

By following these guidelines you will help reduce opposition to off-leash access for dogs in parks. Be an ambassador for responsible dog ownership and help promote the interests of dog owners in this region.

It's never too late to train your dog. Even an older dog can overcome problem behaviours and learn new skills. There are many dog trainers who can help. For information on training and trainers, visit www.citizencanine.org

Canine Community Building

The canine community includes dogs and their owners as well as other people who have relationships with dogs. **Citizen Canine** wants to expand and strengthen this community by sharing information that will increase responsible dog ownership and canine good manners. Dog owners who meet together in public spaces develop a strong sense of community. This promotes group monitoring and mentoring in terms of clean-up and respect for other park users. Respect, tolerance and cooperation are vital to sharing greenspace with other users.

Dogs are an important part of many families in this region, yet public policy does not always provide much support for people with dogs. In some communities, people and their dogs are unreasonably denied access to parks, public transportation, and even a place to live. Citizen Canine advocates for inclusive public policy for dogs and their owners. In addition, we sponsor dog events and provide information about dog behaviour, training, and local seminars at our website. The website also includes an open Dog Forum where dog owners can post questions and get answers from others.

Visit www.citizencanine.org to learn more about resources available to dog owners in Greater Victoria.

What is Citizen Canine?

We are a non-profit alliance of people and organizations working together to promote responsible dog ownership and protect the interests of the dog-owning community in Greater Victoria. Our three areas of focus are *advocacy, public education, and canine community building.*

Citizen Canine Dog Owners Association incorporated as a non-profit society in 2004 to advocate for inclusive public policy for dogs and their owners, promote responsible dog ownership and educate the public about dogs and their behaviour. We are a voice for local dog owners and we continue working to develop a strong community of responsible dog owners.

We invite you to add your voice to ours. You can join our e-mail network for free at our website and receive occasional e-mail updates on local dog-related matters. As well, you can actively support our work by joining our association. For only \$20 a year, you can become a supporting member of **Citizen Canine** and receive a membership card that provides discounts at many local businesses. All funds raised by membership fees go directly to support our work. To join **Citizen Canine**, download the membership form from our website at www.citizencanine.org.

As with any organization, the more members we have, the stronger our voice will be. Help us to increase our numbers so that we can continue to work effectively on behalf of good dogs and their responsible owners in Greater Victoria.



*Citizen Canine's
Guide to
Responsible
Dog Ownership*

Good
Dogs,
Good
Owners



Good Dogs, Good Owners

We all like to think we are responsible dog owners, and that our dogs are well behaved and will be welcomed everywhere. But most of us can probably do more to help our dogs be good canine neighbours. Being a good dog owner means caring for *and* training the dog. It starts with providing food, water, and shelter, but it also includes giving our dogs the exercise, socialization, and instruction they need to be good canine citizens.

As dog owners, it's our job to ensure that our dogs are not a nuisance to others. We need to recognize that some people don't like dogs or are actually afraid of them. We have to teach our dogs basic obedience and make sure they are supervised and well behaved in public places.

What is a Responsible Dog Owner?

You're a Responsible Dog Owner if you:

- Understand that acquiring a dog is a commitment for the life of that animal. Do your research first and choose a dog that is compatible with your lifestyle and environment.
- Provide your dog with consistent veterinary care (including appropriate vaccinations), proper nutrition, grooming and shelter.
- Become part of the solution, not part of the problem—spay or neuter your dog.
- Provide exercise, activities *and* companionship for your dog. Dogs are social animals, and isolation from the family will result in an unhappy, and ultimately, unhealthy dog. It is neither responsible nor kind to tether a dog outside, or to leave the dog home alone for many hours each day.
- Use reward-based training techniques and positive reinforcement to teach your dog good manners—including basic obedience (sit, down, stay) and reliable recall.

- Supervise your dog in public places and keep it from digging, damaging plants, chasing vehicles or wildlife, harassing people or dogs, showing aggression toward other dogs or barking excessively.
- Socialize your dog early by regularly introducing it to other dogs, people and different environments. It's important to start socializing a dog when it's very young because dogs lacking adequate socialization are more likely to become destructive or aggressive.
- Seek expert help if your dog shows aggression towards other dogs or people and is not responding to your corrective efforts. Show others how to safely interact with your dog.
- Obey dog-related bylaws in your community. License your dog and keep it on a leash except where off-leash access is allowed. Do not allow your dog off leash until you are sure it will *consistently* come when called.
- *Always* carry plastic bags and pick up after your dog. Most of the complaints about dogs relate to unscooped poop. Help other dog owners be responsible by carrying extra bags and offering them when needed.
- Recognize that, as the owner of a dog, you are liable for any damage done by your dog.

Is Your Dog a Good Canine Neighbour?

The Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) has developed a series of tests to determine if your dog is a good canine neighbour. Designed to promote responsible dog ownership, the Canine Good Neighbour (CGN) program tests your dog's manners and your relationship with it in twelve everyday situations. If your dog can meet strangers politely, sit and stay on command, walk on leash without pulling, come when called and cope with sudden noises outside, you're well on your way to qualifying.

Many dog trainers can help you and your dog prepare for the CGN test. Citizen Canine organizes fun tests so dog owners can practise in a relaxed way. For information about the CGN program contact the Canadian Kennel Club. Information about the fun tests and the twelve situations is available at our website: www.citizencanine.org

Park and Trail Manners for Dogs and People

Fortunately for dog owners there are many off-leash parks in Greater Victoria. Responsible dog owners recognize that everyone has the right to enjoy these parks. To ensure your dog isn't creating problems in a public recreation area, follow these guidelines:

- Do not allow your dog off-leash until you are certain it has a reliable recall. This means your dog must return to you quickly and directly when you call or whistle.
- Be aware not all dogs enjoy meeting other dogs, and actively try to prevent problems. Do not allow your dog to approach another dog without first checking with that dog's owner.
- Supervise your dog and don't allow it to intimidate other dogs or steal their playthings. Intervene if play becomes too rough. If your dog is aggressive or pushy, keep it on a leash.
- Don't let your dog chase wildlife. If you cannot keep your dog close to you, use a leash.
- Share the trail. Ensure your dog is within recall range at all times and do not allow it to block the trail or bother other users. Even if your dog is on leash, do not allow it to lunge at people or other dogs, or to bark at other trail users.
- If you sense a person might be afraid of dogs, step to the edge of the trail, have your dog sit quietly and allow the person to continue walking.