liability for damages suffered by any person or dog injured by their dog
- 4) No smoking, alcohol, food, glass containers, strollers, bicycles, scooters, or skateboards are permitted in the dog park.
- 5) Patrons are required to leave all food and special toys at home. These may cause territorial or aggressive behaviors, posing a safety risk to other dogs and handlers.
- 6) For the protection of children and dogs, children under the age of 10 are not allowed inside the dog park. Any person under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- 7) Dogs are to remain leashed at all times while outside of the dog park and also while entering and exiting the dog park. Handlers must keep a leash in their possession at all times.
- 8) The Hugh Moore Park dog park is divided into separate areas. Dogs weighing less than 30 lbs must use the Small Dog Area. Dogs weighing over 30 lbs must use the Large Dog Area.
- 9) Dogs less than 6 months of age, unneutered male dogs and female dogs in season, aggressive, unruly, fearful and under socialized dogs are not permitted in the park. Dogs having received a PA Dog Law Citation for aggressive behavior are also not permitted in the park.
- 10) Patrons are required to clean up after their dog. All waste must be bagged and disposed of properly in trash receptacles.
- 11) Patrons must accompany and monitor dogs closely. Dogs must be in view of, and under voice command, of their handlers at all times.
- 12) Patrons are expected to leash their dog and exit the park immediately if their dog is acting aggressively or fearfully towards people or other dogs.
- 13) No more than two dogs per patron are permitted at one time.
- 14) Patrons are responsible to ensure their dog does not dig holes or cause damage to park trees or property.
- 15) Prong, pinch, choke, spike and electric collars are not permitted in the dog park. They pose a safety risk to dogs and people.

- 16) All dogs entering the dog park must be healthy, be up to date on all vaccinations and must wear a collar displaying their current rabies tag and dog license as required by Pennsylvania law. Dogs with contagious health conditions are not permitted in the park.
- 17) The park may not be utilized for private use or gain which includes, but is not limited to, instruction, training, or solicitation activities or events of any type without the written approval of the City of Easton Recreation Bureau.
- 18) The park may be closed intermittently due to poor site conditions or maintenance activities. During such times the City will endeavor to post notice in advance.
- 19) All rules are subject to change without notice as deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of dogs and their handlers.
- 20) For all emergencies please dial 911. For all non-emergencies please dial 610-759-2200. Any serious dog bite should be reported promptly to the police. Patrons are encouraged to contact the City Recreation Bureau at 610-250-6711 or [recreation@easton-pa.gov](mailto:recreation@easton-pa.gov) with any questions or concerns about the dog park.

REMEMBER: *Dog parks are not the place to take your dog for socialization... Dog parks are a place to take socialized dogs*

### **Setting up for Success at the Dog Park:**

#### **On your first visit:**

The first time your dog comes to the park, try to visit at a relatively quiet time of day so that your dog can experience this new place without being overwhelmed by potential playmates. Most parks experience peak usage early in the morning, after work hours on weekdays and at midday on weekends; regular users of the City of Easton Dog Park can tell you when it tends to be most busy or quiet.

When you arrive, stand outside the fence and watch the dogs inside the off-leash area for a few minutes before you enter it. Ask yourself the following questions before deciding to enter:

- Does your dog already know any of the dogs in the park?
- Are they playing in a manner that is comfortable for your dog?
- Does your dog look keen to enter or reluctant?

If your dog seems afraid or reluctant to enter, remember that it is better to leave and come back at another time rather than set your dog up for trouble on the first visit. Be aware that dogs that are already in the larger fenced-in area will likely gather around the gate to “meet and greet” your dog. Allow your dog to remain in the enclosed area for a few minutes until the other dogs retreat from the entrance area.

When you AND your dog feel comfortable, open the second gate and let your unleashed dog enter the play area (leashed dogs tend to become frightened or defensive if suddenly surrounded by other dogs). Close the second gate behind you and follow your dog into the play area.

#### **On Every Visit:**

Before entering, assess how many dogs are already playing in the park, the intensity of the play, and whether their owners are paying attention. Does this look like an appropriate situation for your dog? If not, come back at another time. If you decide to go in, please turn off your cell phone so that it cannot distract your attention from your dog.

The entry and exit to both the “Large” and “Small” off-leash areas are double-gated. If someone is entering/exiting in front of you, wait until the area is clear and both gates are secure before entering. Do not enter or exit as a group.

Inside the park, keep moving. Dogs tend to play more when their owners are in motion; An owner standing or sitting in one place makes it more likely for a dog to guard the surrounding space. While your dog plays, stay engaged: call your dog periodically and also praise/reward. Have your dog take occasional breaks from play to make over-arousal less likely.

Many dogs pay acute attention to who is entering a dog park, and sometimes dogs will bunch up at the entryway as another is entering. If an entering dog is swarmed and feels threatened, a fight can erupt. The person inside the entryway should wait until the dogs disperse or the owners inside the off-leash area call their dogs away from the gate before allowing the dog(s) in.

If another dog owner is not following the posted rules, politely approach that person and ask for cooperation. It may be more comfortable if you ask another dog owner to accompany you. You are the only person who is responsible for your dog’s safety and well-being, and all of us are responsible for the well-being of the park.

When you leave, leash your dog in the double-gated vestibule before returning to the lobby area. Afterward, think your experience over and what you and your dog may have learned.

### Entering and Exiting the Dog Park:

When entering and exiting designated areas close the gates securely behind you and your dog(s). Open or tied back gates defeat the purpose of this security feature. Anyone found leaving the gates open, tied back or unlatched will potentially lose their dog park privileges.

Before opening the outer gate to enter, check to be sure that the inner gate is properly closed and that no other dogs are in the vestibule area. Open the outer gate and enter the vestibule with the dog on-leash. Close the outer main gate and check that it is properly secured and remove the dog’s leash. NOTE: having a dog on a leash when confronting an off-leash dog can be a recipe for trouble. A leashed dog may feel vulnerable and fearful, as well as protective of their owner. Tugging on the leash puts a dog at a disadvantage with other dogs.

Remain in the vestibule while you observe the behavior of dogs already in the off-leash area. If the behavior is friendly, and the area is not congested, carefully open the inner gate and enter – move forward into the park, do not stand at the gate. If you or other dogs behavior is unfriendly, put the leash back on your dog and remove them from the area through the exit gate.

Exiting the off-Leash Area (designated exit)

When exiting the off-leash area, please check to be sure that the outer gate is properly closed and that any other dogs are not trying to leave with you before opening the inner gate. Open the inner gate and enter the vestibule. Close the inner gate properly and ensure that the latch is secure. Place a leash securely on the dog, open the outer gate and exit from the vestibule. Close the outer gate and check that it is properly secured.

### Dog Park Etiquette:

For many pet owners, dog parks are an important part of their relationship with their dog. They are a way to provide exercise, socialization, and an opportunity to meet new friends (for you and your dog!). But a dog park can also be dangerous when we are not watching our dogs closely enough for signs of stress, anxiety, or overstimulation. This information should serve as a guide on how you and your dog can have a positive experience at the dog park!

### Some Basic Guidelines:

Not all dogs are dog park dogs! If your dog has a history of aggression towards any other dogs or humans, becomes stressed in a group of dogs, or guards things that are of high value to him (toys, sticks), he may not be a candidate for dog park socialization.

Keep it positive! If your dog is unfamiliar with the dog park setting, make sure his first few times at the dog park are positive and fun! This may mean going at off-peak times, generally weekdays between 10am and 3pm or later in the evening before dusk. Once you are sure that your dog can successfully handle the rigors of a dog park, you may want to introduce him at peak times.

Be present at the dog park. When you are at the park, always have your eyes on your dog! Watching for signs of stress or bullying, giving your dog time outs if they are becoming overstimulated, and knowing when to go home for the day all come from watching every move your dog makes at the park.

Mind your comings and goings! Entering and exiting the dog park can be hot buttons for many dogs. Leashed dogs, when surrounded by loose dogs can feel threatened and vulnerable and may lash out. Practice proper entrance and exit techniques by utilizing our double-gate policy.

Know when your dog has had enough. You will notice through your dog's behavior and body language when it's time to go! If you see any signs that your dog is tired or has had enough for one day, be proactive and give your dog a time out by taking him for a walk outside the park, or go home for the day and come back the next day.

#### Canine Body Language:

When at the dog park, it is important to understand basic canine body language. These simple guides will help you recognize what is acceptable and what might lead to trouble.

#### *Aggression vs Correction:*

There are times when a dog will correct another dog for something he deems inappropriate. This is totally normal, nonaggressive, and is actually good for teaching young dogs important lessons about canine social structure and body language. Appropriate corrections generally consist of the following:

- Stiff body posturing and pilo-erection or whale eye. (Hair on shoulders and butt stand up and you see the whites of eyes)
- Loud woofs or snarks directed at an individual
- Muzzle punching or lunging resulting in no harm being done to the corrected dog

These are normally done once and the argument is over - if your dog is over-correcting, it may be time to give a time out.

#### When it's time to go!:

An important part of being a member of the dog park is recognizing when it is time for your dog to end their dog park session for the day. If your dog is exhibiting any of the following behaviors, it may be time to leave the park and come back later.

- Repeated correcting of other dogs, sometimes over very benign instances
- Targeting, bullying, or stalking individual dogs
- Fearfulness which does not subside

#### Breaking Up a Dog Fight:

Dog fights happen! It is important when in a dog park to keep your cool if a fight breaks out so as not to escalate the situation. Collect loose dogs who are not part of the fight to prevent mobbing.

Start by making a loud noise such as clapping your hands or shouting “No!”, or throwing water on the fighting dogs. Do not grab dogs by collars or necks/faces to avoid a redirected bite. Handlers should grab each dog from the hips, pinching the loose skin between their belly and legs, and pull out of the fight. (Remember: 1 person per dog). Fighting dogs must be removed from the park for the day.

### Recognizing Healthy Play:

Dogs nip while they play, chase, slam each other with their shoulders and hips, lie on top of each other, mount each other, and “fence” with their teeth. It can look scary and confusing to human beings, but it is how dogs have fun.

The same behaviors, however, can be carried to the point of rudeness and bullying. The following questions can help dog owners sort good, healthy fun from abusive or bullying play:

- Do both dogs look happy most of the time?
- Are their tails, mouths, and movements loose and relaxed (having fun), or are they tight and stiff (not so fun)?
- Is one dog asking for space or trying to get away and the other dog is not allowing it?
- Is the play edgy, hard-hitting, or causing fear for any participants?
- Is there healthy give and take in the play? Over a few minutes, does the dog who was on top take a turn on the bottom, or does the chaser become the chased?
- Is the play fluid, moving from one activity to another, or are the dogs “stuck?”  
Are two or more dogs ganging up on another who looks stressed?
- Is it becoming so intense that “snarks” and “scuffles” are happening?

If the play is not balanced, comfortable, and clearly happy for all parties, the dogs’ owners need to redirect the activities, settle the offending dogs down with a time out from play (preferably outside the off-leash area) or exit the park for the day.

### Mounting:

Mounting is a form of dog play that can be especially volatile, even if the dogs are well matched in size and physical condition. Mounting is not necessarily about reproduction or dominance, but can be a request for attention, an invitation to play, or a way for an overexcited dog to discharge energy. The problem is that some dogs are intolerant of mounting, and so it can trigger fights. Because mounted dogs often react to an innocent dog standing in front of them rather than to the one on top, the behavior can pose risks for surrounding dogs.

If your dog tends to mount, teach an “off” cue and intervene. Better yet, learn to see the behavior coming and redirect your dog before another one is stressed by it.

### Resource Guarding:

Some dogs are very protective of objects they value. The resources a dog may guard can be food (including training treats), toys, their owners doorways, and more. Early signs of resource guarding could include hovering in a particular space or over a toy, lip licking (indicating stress), flared whiskers, curling the lip, and freezing as another dog approaches. If your dog appears to be resource guarding, remove the resource, if possible. If that is not possible or does not help, take him/her out of the park before they begin lunging at others or a fight erupts – then come back at a quieter time.

If someone else’s dog is resource guarding, move your dog away from him, put away anything that seems to arouse the dog’s guarding impulse, point out aggressive behavior to the other owner, or leave. If your dog has just had a scuffle, a time out may be advisable. If there are repeated snarks or scuffles, then it may be time to head home for the day and consider whether that particular group of playmates is healthy for your dog.

### Fights:

If handlers are educated and alert, they should be able to preempt rude play or bullying before fights break out. However, following are some alternatives to consider if a fight erupts:

One option is to do nothing and monitor. Very few dogs fight intensely for long periods and no dog with a history of serious fighting should be at the dog park in the first place. Age appropriate children who visit the dog park with an adult must be instructed ahead of time to walk calmly away from any fighting dogs, even their own. Do not run or scream, and do not get involved. Shrieking children can trigger tragic behavior from dogs.

Anyone interfering in a fight is at risk of being bitten. Highly aroused dogs do not always know what they are biting. If a person restrains one dog, the other dog might continue aggressing, provoking the restrained dog to bite the person holding him. Screaming or shouting can escalate tensions and bring more dogs into the fray.

If someone has been knocked down near the fight or the dogs are badly mismatched, it can be almost impossible to stand back. If you feel compelled to intervene in a serious fight, here are some options, listed in descending order of safety:

- Use water; a squirt water bottle or throw containers of water on the dogs.
- Startle the dogs with loud noise, such as a loud whistle, an air horn, or clanging metal.
- Throw coats or blankets over the dogs.
- Owners can simultaneously lift the tail of each dog in the fight.
- Take the dog's back feet off the ground
- Grab the rear legs and pull the dogs out of the fight - release their legs the instant the fighting stops (to avoid getting bitten yourself) and keep the dogs separated.

As soon as the fighting breaks, immediately lead the dogs away from one another and leash them;. Check the dogs for injuries and assess whether veterinary care is appropriate. Owners should exchange relevant information with each other especially if there is an injury. The dogs should be removed from the park, one at a time. Even dogs that did not join the fight are likely to be extremely aroused, therefore owners should also consider leaving for the day.

Individually or collectively, review and evaluate what went wrong: What could have been done to prevent the dogs' interaction from escalating to a fight? Why didn't people see the fight brewing and intervene earlier? Dog parks are not the place to take your dog for socialization... Dog parks are a place to take socialized dogs.

### Pennsylvania Dog Laws:

The Dog Law Enforcement Office within the PA Department of Agriculture is responsible for overseeing annual licensure and rabies vaccinations for dogs. The Office is also charged with investigating reports of aggressive or dangerous dogs and serious dog bites.

### What are Pennsylvania's Dog Laws?:

- All dogs three months of age or older must be licensed. Licenses are issued by The County of Northampton
- All dogs must be under control and must not be allowed to run at large. Dogs are personal property, and owners are responsible for damages caused by their dog.
- It is illegal to mistreat or abuse any animal. Violations should be reported to a local humane organization or the police.
- It is illegal to abandon or attempt to abandon any dog.
- No dog under eight weeks of age may be sold, traded, bartered or transferred.
- You may not place any poison or harmful substance in any place where dogs may easily eat it, whether it is your own property or elsewhere.
- Dogs three months of age or older are required to have a current rabies vaccination.
- It is illegal to interfere with an officer or employee of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture engaged in enforcement of dog laws.

### City of Easton Dog Park Incident Notification Procedure:

Park patrons should feel free to direct any questions or concerns regarding the City's dog parks to the City Recreation Office at 610-250-6711 or [recreation@easton-pa.gov](mailto:recreation@easton-pa.gov). If an owner would like to file a formal report or make the City aware of an ongoing dog park situation, an Incident Report form should be completed. The Incident Report will enable us to document occurrences and properly investigate and resolve the concerns of our dog owners. Incident Report Forms may be obtained from the dog park section of the City website under Parks and Recreation or in person from the Recreation Office during regular business hours at 123 S. Third Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.





## City of Easton Dog Park Incident Report Form

Please note that any incident involving bodily injury to persons or dogs requiring medical attention should be immediately reported to the City of Easton Police by calling 911. This form should be completed for all incidents of aggressive dog behavior and those incidents noted above regardless of the severity.

**Your Information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Dog's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Lbs. Color \_\_\_\_\_

General Description \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Individual/Dog Involved:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Dog's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Lbs. Color \_\_\_\_\_

General Description \_\_\_\_\_

If names are not known please provide a full description of the individual, their dog's name and/or anything that may be pertinent (i.e., make, model, color of their car, license and plate number, etc.)

**Nature of the Incident:**

Date of Incident \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am pm

Location:  Small Dog Area     Large Dog Area     Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Description of any Injuries: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Actions Taken:  
 None  Ambulance  Police  Veterinary  Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: All incidents will be handled in as timely a manner as possible. Guidelines for use of City Dog Parks can be found at [www.easton-pa.gov](http://www.easton-pa.gov). Thank you for your cooperation.