



Parks & Recreation

Dog Park Orientation

Welcome to Lower Makefield Dog Park

- Registration Requirements/Park Fees
- Benefits of a Dog Park
- Dog Park Rules
- Preparing for first visit
- Every Visit
- Reading dog behavior
- Dog Park Etiquette
- What to do in the event of a fight



Registration Requirements

- This is the first step
- Proper Documentation: Dog License and Vaccinations
- Register at Lower Makefield Township Building
- Enjoy the Park!



Benefits of a Dog Park

- Dogs Need Exercise! This is an opportunity for your dog to run free, chase balls, sniff and explore.
- Tired satisfied dogs are more content.
- Allows an opportunity for both people and their canines to interact.



Dog Park Rules

- Become familiar with LMT Dog Park Rules provided in your dog park packet and posted at the park - and follow them.



Dog Park Rules - Accessibility

RULES

The dog park is divided into two areas

- Small dog less than 25lbs
- Large Dog greater than 35lbs
- Either 26lbs-34lbs

- The park is open from sunrise to sunset.
- All users must be registered with LMT Parks and Recreation and receive a keycard to access the park – keycards are non transferrable.
- Dogs must be on leash when entering and exiting the park.



Dog Park Rules-Don't bring your picnic to the park

- Owners must accompany dogs and dogs must be under voice command
- No smoking, Food, alcohol or glass containers in the park.
- No treats food or special dog toys permitted in the park.



Dog Park Rules- Health and Behavior

- Dogs showing aggression or fear towards other people must be removed from the dog park immediately. (More information in reading doggie language later in the presentation)
- All Dogs must be healthy
- Female Dogs in heat or unneutered male dogs may not enter the dog park.



Dog Park Rules- Age Requirements

- No children under the age of 14 are permitted in the park. Children from 14-17 must be accompanied by an adult.
- Puppies must be at least 6 months and have all of their shots before entering the park.



Dog Park Rules- Cleaning up

- Owners must clean up after their dogs. The park and recreation crew will mow and do general park maintenance but it is the responsibility of the dog owner to clean up dog waste. Receptacles will be available.



Dog Park Rules- Enter at your own risk

- The owner of the dog assumes all liability for damages or injuries while utilizing the off leash area.
- No more than two dogs per member are permitted at a time.



Dog Park Rules- Accessories and hobbies

- ▶ Pronged, pinch, choke, spike or electric collars are not permitted in the off-leash area.
- ▶ Please stop your dog from digging
- ▶ Please be considerate and do not allow excessive or nuisance barking



Dog Park Rules- Who to call

- Emergencies call 911
- Non Emergencies call 215-493-4011



Preparing for your first visit

- Visit the park with out your dog, ask members questions.
- First time visiting with your dogs, try to visit during a quiet time.
- Pack Wisely Every Visit!
 - Bring extra poop bags
 - Bring a towel for muddy paws
 - Keep first aid kit in your car
 - Bring a cell phone and the number of your nearest emergency veterinary clinic.



Every Visit- Scan for safety

- Watch and listen
- Are these dogs your dogs should play with.
- If you note a bully on the playground wait, or come back another day.
- Tip: On lease dogs cannot communicate well, wait until you are in the off leash area to let your dogs mingle.



Every Visit –Entering the Park

- Keep your dog on lead until safely inside
- One dog family in the pass through at a time
- Stay back from the gate until others have exited
- Wait to go in if there are dogs congregated at the gate
- Move away from the gate and steer clear of heavily congregated areas.



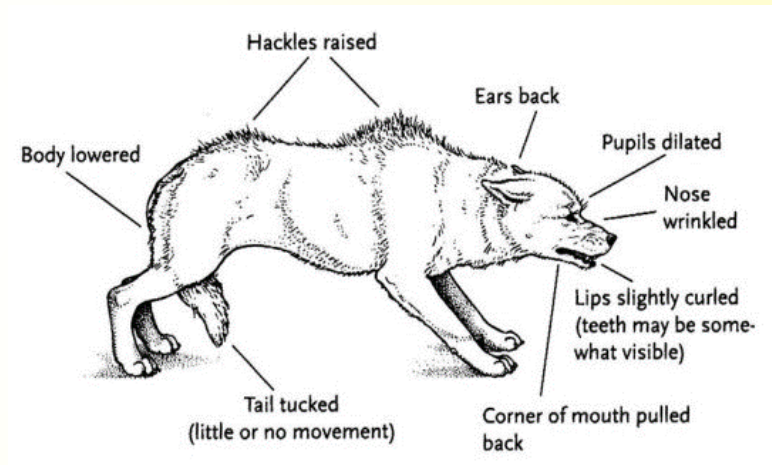
Every Visit – Social protocol

- ▶ The first few minutes are a period of introduction, arousal, attaining social equilibrium.
 - ▶ It can be stressful
- ▶ The gate is a hot spot- trouble is likely there. Wait for the gate to clear, avoid walking straight into a crowded high traffic area.
- ▶ SUPER VISION- Pay attention to your dog.
 - ▶ Do not read a book
 - ▶ Do not talk or text on your phone



Reading Dog Behavior-Red Flags

- High Tails
- Stiff bodies, tense movements
- Dog hunched, slinking crouching, hiding
- Hot pursuit-Stalking or ambushing, ganging up on smaller dogs
- Vocalization-angry barking or growling
- Owners not stepping in when needed



Wait until trouble makers leave or come back another day.

Reading Dog Behavior

- Don't bring a dog with social issues to get over his/her problem.

NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE DOG PARK

- Aggressive Dogs
- Very shy dogs
- Puppies under six months
- Dogs who are possessive or guarding of toys, food or YOU
- Unvaccinated dogs
- Non-neutered dogs
- Dogs in heat





Reading Dog Behavior- Stranger Danger

- ▶ NOT EVERY DOG IS A DOG PARK DOG
- ▶ Dogs may be fine with dogs at home but may not be fine with some dogs at the dog park.
- ▶ Even a dog with other dogs at home may not automatically be social with other dogs.

Reading Dog Behavior-Recognizing red flags



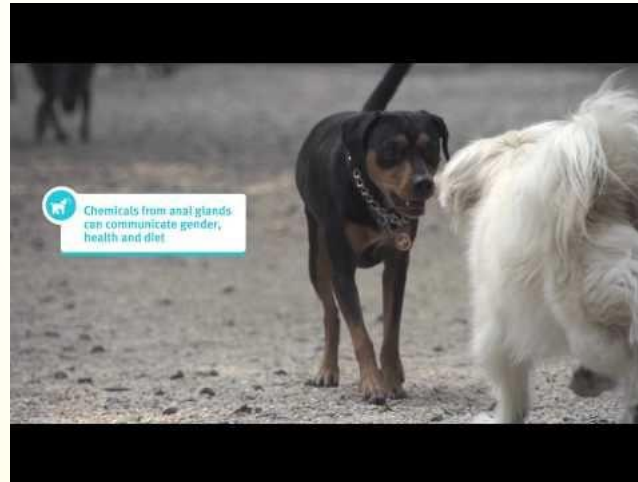
Reading Dog Behavior- Dog Greetings

- First Name, Last name, Greetings usually start in a circular pattern tail to front.
- Often followed by a shake off and take off.
- Use the three second rule. Then call your dog away, after they regroup they can try again, or not.
- If either dog seems too intense, call your dog away and move away.



Reading Dog Behavior- sniff and be sniffed

- It is appropriate for dogs to sniff each other.
- At times dogs sniff the ground as a calming mechanism
- Ask a vet video Link:



Reading Dog Behavior - Fair Play

- Role reversal
- Starts and stops
- Play bows, loose bodies, lateral movement
- Relaxed, Horizontal, swishy tails
- Self handicapping
- Shows bite inhibition



Reading Dog Behavior-Self Handicapping

- Dogs may adjust for other dog's size, needs and play style.



Reading Dog Behavior –Role reversal

- In healthy Play or social negotiation submissive roles are offered not forced.
 - (Pushed and pinned is bullied, not submissive)



Reading Dog Behavior – Cooperative Play Vs. Competitive Play

- Even when going well, continue to monitor arousal levels closely.
- Everything that starts out fun could end up in tears.



Reading Dog Behavior- Not fun for everyone

- ▶ Interrupt any fun that is at the expense of another dogs comfort.
- ▶ This is often a problem when dogs for a pack (often dogs from the same household) and gang up on a third dog.



Reading Dog Behavior - Stress

- ▶ Eyes Large, pupils dilatated. Ears and lips back.
- ▶ Licks lips, looks away, ears back, stress panting



Reading Dog Behavior- yawning

- A measure of anxiousness, indecision or conflict
- Sometimes a yawn is just a yawn
- But if a yawn is a response to social pressure, it is probably a calming signal



Reading Dog Behavior – Sizing up other dogs

- Dogs will size up other dogs to understand their intentions.



Reading Dog Behavior - I Need Space



These dogs are letting their owners know they need support.

- If your Dog Runs to your for assistance help him out.
 - Use **Body Blocking** and step in between your dog and the space invader.
 - Do not grab his collar or hug him into your legs
 - A dog who feels trapped. Has the only option to snap or snarl.

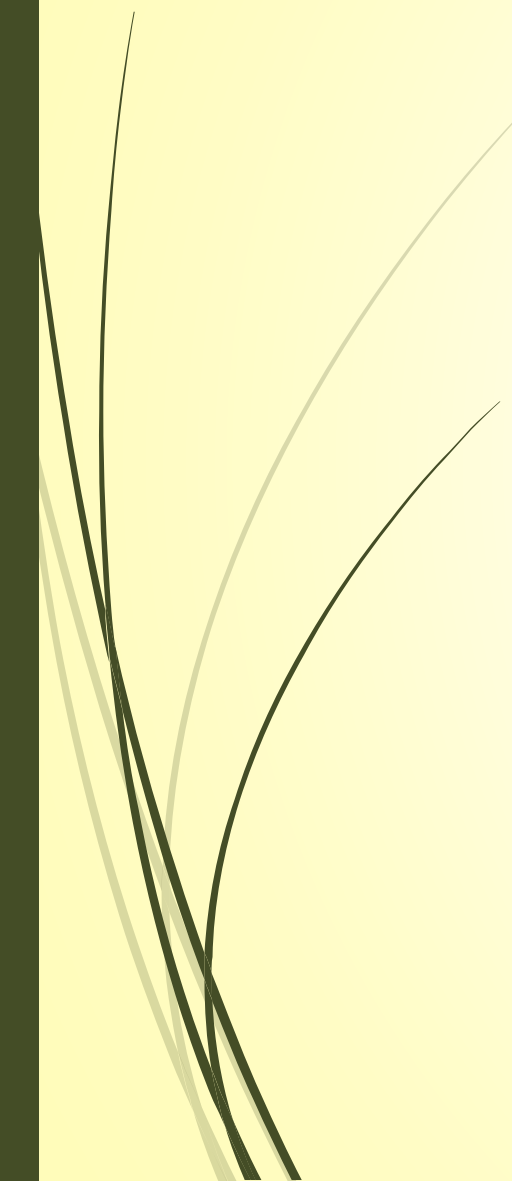
Reading Dog Behavior Shaking it off

- ▶ When there is arousal, excitement, conflict or stress, you will often see a full body shake off as a dog leaves a stressful social situation.
- ▶ Sometimes it appears the dog seems to be shifting gears.
- ▶ This could be an indication of the level of stress or conflict in a social situation.





Reading Dog Behavior – Danger Signs

- 
- High tail, tense muscles, standing tall
 - Stillness, mouth closed, direct stare
 - Strong focus, staring, stalking
 - Relentless pursuit, ganging up on spall/shy dogs
 - Hall monitoring, Social harassment
 - High arousal, intensity
 - Fun at the expense of another dogs comfort

Reading Dog Behavior – Arousal

- ▶ Excitement, anxiety, defense, fight or flight.



Reading Dog Behavior – The Tail

Friendly Wags are broad
loose and horizontal



Upright, tense, high tails indicate high arousal

Reading Dog Behavior – Vertical Play

- ▶ This level of sparring could easily turn into a fight.



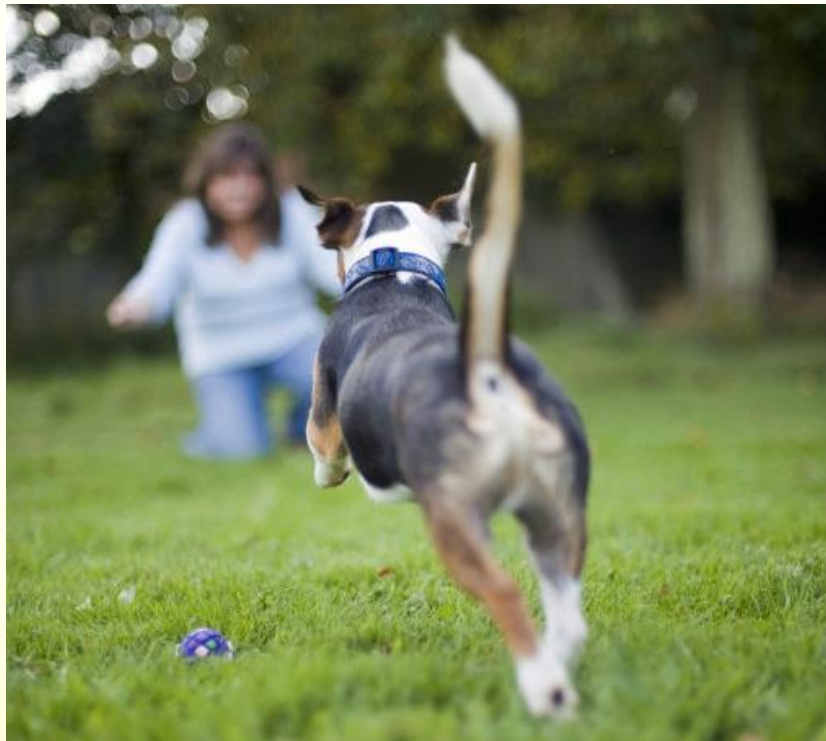
Reading Dog Behavior – Recognizing Bullies

- One who targets the small and the weak
- One who picks on young or shy dogs
- One who crashes around without paying attention to what others are communicating.
- The fun police.



Dog Park Etiquette – COME!

- ▶ A truly safe dog park dog keeps track of its owner and comes when called. Joyfully the first time!





Dog Park Etiquette – Ask owners for help

- ▶ How you ask is important – be calm and supportive.
- ▶ Sample conversation:

Owner 1: “Could you call your dog please?”

Owner 2: “Its ok, my dog is friendly – he's just playing.”

Owner 1: “I know, but my dog is a scaredy cat, he doesn't know that – could you please call your dog? It would help me out. Thank you.”



If a fight Breaks out

- Stay Calm: The actions of the humans surrounding the fight will sometimes disperse the fight. If the humans energy levels rise so will the dogs, this would only make things worse.
- Avoid grabbing collars: Dogs reflexivity bite anything that grabs them in the heat of a fight – even their owners.
- Insert an object between the dogs: Spray water. Citronella, extra towel, jacket.
- The safest way to separate dogs is the “wheel barrow” technique: Get behind the dog and grab the hind legs. IN one smooth move, lift upward and quickly swing the dog away from the fray. Don't lean over the dogs. Lean back and keep your face away from the action. :et centrifugal force propel the dog away. Let go quickly if the dog wheels around.

Dog Park Etiquette – Have Fun

- ▶ At the end of the day leave the park smiling.

