

RULES FOR THE DOG PARK AT GODOWN PARK

Dogs must be licensed, healthy, current on vaccinations & spayed/neutered

Why this is a rule...

There are health risks any time your dog interacts with other dogs. Healthy, vaccinated dogs are at a lower risk of getting ill as a result of visiting the dog park. Talk to your veterinarian about the risks and what vaccinations are recommended. Consult with your vet about your dog's overall health before coming to the dog park.

Concerning spay and neutering. In addition to accidental puppies, intact males can experience social problems. An unneutered dog's high testosterone level can make him the target of harassment or aggression from other male dogs.

Females in heat can inadvertently cause dogfights.

Dogs must be over 4 months old

Why this is a rule...

The immune system for puppies under four months is not fully mature, making them highly susceptible to potentially deadly and contagious diseases.

Until your puppy has had all its' shots, don't bring it to the dog park. Instead, consider arranging play dates at the homes of friends/family who have healthy dogs and puppies. You can also enroll your puppy

in a puppy class that includes off-leash playtime in a safe, clean environment.

While socializing your puppy is one of the most important things you will ever do, the dog park may not be the best option for beginning socialization. For young puppies, a dog park can be scary and overwhelming, potentially giving your puppy life-long issues with other dogs.

Handlers must keep your dog in sight & be in direct control of your dog at all times. You are liable for your dog's behavior and actions (Ohio code, Columbus Ord. 2327)

Why this is a rule...

Your dog is your personal property. You are legally responsible for damage or injury caused by your dog. This includes injury to another dog or person.

You should always remain with your dog, observant of its' behavior, as no one knows your dog as well as you. If your dog becomes upset, worried, scared, belligerent, or a nuisance to other users, please remove them from the park. Remember, you are your dog's best advocate.

Finally, you also need to watch to know when and where your dog "does its' business" so you can quickly clean it up.

Dogs must not be wearing a chain, choke, prong or e-collar

Why this is a rule...

During dog play, other dogs can get their teeth caught in a chain, choke or prong collar when playing and panic when stuck, causing injury to themselves and the dog wearing the collar. A prong or pinch collar may also get caught up on a fence and will be painful if pushed into the dog's neck during play, potentially causing a fight because of a perceived "signal of threat".

While not a rule, halters are discouraged as they too can get caught up during play.

Plain, buckle, stretchy or leather collars are the safest choices at the dog park.

Dogs must wear a leash to the dog park and have it removed inside the dog park

Why this is a rule...

For your dog's safety, keep the leash on until you are safely in the double-gated entry area. Godown Road is a busy road and trains do frequently travel on the nearby tracks. Best to play it safe.

Both the small dog and large dog areas have two double-gated entrances. Once inside the double-gated area, and before entering the off-leash area, unleash your dog.

The dog park is an "off leash" area. If you need to keep your dog on leash, you should, for your dog's own safety and comfort, consider not bringing him or her into the park. Being kept on leash with other dogs that are not on-leash can trigger aggression and create tension

between dogs. Leashes interfere with a dog's natural body language, dogs can get tangled up in them and dogs who become stressed by constant pulling against a leash can act in undesirable ways. It will also put your dog at a tremendous disadvantage if something goes "wrong".

Dogs must be on your best behavior to stay in off-leash areas because aggressive/overly playful behavior won't be tolerated

Why this is a rule...

Often people mistakenly believe that if their dog fears or dislikes other dogs, the dog just need socialization to "get over it". However, if your dog is fearful or nervous around other dogs, exposing it to unfamiliar dogs could worsen existing issues.

If your dog exhibits aggressive behavior toward other dogs, visits to a dog park may worsen the behavior and put other people's dogs at risk or ruin their enjoyment of the park.

If you'd like to help your dog with socialization or aggression problems, there are numerous classes and qualified trainers in our area who can assist you.

Educate yourself about dog behavior, canine communication and body language. Behavior that concerns some dog owners may simply be a rambunctious play style.

Always respect other dog owners' wishes if someone is not comfortable with how your dog is interacting with theirs. Simply move to another part of the park for a while or leave the dog park if your dog is acting in an aggressive manner or having a bad day.

What should you do if someone else has a dog acting aggressively?

First, remove your dog from the situation. Second, if it is safe, politely tell the dog's owner that you feel their dog is behaving aggressively and ask them to take some action to control their dog or leave the

park. If you do not feel safe or your request has no effect, call Worthington Parks and Rec at 614-436-2743 and file a report.

No more than two (2) dogs per person/owner at a time

Why this is a rule...

It is very difficult for one person to effectively control and supervise more than two dogs. If you have more than two dogs, feel free to bring a friend or relative to assist with the close supervision.

You must clean up your dog's poop IMMEDIATELY

Why this is a rule...

No one likes a little poo on the shoe. Moreover, it's unhealthy and can spread disease as there are some canine diseases that spread through feces.

Our dog park will be equipped with waste receptacles and bags for your convenience. Use them!

Also, please pick up any "orphan poo". From time to time, you may also have missed your own dog's "presents". If you notice that a dog has pooped and the owner seems unaware of it, politely point it out to them.

Additionally, please also pick up trash, cigarette butts, litter and anything else on the ground that could possibly be eaten by a dog. Before you drop something on the ground, consider "Would I want my dog to eat this?"

In summary, leave the dog park better than you found it. It's the small price to pay for this beautiful space.

No children under the age of 9 are allowed inside the fenced areas of the dog park. Children under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Children 9 to 12 must be under the direct supervision of an adult, meaning in very close proximity at all times when within the fenced areas.

Why this is a rule...

This is a dog park and not all dogs are child-friendly.

Herding dogs may nip at children while attempting to “round them up.” Children playing or running around in the park may invite dogs to demonstrate this behavior.

Dogs running and chasing may inadvertently knock down a child.

Direct eye contact is confrontational to dogs. An interested child staring into a dog’s face may provoke a dog unintentionally.

Never let your child have toys or food in the Dog Park. A friendly dog may knock down your child to get at the toy or food.

One adult to supervise several children and the family dog is not sufficient to ensure everyone’s safety. Be sure you can take care of everyone you bring to the park.

All dogs have the potential to bite. A small child is more likely to be bitten in the face if a bite occurs.

Never allow your child to approach or pet a strange dog without the owner’s presence and approval.

Children are more susceptible to contracting intestinal worms and other infections from touching grass, rocks or toys where feces and urine are present.

Dog Handlers must be 18 or older.

Why this is a rule...

As you are responsible for your dog's actions, handlers must be of a legally responsible age.

Stop your dog from digging

Why this is a rule...

Let's keep the park nice for everyone.

No human food of any kind or glass containers into the dog park

Why this is a rule...

Food can trigger fights between dogs. It's that simple.

Do not bring dog treats or toys of any kind into the dog park

Why this is a rule...

Some dogs may have allergic reactions to treats and treats accidentally dropped on the ground could cause problems. Additionally, some dogs are treat and/or toy possessive. Treats and toys, as with food, can trigger fights between dogs. With treats and toys, there's just too much potential for dogs to engage in guarding or stealing behavior that can lead to aggression and fights.

Additionally, toys can be accidentally left or lost at the dog park. If left laying around on the ground, they become a real headache for the maintenance staff and problematic for mowers and equipment.

Carry your dog's leash with you at all times

Why this is a rule...

A leash is a sure way of gaining control over your dog in an emergency situation.

Adhere to the City of Worthington and City of Columbus rules and City Ordinances

- report all unattended dogs to the Franklin County Animal Warden at 614-462-3400.
- report dog bites, to 614-645-7288, Columbus Health Department, or Worthington Animal Control at 614-645-4361
 - report dangerous animals to 614-645-6748, the number for the Columbus Public Health Veterinarian
- for assistance in unsafe situations, please call 911.

As a dog owner you are liable for injuries and damage inflicted by your dog. Watch your dog carefully! If your dog injures a person or a dog, give your name and phone number to the injured party. Report to law enforcement authorities any handlers who refuse to take responsibility for damages/injuries and who are endangering the safety of others. Record their license plate number, if possible.

The success of this park depends on self-policing and the good manners of its users. Please address potential problems before they become big problems. A friendly reminder is better than an angry

confrontation. However, do not get in over your head! You always have the option of calling the police, or taking your dog and walking away. It's always better to remove yourself and your dog to safety and consider coming back another day or time.