

Suggested City of Mount D.o.r.a. Dog Park Petiquette

from the City of Mount Dora Parks & Recreation Department proposed etiquette

1. Because the first dog park visit can be a little stressful for the novice user (human and dog), first-time visitors might consider visiting the park at non-peak times. It may take a couple or tries, or even a few weeks of visits, before your dog comes out of his/her shell. If you give your dog a little time, however, you may be pleasantly surprised by the change and you will have a healthier, friendlier, more playful dog.
2. Know your dog! Not all dogs are good candidates for off-leash dog parks. If your dog has not had regular interaction with other dogs, he may lack the necessary social skills to make your visit safe.
3. When entering or leaving the off-leash area, do not enter the double-gated transition area if there is already someone in that area. This will eliminate the possibility of both gates being open at the same time.
4. Place your dog off-leash in the transition area before entering the unleashed area. Dogs can feel threatened leashed around unleashed dogs.
5. Quickly move away from the entrance area as you enter. That will help disperse the group of dogs that will come over to welcome your dog to the park. Move away from the fence so that your dog will not feel cornered or threatened. This will lessen the problem caused when several off leash dogs, already in the park, come running over to greet the new arrival, perhaps overwhelming the arriving dog.
6. Keep your dog leashed at all times while outside the fenced dog park area. Even if your pet is under perfect voice control, many non-dog people have fears and a dog off-leash outside the fenced area violates the City's Leash Law.
7. Keep park gates closed and watch for dogs on the other side as you are entering/leaving to avoid dogs escaping.
8. Always scoop your dog's poop! Bags are provided for convenience, so please use them. Please help with "orphan poop" as you will sometimes miss some of your dog's poop.
9. Supervise your dog closely at all times to help prevent aggression and other inappropriate behavior.
10. Ask the owner's permission to approach a dog before befriending it.
11. Use caution when permitting curious dogs to greet yours, both within and outside the dog park.
12. Dogs that bark persistently are a nuisance and should be removed from the premises.
13. Please clean up your park, e.g. trash and anything else on the ground that may end up in a dog's mouth. Before you drop something on the ground, ask yourself, "Would I want my dog to eat this?"
14. Stay alert at all times as there will likely be groups of dogs running around the park having fun. People standing around are obstructions, and a dog may run into them which may cause injury to humans and/or dogs.
15. Be aware that dogs have different play styles, temperaments and physical abilities. Many dogs love rambunctious play, but some dogs suffer from injuries, and some are more timid and aloof. If your dog's play is making other dog owner's uncomfortable, go to another area of the dog park or perhaps return another time.
16. Keep walking! Walking rather than sitting or standing will help minimize defensive and territorial behaviors. This means that your dog is more likely to pass another dog with a friendly sniff instead of a stare down.
17. Keep the area safe and clean. Don't allow your dog to dig holes which can cause injuries to unsuspecting people and dogs. If you dog digs a hole, fill the hole immediately. Leave the site in better condition than you found it.
18. Do not bring dogs with aggressive tendencies into the dog park. You are risking harm to others and creating a potential liability for yourself. Dog fights in dog parks are rarely a problem because dogs consider it to be neutral territory as the dogs are all visitors and none of the dogs are protecting their own turf. However, if a fight does break out, owners are responsible for immediately breaking it up. The safest way to break up a dog fight is to pull the dogs apart from behind. If any dog remains unruly, the other owner must immediately leash and remove the dog from the park. Mounting can initiate a potentially harmful situation. The owner of any dog displaying mounting behavior must immediately leash and remove the dog from the park.
19. If your dog inflicts an injury, you must give your name and phone number to the other owner before leaving the area. Owners are legally and financially responsible for their dog's behavior, injuries, damages or loss their dog causes.
20. Prevent an accident before it happens: (a) Posture – dog body language can communicate fear, hostility, or submission. Learn to read and respond to your dog's posture and body language. (b) Packing – several dogs packed together can lead to trouble. Prevent packing behavior by leading your dog away from the group to a neutral area. (c) Possession – whether it's you, a toy, or a treat, dogs will protect what's theirs. **Food, either dog or human, or toys are not permitted in the dog park.** (d) Provoking – if your dog is annoying or provoking other dogs or people and requires a lot of attention, it's time to leave and return another day.
21. Dogs that have been declared dangerous or aggressive are prohibited. Dogs showing aggression towards people and/or other dogs, as determined by Parks & Recreation personnel and/or D.O.R.A. Dog Pawtrollers, will be removed from the park.
22. Cooperation between handlers is expected and required.
23. A handler, age 16 years or older, must be present & must supervise the dog at all times & must be solely responsible for the action of their dog(s).
24. Children, 6-15 years, must be accompanied by an adult and must have a dog to enter the dog park.