

TWINING VALLEY DOG PARK

1487 Twining Road Dresher, PA 19025

Supplemental Information Packet

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UPPER DUBLIN
TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION

Plan for Success!

On Your First Visit & Every Visit

To prepare for your dog's first visit to Twining Valley Dog Park, it's recommended to first visit and explore the park on your own, without your dog. Walk around and feel free to ask questions of anyone in the park. Assess if the park will be the right environment for your dog. When you bring your dog for the first time, you and your dog may feel more comfortable and be less likely to walk into any surprises.

When visiting on your own, try to learn from regular users when the dog park is at the busiest. For the first time, it's best 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 midday on weekends. Once you're sure your dog can successfully handle the rigors of a dog park, you can introduce him/her at peak times.

Before entering: When you first arrive with your dog(s), stand outside the fence and watch the dogs inside the enclosure for a few minutes. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your dog already know any of the dogs in the park?
- Are they playing in a manner that is comfortable for your dog?
- How many dogs are already playing in the park? Are their owners paying attention?
- Does your dog look keen to enter or reluctant? If so, it is better to leave and come back another time than set your dog up for trouble.

When entering:

- Be sure you are entering the enclosure that corresponds to the weight of your dog(s) provided at membership registration. Your key fob will allow access only to the size enclosure you specified.
- Do not hold open the gate for other dog park users to enter behind you - each dog park user must enter using their own key fob.
- Be aware that dogs already in the park will likely gather around the gate to "meet and greet" your dog.
- Allow your dog to remain in the first enclosed area for a few moments until the other dogs retreat from the entrance area. Unleash your dog during this time.
- When you and your dog feel comfortable, open the second gate and let your unleashed dog enter the enclosure. Leashed dogs may feel defensive if suddenly surrounded by other dogs.
- Securely close the second gate behind you and follow your dog into the enclosure.

While playing:

- Pay attention to your dog - not your cell phone! Be present and watchful for signs of stress or bullying.
- Don't bring your dog's favorite toy.
- Keep moving around the park - dogs tend to play more when their owners are in motion. An owner staying in one place makes it more likely for a dog to guard that surrounding space.
- Stay engaged with your dog - call your dog periodically, praise and encourage play.
- Have your dog take occasional breaks to make over-arousal less likely.
- Call your dog away from the enclosure entryway when new dogs are entering the park to avoid new arrivals feeling swarmed or threatened.
- Know when your dog has had enough and be proactive about removing your dog when it is time.

When leaving:

- Before you open the inner gate, make sure the outer gate is properly closed and that other dogs are not trying to leave with you.
- Open the inner gate and enter the enclosed area. Close the inner gate properly and ensure that the latch is secure.
- Put a leash securely on your dog, open the outer gate and exit from the enclosure.
- Close the outer gate and check that it is properly secured.

Basic Guidelines

By Nicole Larocco, CPDT & Behavior Consultant - www.thatsagooddog.com

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 the best 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. 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. Sure, you can still socialize with all of your new dog people friends, but remember to keep one eye on your pooch at all times!

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.

Be proactive! Everyone knows that their dog is pretty much the most wonderful dog in the whole park. But even if your dog is not the instigator, if you think that your dog is in danger of having a bad experience at the park, be proactive about the situation. Always talk to people respectfully, and know when it is better to simply remove your dog from the situation before an accident happens.

Understanding Basic Canine Body Language

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 escalate in severity and result in no harm being done to the correctee. If your dog is over-correcting, it may be time to give a time out.

- 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 correctee
- Normally done once and the argument is over

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:

- Stiff body posturing and pilo-erection (hair on shoulders and butt standing straight up)
- Repeated correcting of other dogs, sometimes over very benign instances
- Targeting, bullying, or stalking individual dogs
- Fearfulness which does not subside
- Prey drive

Understanding Basic Canine Body Language

Appropriate - You're OK!

- Butt sniffing and loose tail and body language
- Wide, circular tail wagging
- Play bows
- Butt bumps
- Playful vocalization
- Brief, fair, and harmless disagreements or corrections

Calming Signals - Meant to Diffuse Tension, Recognize & React Appropriately.

- Averting eye contact
- Lip-licking, chewing,
- Submissive urination
- Going belly up and tail between the legs

Inappropriate or Rude: Maybe Time for a Time Out or To Go!

- Hard stares and face-offs
- One dog chasing, pinning, targeting, or not letting up on another dog
- A group of dogs mobbing an individual dog

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 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 the play edgy, hard-hitting or causing fear for any participants?
- Is there healthy give or 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 dogs’ activities, settle the offending dogs down with a time out from play or take some dogs home.

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. 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. Dogs may guard food (including training treats), toys, their owners, doorways, and more—even feces or holes! 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, and 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.

Understanding Basic Canine Body Language

Stress Signals: Depending on context, some perfectly mundane dog behaviors can also indicate stress. Some of these behaviors discharge energy that is building up, and some signal that “I’m not looking for trouble!” If you see combinations of the following in social situations, look for what may be stressing your dog. If the stressors do not shift and you cannot positively influence your dog’s experience, take your dog out of the park.

Signals that may indicate stress, discomfort, or an effort to avoid conflict include:

- *Increased activity*
- *Scratching*
- *Shaking off*
- *Looking away from a perceived threat*
- *Front paw lift*
- *Sitting or lying down*
- *Sneezing*
- *Marking territory*
- *Yawning or Blinking*
- *Sniffing the ground*
- *Lip or nose-licking*
- *Approaching slowly and in an arc*
- *Slow, careful movements*

Signals that request or demand greater distance from another dog include:

- *Staring*
- *Growling or snarking*
- *Tension in body and face*
- *Muscle ridges in face*
- *Stalking or very erect, up-on-toes stance*
- *Hair up on back (also indicates excitement)*
- *Urination and ground scratching*
- *Tail up over back or straight*
- *Tail wagging only at tip*
- *A brief look-away or turn-away at a tense moment*
- *Ears flat against head (uneasy) or erect and forward (confident)*

Again, many of these behaviors have multiple meanings, and so the trick is to know your dog and read the whole dog in context.



Snarks, Scuffles and Fights



Snarks and Scuffles: Just as tempers flare on a playground or basketball court, so do they in a dog park. When a dog nips or bumps too hard, another dog may respond by saying, “Hey, you jerk! That hurt!” That is the meaning of a “snark,” - a vocalization that sounds like a combined snarl and bark. A “scuffle,” sounds like a fight but ends just as quickly as it started. 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 on the ball, they will preempt rude play or bullying before fights break out. What do you do, though, if a fight erupts?

One option is to do nothing. Very few dogs fight to the death, and no dog with a history of serious fighting should be at the dog park in the first place. 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 clapping, a loud whistle, an air horn, or clanging metal.
- Throw coats or blankets over the dogs.
- Use Direct Stop, a citronella-based spray (for dogs).
- Owners can simultaneously lift the tail of each dog in the fight.
- Take the dog’s back feet off the ground, or...
- 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 follow the instructions described in “After a Fight”, below

After A Fight: Put each of the dogs involved in the fight on leash, check them for injuries, and assess whether veterinary care is appropriate. As after a car accident, calmly exchange relevant information with the other dog owner(s), especially if there is an injury. Remove the dogs from the park, one at a time. Even dogs that did not join the fight are likely to be extremely aroused, and their owners are advised to call it a day also. 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?

Pennsylvania Dog Laws

The Dog Law Enforcement Office through the PA Department of Agriculture is responsible for ensuring the welfare of breeding dogs and puppies in commercial breeding kennels. The Office also regulates activities pertaining to dogs that are classified as dangerous, and oversees annual licensure and rabies vaccinations for dogs.

What are Pennsylvania's Dog Laws?

- All dogs three months of age or older must be licensed. Licenses are issued by the County Treasurer.
- 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.
- Owners of 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.

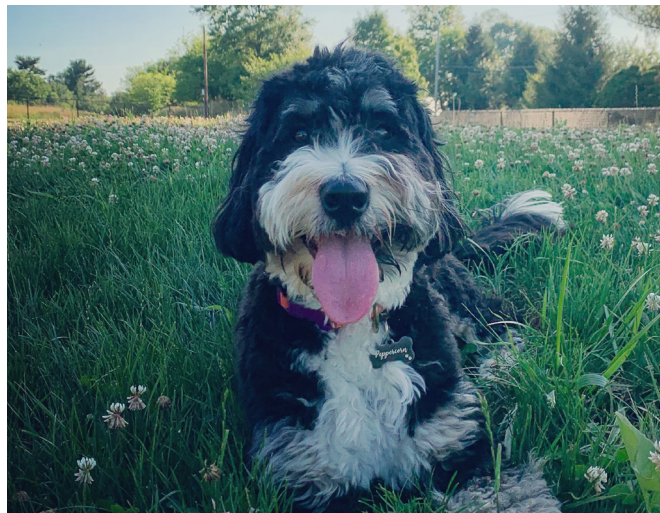
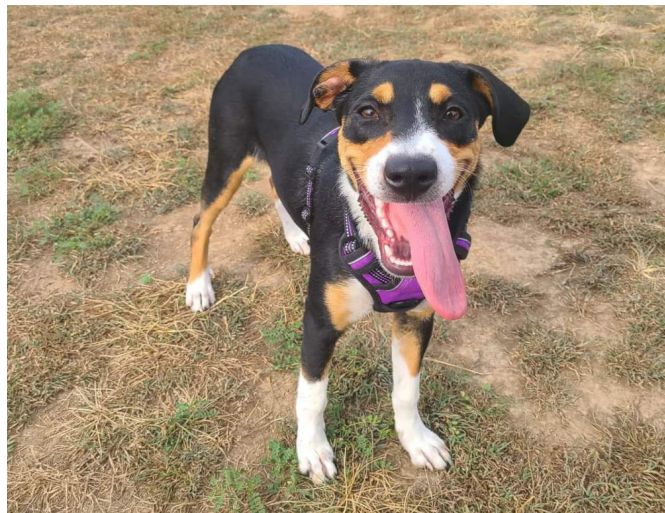
The Dog Law Enforcement Office is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Enforcing licensing and control of dogs
- Investigating dog bites
- Seizing and detaining any dog seen running at large
- Establishing and enforcing the quarantine of dogs in certain areas when required
- Providing educational services concerning dog ownership in Pennsylvania
- Enforcing the Pennsylvania Rabies Law

Dog Law Enforcement Office:

Montgomery County:
Edward Bunt
610-909-1173

Region VII (Berks, Bucks, Chester, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton and Schuylkill Counties):
Kristen Penn
1015 Bridge Road Collegeville, PA 19426
Region: 610-489-1003, Office: 717-957-4751



Common Canine Emergencies

Heat Exhaustion/Stroke

Heat stroke is a common occurrence during the hot months of the year. Dogs are prone to overheating because they do not sweat. Other factors such as obesity, advanced age or infancy can also make a dog more vulnerable to heat.

Symptoms (some or all may be present):

Panting • Weakness or collapse • Gums getting very dark or very pale • Vomiting and/or diarrhea • Seizures

Cool the dog down immediately by soaking with water (use a piece of clothing in the dog watering facility to wet the dog down if nothing else is available). If showing signs of distress, contact your veterinarian and/or transport to emergency hospital immediately.

Prevention: Wet your dog down periodically. Offer water frequently. Dogs at risk should not use the park during the heat of the day.

Bug/Bee bites/stings

If a dog suddenly starts clawing at their face or drooling excessively they may have been bitten or stung. If your dog exhibits signs of distress contact your veterinarian immediately.

Emergency Contacts

Upper Dublin Township Parks & Recreation Department

370 Commerce Drive Fort Washington, PA 19034

Phone: 215-643-1600 x3443

Email: prcsr@upperdublin.net

Available weekdays from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Upper Dublin Township Police Department

520 Virginia Drive Fort Washington, PA 19034

Emergency: 9-1-1

Non-emergency line: 215-646-2101

Available 24/7

Emergency Veterinary Services

The following information is intended only as a general reference for your convenience. None of these listed parties is in any way associated with the information printed herein or necessarily agree with the information printed herein. You are responsible and liable of your own dog's actions and well being.

Fort Washington Veterinary Hospital

510 Pinetown Road
Fort Washington, PA 19034

Phone: 215-458-5845

Call for hours.

Hickory Veterinary Hospital

2303 Hickory Road
Plymouth Meeting, PA

Phone: 610-828-3054

Open 7:00 am to 12:00 am daily.

Montgomery Animal Hospital

827 Bethlehem Pike Flourtown, PA 19031

Phone: 215-233-3958

Call for hours.

Gwynedd Veterinary Hospital & Emergency

1615 West Point Pike Lansdale, PA 19446

215-699-9294

Open 24/7 daily, weekends & holidays